THE RED RIVER IN SOUTHWESTERN HISTORY

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PREFACE

Great rivers hold an intriguing allurement to the author. Like people, their personalities are changeable; however, unlike people, a river can be radically different at the same time, depending on the position from which one views it. Cold hearted indeed is the individual who can gaze at a mighty river wending across the earth without feeling twinges of wanderlust. Certainly the author can claim no such grasp of reality.

Of all the rivers which grace the North American continent, few have had as varied and significant a history as the Red River. Although less well known than others, such as the Mississippi and the Missouri, the Red has enjoyed a central position in the history of the American West. From the time of the arrival of Redmen in North America to the present, some nation, state, or tribe has cherished the river for its advantages, claimed ownership of it, tried to discover the secrets it held, or tried to change it. From the beginning of the Franco-Spanish conflict in the Southwest to the end of the dispute between Texas and Oklahoma in the 1920s, the river was the center of controversy.

The idea of writing the history of a river is not new; myriad streams have served as the focal point for historical works. However, the approach utilized in this study is somewhat unique. Whereas previous studies have used the river to give unity to diverse events, this study is the history of a river; only events which took place because of the river's presence are chronicled. For example, narration of the Red

River War of the 1870s is omitted because that campaign was incidental to the stream. It received the river's name only because it took place near its course. Conversely, the Red River Campaign of the Civil War, the various missions of Athanse de Mézières, and the journey of Pedro Vial are included because the Red played a vital role in these events. In this manner I have not tried to write the history of a region, but rather to write the story of how this river has had great economic, political, and social significance in a vast region of the American West.

A list of the debts which I owe to Professor Odie B. Faulk, who served as director of this work, would fill more pages than the manuscript itself. Without his patience, encouragement, and admonitions, this account would not have been possible. Often he ignored his own work in order to assist with mine. Also, I am indebted to other members of my committee: Professors LeRoy H. Fischer, Joseph A. Stout, Jr., Neil Hackett, and Peter C. Rollins; each has suffered, contributed, and helped during the preparation of this work. In addition, I wish to thank three members of the faculty of Wichita State University, Professors Ross M. Taylor, Jimmy M. Skaggs, and William E. Unrau, for leading me to history. Several of my fellow graduate students at Oklahoma State University have aided in the writing of this work, but a special thanks goes to my friend James Thomas. The staff of the Oklahoma State University Library has responded to seemingly unreasonable requests with calmness and cooperation and Vicki Withers has repeatedly lend a helpful hand and sympathetic ear.

Finally, my wife Toni and my son Jon have miraculously maintained their love for a grumpy husband and father, and have suffered through

long days of solitude and long evenings when my typewriter invaded the domain of the television set. To them I owe the greatest debt.

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CHAPTER I

THE RIVER AND ITS PEOPLE

To the weary pilgrim wending his way westward across scores of miles of changeless plains, the Rocky Mountains were a welcome change. Their massive peaks thrust skyward, some capped with eternal snow. These peaks are a continental divide, separating the water that falls there and making it flow in two directions. On the western slope are two major rivers, the Colorado and the Columbia, while on the eastern side the Missouri, the Arkansas, and the Red have their headwaters. Of these the Red is the most southerly--and the one which spans the arid plains of the Southwest.

The Red River has no single source. Rather it is born in the foothills of the Rockies from a thousand tiny rivulets. These come together on the Staked Plains--or, as the Spaniards named this region, the Llano Estacado; the semi-arid high plains slope gradually away from the Rockies, decreasing in altitude as they progress eastward. Although this land now is so flat that one can see for miles, its soil once was part of the peaks of the mountains, washed down by the rains of centuries past to form an alluvial plain. In the spring the short gramma grass bursts into growth; as the ceaseless winds of summer blow, this grass tosses and tumbles like a green ocean. An occasional cottonwood tree dots the landscape to denote some small stream bed that wends its way toward the Red River, while dwarf red cedars indicate the underground

water near the surface.[1]

The Red crosses this Staked Plain that marks the Panhandle of Texas. As it gathers strength from the tiny streams that flow into it, the river becomes broader and more stately, but everywhere its course winds and curves like the path of some giant snake. Because the Red has flowed through the plains for so long, it has cut deeply into the surface--five to eight hundred feet in places--to form the Palo Duro Canyon; this is a place of canyon walls carved into myriad portraits and escarpments. From the bed of the river, these walls seem to merge as they rise, creating the illusion that the river lies beneath a canopy of rock and sand.[2]

As the Red leaves the Llano Estacado, it flows into lower, broken country, eight hundred feet below the Staked Plains. Although animals and plants, such as the prairie dog and the cottonwood, inhabit both areas, the plants and animals of the high plains are more numerous and varied. Here the cottonwood is joined by the mesquite and dwarf oak near surface water, and the prairie dog competes with jack rabbits and ground squirrels for available food. Larger beasts such as the cougar (or puma) and coyotes wandered the land, searching for food and scattering smaller creatures in their wake. Here too roamed the American bison, a hold-over from the days of saber-tooth tigers and mammoths. Wooly and tenacious, the Buffalo had few enemies for its size, strength and ill-temper discouraged all but the most determined predator. Only an occasional black bear could match the buffalo, and then only if the wooly bovine was alone.[3]

The buffalo inhabited the plains from the Canadian border to the Rio Grande, moving with the weather and seeking fresh pasturage.

Because the herds had no natural predators and because the land was plentiful, the buffalo multiplied quickly. When the first white men came to the American West, there were an estimated 6,000,000 of these shaggy beasts in the southern herd. This herd grazed the plains of present-day Texas and Oklahoma, with the Red River providing a reliable water supply.[4]

These buffalo did not stay exclusively on the High Plains wandering to the east in their eternal quest for grass. In this region the river changed as it flowed off the Llano Estacado. There the land is broken and sandy. No longer does the river cut deep and jagged banks; here it meanders across the land, seeking the course of least resistance. With each freshing of the waters, the river floods the surrounding country, widening its channel and eroding its banks. Because the land is flat and soft, the river often forms "cut offs" and rechannels its waters. The sandy bottom quickly becomes saturated with moisture, creating a deadly trap for any unsuspecting intruder.[5]

Some hundred miles after it leaves the Llano Estacado, the Red receives its first major tributary, the North Fork. This stream rises on the northeastern edge of the Staked Plains, on the southern side of the Canadian River's watershed. It runs parallel to the Canadian before turning southward, making a long, gentle arc in reaching the Red. The North Fork is equal in size to the main stream, doubling the Red's burden at this confluence.[6]

A few miles above the juncture of the two branches, the North Fork flows through the southwestern tip of the Wichita Mountains. These mountains rise three thousand feet from the plains and are rich in minerals. Gigantic quartz deposits convinced early explorers that the

mountains held riches of precious minerals, but the gold and silver which fortune hunters sought was there only in small amounts and would not be found until the 20th century--and then not in paying quantities. Miners, seeking copper, iron, and other useful metals, would find scant success in the Wichitas. However, the minerals of the Wichitas served another purpose; for centuries water and wind eroded the earth in the hills, and the deposits were carried into the Red by Otter Creek, coloring the river. As a result, the water was of a brownish, rusty tint; for this reason Spanish explorers named it "el Rio Rojo" (Red River).[7]

Ten miles before the North Fork enters, the river curves southward to cross the prairie which stretches from the Wichitas southward into central Texas. Moisture is abundant here and the land is dotted with stands of cottonwood, oak, and various other plants. Beaver dams once gave silent evidence of their builders' presence. In the lush foliage which grows along the banks of the Red and its many tributaries in this region, myriad animals made their homes and sought shelter from the elements and predators. Raccoons, foxes, and opossums burrow into the banks, waiting for darkness and their nightly hunts. Cottonmouth moccassins lay deadly in the grass by the waters, silently and patiently watching for an unwary frog. Overhead many species of multi-colored birds chatter and screech their way through the branches and the sky.

In the countryside a covering of grass and bushes conceal a darting and scurrying world of cottontail rabbits, field mice, and other small creatures. Across the prairies once stalked predators of varying sizes and appetites, searching the land for food. Far above, lordly eagles and wary hawks soared, waiting for an incautious movement below

to bring them plummeting to earth. A blundering visitor might be startled by the fluttering explosion of a disturbed covey of quail, or awed by the beauty and grace of a fleeing antelope.[8]

After its junction with the North Forks, the Red River flows almost due south, turning eastward at the mouth of the Pease River, which enters from the south. The Pease rises on the prairies of the lower Texas Panhandle on the southeastern rim of the Llano Estacado. After gaining strength from the Pease, the Red then cuts eastward, reaching a confluence with Cache Creek near the ninety-eighth meridian. The latter stream rises on the southeastern slopes of the Wichita mountains. Thus the Red collects the moisture from both sides of the Wichitas via North Fork and Cache Creek. Ten miles below the mouth of Cache Creek, the Wichita River marries with the Red. The waters from these tributaries increase the river's burden greatly, creating a broad, turgid stream which later would support steamboat navigation.[9]

Twenty miles downstream the Red receives two additional major tributaries, Beaver Creek from the north and the Little Wichita River from the south. From here the Red continues eastward, gathering water of smaller streams such as Belknap, Farmers, Mud, and Walnut creeks. As it moves eastward from the ninety-eighth to the ninety-seventh meridians, the Red cuts a zigzag course, flowing north after its confluence with the Little Wichita, then dropping south, only to turn northward again to meet Walnut Creek. Near the mouth of Walnut Creek the Red River leaves the prairies and enters the Western Cross Timbers, a botanic and geographic phenomenon. In the midst of open country, this massive stretch of trees and brush signals the beginning of a rough, broken country running from central Oklahoma southward to central Texas. In this area

rolling hills and minor sandstone outcroppings give evidence of the Comanchean and Pennsylvanian formations on which it rests. Here the river changes also, reverting to a narrow channel with a sandy bottom. The river's course is better defined in this area, owing to the land's resistance to erosion and the inability of the river to cut new channels with each freshing of the water.

As the Red enters the Western Cross Timbers, it turns southward, flowing in a south-easterly direction for some twenty miles before turning once again toward the east. At this point the river enters the eastern Cross Timbers, which run along the ninety-seventh meridian. Similar to its western counterpart, the Eastern Cross Timbers consist of blackjack and post oak intermingled with mesquite and smaller shrubbery; however, the eastern stand of trees is generally taller and larger because of the more fertile land and greater rainfall. East of the Cross Timbers and land again is open prairie. Here the Black Prairie begins, so named because of the dark, rich tint of the heavy loam soil in the region.[10]

After leaving the Cross Timbers, the Red again becomes a broad, turgid stream, widening its bed with each new high water and creating new channels known as "cut-offs." Because the soil is loosely packed and easily eroded, the river often flows into low areas during high water, cutting away the top soil. This frequently results in the formation of multi-channels, dividing the river's waters among several courses. At times high water washes away sufficient amounts of soil to create entirely new channels, a tendency that created myriad problems for later-day surveyors and boundary commissioners.[11]

On the Black Prairie the Red receives its largest tributary, the

Washita River. This stream also rises on the high plains of the Texas Panhandle to the south of the Canadian's water-shed; indeed, the head-waters of the Washita are less than twenty miles from the bed of the Canadian. From this source the Washita cuts a rough and meandering course to the southeast, entering the Red midway between the ninety-seventh and ninety-sixth meridians.[12]

East of the ninety-sixth meridian the land becomes broken and hilly. Long avenues of grassland are intermingled with patches of rolling hills. The land is fertile and green, and expansive stretches of timber denote a sharp increase in rainfall. Long-leaf pines jut skyward into the moist air, casting their outsized cones into the breeze, thereby spreading their breed. Giant live and white oaks stand majestically over the thickets of wild dew berries and poison ivy. Along the banks of the Red and its many tributaries in this region, wild flowers grow in abundance. Bluebonnets, Indian paint-brushes, and sunflowers sprout from the sandy soil, tinting the terrain with bright blues, red, and yellows; delicate honeysuckle hangs serpent-like across the shrubbery, scenting the breeze with sweetness and filling the mind with soft thoughts. Droopy willows bow demurly near surface water, and stately sycamores drop armored seed-pods into the tall grasses beneath.

In this garden many animals made their home. Wood bison, smaller cousins of the buffalo, grazed among the forests, pentulant squirrels chattered in the branches, and mailed armadillos skittered warily about. The air is filled with unaccountable thousands of bothersome gnats and thirsty mosquitos. The coo of feeding doves and the wail of the whip-poor-will echo across the land.

For almost two hundred miles past the mouth of the Washita, the

Red courses eastward, gathering tributaries such as Blue and Kiamichi rivers from the north and Bois D'Arc and Pine creeks from the south. Near the ninety-fourth meridian the river turns northward, starting its "Great Bend" to form a rough semi-circle. On the northern arc of this halfmoon the Little Red River enters. At the end of the bend the river flows southwest for some ten miles, joining with Sulphur Fork near the boundary of the present-day states of Arkansas and Louisiana. From there the river flows southward for more than fifty miles to receive the run-off from Caddo Lake, a natural shallow lake. The lake is fed by several streams which drain a large part of present-day East Texas. Because of the heavy rainfall in this area, the contribution of these streams is considerable, increasing the Red's burden measurably.

The Red turns after passing Caddo Lake, flowing at roughly forty-five degree angle to the southeast toward the Mississippi. This land is almost tropical in climate. Huge cypress trees stand stately among the bayous along the river, with musky clumps of Spanish moss hanging among their branches. Rainfall is plentiful. Much of the land is inundated after spring and fall showers, drying only during the summer months. Winters are generally mild and short, with the rest of the year invariably hot. During the wet months the air is oppressive with moisture and heat.[13]

As the Red flows through this area, it gathers water to form hundreds of swamps and bayous. The water in these is usually dark and brackish, providing an excellent breeding ground for mosquitos. Snakes of every size and color glide through the waters. Fat bull-frogs croak in the lush grasses, and turtles sun themselves on logs or poke their heads periscope-like from the water. Eel-like gars roll to the surface,

showing their yellow undersides and scattering smaller fish in their wake. On the sandy banks of the Red, lazy alligators once lounged in the sun or searched for anything edible.

Three hundred miles from the Gulf of Mexico the Red River reaches its destination--the Mississippi River. Here it empties its rusty contents into the greatest river of the North American continent, mingling its moisture with water from the Northern Rockies and the Appalachians--in short, with water from every state west of the Cumberland gap and east of the continental divide. From the Llano Estacado to the Mississippi the Red River flows, traveling more than twelve hundred miles and draining roughly one-tenth of the continent.[14]

This was the Red River as the white men found it, flowing ever toward the sea, moving for thousands of years before the Europeans ventured inland. But it did not flow unseen or unnoticed. Redmen knew the benefit of living near an unfailing source of water. They also knew the advantage of water-borne transportation. Therefore they settled along the river, enjoying its bounty and sometimes suffering its ill-temper.

The lower Red River below the mouth of the Washita River, was the home of Caddo Indians. This group included several different confederations which were related by common language and tradition. These were the Natchitoches, in present-day Louisiana; the Adai, just below the great bend of the river; the Eyeish and the Cadohadacho Confederacy, along the river above the bend; and the Hasinai, to the west and south of the Eyeish. The Caddoes were woodland Indians, supporting themselves by hunting and cultivation. They tended various plants--muskmelons, plums, cherries, white grapes, and mulberries--all of which produced bountifully with little or no care; and they killed the game which

inhabited the forests.[15]

The name Caddo was a contraction of the word Cadohadacho, meaning "real chiefs." Among the various tribes of the Confederation, the term Caddo was not applied by the Indians as meaning all the different groups, but was later broadened by white men as a convenient term for all the confederacies.[16]

The first contact between the Caddoan Tribes and white men occurred during the march of Luís de Moscoso's column from Arkansas to Mexico. Moscoso found a group called the Amaye near the Red River in June of 1542. The next contact with white men was in 1687 during Robert Rene Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, made his abortive journey toward Canada from South Texas. La Salle's attempt to settle Texas resulted in Spanish expansion into the area, and in the 1690's missionaries were sent from Mexico to the Caddos. However, instead of spawning friendly relations between Spaniards and Caddos, the missionaries served only to alienate the Indians and drive them into the camp of the French. The Caddos were unwilling to accept the teachings of the padres, and the soldiers who accompanied the fathers continually molested Indian women. This was the beginning of an unfriendly relationship between Spaniards and Caddos which would last through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[17]

About 1700 the Caddos came under the influence of the French. At this time sons of France were expanding their colony of Louisiana up the Red River. In 1714 Louis Juchereau de St. Denis established a trading post on the Red River near the location of present-day Natchitoches, Louisiana. From there he conducted his expeditions into Spanish Texas. This was the beginning of friendship between the French and the Caddos

which would last until 1763, and the end of the Seven Years War. This friendship would also play a vital role in French domination in the area until Spain gained ownership of it.

Upriver the Wichita Indians moved into the area west of the Kiamichi River and east of the Washita about the turn of the eighteenth century. This group, including the Toavaya, Tawakoni, Yscani, Waco, and Kichai, had lived along the Arkansas River previously, but had fled southward to escape the more war-like Comanche and Osage tribes who invaded the region. The Wichita lived in permanent villages of grass huts called wickiups.[18]

Like the Caddos, the Wichita economy was based on hunting and agriculture. The Caddo and Wichita generally maintained friendly relations because neither relied on conquest or looting for economic gain. The first contact with the Wichita by white men probably was the expedition of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado in 1541 when the tribe was living along the Arkansas. In 1719 Bernard de la Harpe visited a group of Wichita living near the mouth of the Canadian River in present-day Oklahoma. From La Harpe's visit and subsequent trading between the French and the Wichita tribes, the sons of France gained the loyalty of the Wichitas, aiding in their struggle with Spain for dominance of the region.[19]

East of the Wichita lived the Lipan Apache, an eastern branch of the large group of southern Athapaskans who inhabited much of the Southwest. Nomadic and fierce, the Lipan warred with the Wichita and Caddo, enlarging their domain with each successful campaign. By the time of the coming of Europeans to the region, the Lipan Apache had secured a stronghold which extended from the Arkansas River southward through central Texas. This group lived along the upper Red River until they would

be driven southward by the Comanche in the first half of the eighteenth century. During this time the Lipan Apache warred on three fronts: with the Comanche to the northwest, the Wichita and Caddo to the east, and Spaniards to the south.[20]

Unlike the Caddo or the Wichita, the Apache were not farmers. They were buffalo hunters, following the herds and living in temporary shelters. Because they followed the buffalo and based their economy on raiding, the Apache were constantly at war with their neighbors; they needed room to stalk the buffalo and enemies to raid.[21]

To the west and north of the Lipan Apache lived several tribes of the Comanche nation. The Comanche were the southernmost of the Shoshonean groups, having migrated from their ancient home in the present-day state of Wyoming in the early part of the eighteenth century. The various Comanche tribes were semi-independent, banding together during wars. The principal sub-tribes along the Red River were the Nokoni (or wanders) who ranged from the Big Wichita River to the Llano Estacado, and the Quahadi (or Antelope People) who lived on the Llano Estacado. Members of another sub-tribe, the Kostsoteka (or Buffalo-eaters) sometimes ventured into the vicinity of the Red River from their homes along the Canadian.[22]

The Comanche, like the Apache, lived by hunting buffalo and raiding other groups. For the most part the Comache limited their hostilities to the Apache and to Spaniards, choosing to ally themselves with the Kiowa to the north and the Wichita to the east. Through their alliance with the Wichita and because of their hatred for Spaniards, the Comanche were natural allies of the French who came into their territory from Louisiana.[23]

The Comanche were a proud and dignified people, looking at Spaniards as inferior. This was partially the result of the Spanish policy of attempting to missionize, educate, and Europeanize the natives. The Comanche in turn believed that Spaniards had little to teach them and that their own way of life was infinitely superior. The result was a conflict of culture and arms, in both of which the Spaniards fared badly. However, the French made no attempts to change the Indians, merely using them as allies against the Spaniards.[24]

When the white men came to the Southwest in the early part of the sixteenth century, they found the natives along the Red River living in harmony with nature, and the river flowing wild and unfettered. Almost immediately the Europeans began to alter the way of life of the natives, to attempt to tame the great river and to discover its secrets.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Randolph B. Marcy, "Exploration of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852," Senate Doc., Doc. No. 54, 32 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 45-46; George Bonnell, Topographical Description of Texas (Waco, Texian Press, 1964, Reprint of 1840 edition), pp. 17-19; "Development of Water and Land Resources of the Arkansas-White and Red River Basins," Senate Doc., No. 13, 85 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 61-62.

[2]Marcy, "Exploration," pp. 54-56; Walter P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, 2 vols. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), II, p. 328.

[3]Martin S. Garretson, The American Bison (New York: New York Zoological Soc., 1938), passim; Marcy, "Exploration," pp. 15, 27-28, 46-47.

[4]Garretson, The American Bison, p. 25ff.

[5]"Red River, La., Ark., Okla. and Texas," House Doc., Doc. No. 378, 74 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 349-368.

[6]Ibid., p. 27; Marcy, "Exploration," pp. 16-20.

[7]Ibid., p. 15.

[8]Ibid., passim.

[9]Ibid., pp. 8-9; Bonnell, Texas, pp. 18-19; Emma Estill Harbour, "A Brief History of the Red River Country Since 1803," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XVI, No. 1 (March, 1938), pp. 58-85.

[10]Webb, ed., Handbook of Texas, pp. 753-754; Robert T. Hill, "The Topography and Geology of the Cross Timbers and Surrounding Regions in Northern Texas," American Journal of Science, Third Series, XXXIII (1887), pp. 34-49.

[11]Muriel Wright, "Early Navigation and Commerce Along the Arkansas and Red Rivers in Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VIII, No. 1 (March, 1927), pp. 65-88.

[12]"Red River," House Doc., Doc. No. 378, 74 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 29; "Arkansas-White and Red River Basins," Senate Doc., Doc. No. 13, 85 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 822-838.

[13]Ibid., pp. 916-987; "Red River," House Doc., Doc. No. 378, 74 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 20-21.

[14]Ibid., pp. 20-21, 33-34.

[15]W. C. Nunn, "The Caddoes," Indian Tribes of Texas (Waco: Texian Press, 1971), pp. 19-20; Frederick W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, 2 vols. (New York: Pageant Books, Inc., 1959), I, p. 179.

[16]Nunn, "The Caddoes," Indian Tribes of Texas, pp. 19-34; Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, I, p. 179.

[17]Ibid., pp. 179-183.

[18]Billy M. Jones, "The Wichitas," Indian Tribes of Texas, pp. 169-178; Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, II, pp. 947-950.

[19]Ibid., pp. 947-948.

[20]Ibid., II, pp. 768-769; Sandra L. Myres, "The Lipan Apache," Indian Tribes of Texas, pp. 122-145.

[21]Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, I, p. 768.

[22]Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, The Comanches (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), passim; Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, I, pp. 327-329.

[23]Ibid., I, p. 327; Wallace and Hoebel, Comanches, pp. 35-42.

[24]See Rupert N. Richardson, "The Comanches," Indian Tribes of Texas, p. 41.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRE

The first Europeans to view the Red River were members of the expedition which Francisco Vásquez de Coronado led into West Texas in 1541. This group probably crossed the headwaters of the Red sometime in the early summer of that year on their way to conquer the Gran Quivira. During the return trip, the disappointed conquistadors undoubtedly recrossed the stream; however, these men were searching for gold and silver, not geographical knowledge. Thus the presence of the Red made little or no difference to them, other than as a supply of potable water--and as yet another obstacle to surmount. A year after Coronado crossed the Red, another Spaniard, Luis de Moscoso, led his party of fortune-hunters to the banks of the Red from the east. This group also had little interest in the river, but it made its presence felt by delaying their march for a week because of high waters.[1]

Although neither Coronado nor Moscoso had any interest in the region of the Red River, their reports influenced the history of the area for centuries. Both parties had been in search of wealth--the Gran Quivira and the Seven Cities of Cibola--and their failure to find riches pervaded their reports. To gold-hungry Spaniards the region was barren and worthless. Thus officials in Mexico and Spain found no reason to finance or organize further expeditions into the interior of North America. As a result the land along the Red River lay open and unclaimed

except for the Spanish assertion that the entire continent belonged to their king. Only the Indians walked the land for one hundred and fifty years after the first Spanish explorations. Then, in the 1680's another country began to covet the region.[2]

In 1674 Pere Marquette and Henri Joilet descended the Mississippi River to the mouth of the Arkansas, turning back to Canada after assuring themselves that the Mississippi flowed into the Gulf of Mexico. Their reports sparked a dream in the mind of a fellow Frenchman--René Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle. La Salle envisioned a French post astride the mouth of the Mississippi River, dominating the trade of the inland and the commerce of the Gulf of Mexico. His dream was sufficiently strong for him to convince the King of France, Louis XIV, that it could be made a reality, and in 1684 La Salle set out with a floatilla of four ships and about 300 colonists to build his dream. Unfortunately La Salle and his colonists did not disembark at the mouth of the Mississippi; either because of poor navigation or by La Salle's design, the party landed on the coast of present-day Texas, coming ashore in January, 1685 at Matagorda Bay. Whether La Salle intended to land there or not, his endeavors were ill-fated from the beginning. One ship was sent back to France, another had been lost to Spanish corsairs during the voyage, another was lost entering the bay to unload cargo, and the other returned posthaste to France. Thus the colony was left without transportation--in an unfriendly land.[3]

Because of the loss of one vessel to the Spaniards, La Salle knew that Spanish officials would send parties to locate and destroy his colony. Therefore he moved his settlement away from the shore six miles up a tributary of the Lavaca River, probably Garcitas Creek.

There he founded Fort St. Louis, hidden away from the searching eyes of Spaniards. While the colonists began construction of a settlement, La Salle explored the countryside, causing some latter-day observers to theorize that the Frenchman had purposefully missed the Mississippi, perhaps to gain information about the Spaniards in Mexico, perhaps to be near the silver mines of Durango.[4]

Whatever La Salle's intent, his colony fared badly. Although the Indians in the area at first were friendly, they soon grew hostile to the Europeans. A war of attrition began, with the Indians the invariable winners. Meanwhile La Salle continued to explore the country. In all he made three exploratory journeys, one to the west, one to the north, and a third in search of the Mississippi. Finally, in January, 1687, La Salle decided that the colony needed succor. Supplies had been exhausted, efforts to gather food had proven futile and dangerous, and the number of colonists had grown ever smaller because of the Indians. On January 12, 1687, La Salle and a small party of men set out for Canada. They would, he hoped, reach Canada in time to send back aid to the colonists who had been left at Fort St. Louis.[5]

Members of this party did, after many days of hardship and privation, reach Canada, but the Sieur de la Salle was not among them. He lay dead in the wilderness of East Texas, murdered by two of his own men, his dreams crushed by bad management, the elements, and poor planning. The survivors, led by Henri Joutel, La Salle's second-in-command, told of the plight of the colony and its founder, but the French government and Louis XIV were more interested in their affairs in Europe than with the fate of a small and seemingly worthless settlement in far-off North America.[6]

The Spaniards, however, were not too busy to worry about La Salle. Immediately after word reached Mexico City of French colonization on the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico, which the Spaniards considered a Spanish private lake, expeditions were sent to destroy the settlement. However, La Salle had hidden his colony well. All attempts failed until 1789 when Alonso de León located the fort with the aid of Jean Henri, a Frenchman who had left La Salle's settlement to become ruler of an Indian village in the area. The Spaniards found the fort in ruins and most of the settlers dead. They did hear rumors that most of the Frenchmen had been taken by the Indians but only two were discovered. Thus ended the French attempt to settle the coast of Texas, but the Spaniards were not satisfied.[7]

The viceroy of Mexico, the Conde de Galve, realized that La Salle's colony in Texas might later be used to support a French claim to the area; he also knew that the colony could have been successful but for ill-fortune. Spaniards either had to expand into Texas or chance a second French intrusion. The Viceroy chose the former course. His task was made easier by the desire of a Spanish missionary, Father Damián Massanet, to missionize the Indians of East Texas. Massanet had accompanied Alonso de León during the search for La Salle's post, and there he had met several Tejas Indians who appeared receptive to Christianity. Thus, when Galve ordered De León back to Texas to destroy all remnants of the French post, Father Massanet was sent to build a permanent mission for the Tejas. This was done in the Spring of 1690. Father Massanet personally burned the remains of Fort Saint Louis, and Mission San Francisco de los Tejos was constructed on the banks of the Trinity River. Three Franciscan missionaries, including Massanet, were

left to man the post while De León returned to Mexico to report their work completed.[8]

However, the Viceroy was not satisfied. He still feared that the French might successfully colonize Texas, threatening New Spain. In a classic example of defensive expansionism, Galve ordered the province of Texas formally settled. Captains Domingo Terán de los Rios was appointed governor of the region, and Father Massanet was appointed superintendent of the missions of Texas. The result of these orders was disappointing. De los Rios discovered that the Indians had turned hostile to Spaniards at San Francisco de los Tejas, and that the missionaries had made little if any progress. He returned to Mexico in early 1692, leaving Massanet yet at the mission with a small company of soldiers.[9]

The situation at the mission turned rapidly worse. Droughts and epidemics, which the Indians blamed on the Spaniards, created overt hostilities between Europeans and natives. Late in 1693 the Viceroy decided to abandon the mission; however, the missionaries, seeing a conflict between the work of God and their own welfare, had already decided to flee the mission. In October of 1693 the fathers buried their sacred ornaments and fled to Mexico. Once more Texas was left to the Indians.[10]

Shortly after Mission San Francisco de los Tejas was abandoned, Viceroy Galve's fear that the French would encroach on Spanish territory was made reality. During the period between 1693 and 1713 the French were busy. In 1699, Biloxi was founded in present-day Mississippi, and in 1702 Mobile was established in Alabama. By 1713 the French were ready to fulfill La Salle's dream of a French colony along the

Mississippi. That year Louis XIV granted a monopoly for the colony of Louisiana to Antoine Crozat. Crozat acted quickly naming Sieur Antione de la Mothe Cadillac as governor of the colony. Cadillac was instructed to establish trade with the natives of the region and, if possible, with Spaniards in Mexico. Although early attempts to trade with Mexico were rebuffed because of Spanish mercantile laws, Cadillac soon received an opportunity to initiate such trade.[11]

Early in 1713 he received a letter from a Franciscan missionary, Father Francisco Hidalgo, who years before had been one of the padres at San Francisco de los Tejas. The Father longed to return to Texas; however, his requests had been denied repeatedly. In 1711 the padre turned to the French for help, writing to the governor of Louisiana to suggest that a joint missionizing project might successfully Christianize the natives of Texas. For Cadillac, Hidalgo's letter was a gift from heaven; he now had a reason to send a French agent into Spanish territory.[12]

All that was needed to begin Cadillac's plan was a talented and adventurous leader for his expedition into Mexico. The governor found an excellent individual in Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, his commander at Biloxi. Cadillac decided that St. Denis should travel to the Rio Grande to visit the Spanish outpost of San Juan Bautista where Father Hidalgo resided. All that was needed then was a route, a route that would provide easy access to Texas and also take the Frenchmen among the Indian tribes along the way. The Red River filled both requirements. This stream was a natural choice for the French because of previous explorations of the river by their countrymen.[13]

In 1686 Henri de Tonty (or Tonti), who had been a member of La

Salle's early expeditions down the Mississippi and in Canada, had sailed down the Mississippi from the French colonies in Canada to search for La Salle. Tonty had been left in Canada when La Salle went to France to organize his expedition to colonize the mouth of the Mississippi, and was to join the colonists after their arrival from France. However, his plans were changed when he learned that the colonizing expedition had not landed at the Mississippi's mouth. On finding the colony absent, Tonty returned to Canada. But he had not given up hope of finding the errant colony. Three years later he again had voyaged down the Father of Waters; this time he sailed up the Red River, questioning the natives along its banks about the presence of other Frenchmen in the area. Tonty's search carried far up the Red beyond the Caddo settlement near present-day Bayou Pierre; he then turned southward, reaching the Tejas Indians, who reported that Spanish soldiers had visited the area recently. These were the men of Alonso de León, who also were looking for La Salle. Because of rumors of Spaniards nearby and because of his failure to find any trace of his leader, Tonty had retraced his path to the Red and down it, disappointed and discouraged. On returning to the Illinois country, he found Henri Joutel and the sad news of La Salle's murder. However, Tonty's voyages had not been wasted; he had gained valuable information about the country along the Mississippi and Red rivers. Also, he had contacted many Indians along the Red River, beginning a friendly relationship with the natives that would last until the end of French Louisiana, one which would prove invaluable to the French in their conflict with Spain in the region.[14]

Eleven years after Tonty's voyage, Jean Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, governor of Louisiana and a brother of the colony's

founder, Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, explored the Red River, pushing across the entire breadth of present-day Louisiana. Bienville had attempted to reach the area of La Salle's death, but spring rains and cold weather had forced him to turn back. Although Bienville failed to reach his original goal, his trip was of importance. He had rekindled friendly relations with the natives along the Red River, enhanced French knowledge of the region, and given important experience to a young Canadian who had accompanied him--Louis Juchereau de St. Denis.[15]

After returning from his explorations with Bienville, St. Denis had commanded a post on the lower Mississippi from 1702 to 1705. He then had led several expeditions into the Indian country, including another visit in 1710 to the Indians along the Red River, during which he traded with the Natchitoches and several tribes of present-day East Texas. In 1712, St. Denis had been appointed commander of the French settlement at Biloxi, and was in that office when Governor Cadillac chose him to lead the expedition into Spanish territory to discuss the possibility of a joint effort to missionize the natives of East Texas--and, in the process, to open trade between Louisiana and Mexico.[16]

In late September of 1713, St. Denis and a small group of traders left Mobile with a large amount of trade goods. This party spent the winter of 1713-1714 trading with natives along the Red River and in East Texas. St. Denis realized that if trade between the Spanish and French colonies was ever to become frequent and steady, a post was needed somewhere midway between the Spanish settlements along the Rio Grande and the French settlements along the Mississippi. Accordingly he ordered a trading station constructed on the Red River, naming it

Natchitoches in honor of the Caddoan Indians who inhabited the surrounding area. Having won the allegiance of the natives with gifts and his personal charm, and having established a headquarters for his travels, St. Denis set out for San Juan Bautista late in the spring of 1714. He and his party arrived at the Spanish settlement on the Rio Grande early in the fall of the same year; there he presented his papers, including Father Hidalgo's letter, to the presidal commander, Captain Diego Ramón. Also, he inquired about the possibilities of commercial contact between the colonies of France and Spain, whereupon Captain Ramon immediately arrested St. Denis and confiscated his trade goods as his orders specified he should do. Unsure of his next action, Ramón forwarded St. Denis' documents to the viceroy, the Duke de Linaries, in Mexico City, and placed the affable Frenchman under house arrest. While Ramón and St. Denis waited for a decision on the Frenchman's future to be made in Mexico City, the latter enjoyed the freedom usually granted a house guest rather than the restrictions of a prisoner. Never one to miss an opportunity, St. Denis utilized the time it took for the viceroy to respond to Ramón's questions to win the respect of the captors--and the heart of the commander's granddaughter, María Ramón. The Spaniards came to admire the gentle Frenchman for his gracious manners and sincere warmth.[17]

Six months after the Frenchman had arrived at San Juan Bautista, Captain Ramón was informed that the viceroy wished St. Denis brought to Mexico City for questioning and appraisal. St. Denis left the Spanish outpost with a detachment of soldiers, ordering his men to return to Natchitoches and promising his new-found love that he soon would return. On St. Denis' arrival in Mexico City, he was questioned at length about

the motives of the French toward Texas and the reasons behind his visit to Mexico. To these queries the adroit Frenchman replied that the sole interest of his country in the area west of Louisiana was the missionization of the natives and that his objective had been only to further this project. The viceroy remained suspicious of French intentions, however, and convened a council of war to decide what the Spanish reaction to this new threat of French encroachment should be. The council, reasoning that the French would not risk overt intrustion into territory which had already been settled, determined that a series of four missions, the primary aim of Spanish expansion, should be constructed in East Texas to serve the Tejas Indians. Once more Spain would reach into Texas and attempt to tame the Tejas.[18]

Once the decision was made to expand into East Texas, the Spaniards moved quickly. Late in September of 1715 Domingo Ramón, the son of St. Denis' original captor and the uncle of María, was appointed to lead the expedition. Ever enterprising and invariably alert, St. Denis was able to secure an appointment as guide for this missionizing party by taking Spanish citizenship. St. Denis and the party then returned to San Juan Bautista, where he married María. Early in 1716 the party, numbering sixty-five persons, left the Spanish province of Coahuila. In addition to the soldiers, priests, and other official members of the expedition, María St. Denis journeyed northward into the wilderness with her new husband.[19]

With St. Denis acting as an interpreter and guide, the party reached the site of the abandoned Mission San Francisco de los Tejas in June of 1716. Nearby a new mission, Nuestro Padre de San Francisco de los Tejas, was built. Father Francisco Hidalgo was appointed to oversee

the new mission, fulfilling the desire he had expressed in his letter to the governor of Louisiana, but not stopping the change of events which his letter had begun.[20]

Leaving Hidalgo, his group of padres, and two soldiers at the mission, Ramon's party traveled northward, meeting several groups of Tejas to which St. Denis gave gifts. These natives received the Spaniards cordially and declared themselves subjects of the King of Spain. Three more missions, Purísima Concepción, San José, and Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, were constructed among the Tejas. Having fulfilled their orders, Ramón and St. Denis then visited the French post at Natchitoches, where St. Denis was greeted by many of the men who had accompanied him to Mexico. From the post on the Red River, the two men then went to Mobile to discuss recent events with the governor of Louisiana. At Mobile Ramon informed the Governor Cadillac that because Spaniards had undertaken to missionize the Indians of East Texas, there would be no need for further discussion of a joint effort by the two Catholic powers. Furthermore, because Spanish law prohibited trade between Louisiana and Mexico, officials in Mexico City could see no reason for future contact between the two colonies. As far as Spaniards were concerned, the matter had ended.[21]

Despite the assertions and protestations of Ramón, the French remained hopeful that officials in Mexico would permit commerce between the colonies. While Ramón was explaining to the governor that such a hope was futile, St. Denis was replacing the trade goods which had been confiscated two years previously. Because of his recently gained Spanish citizenship and his newly obtained family connections in Mexico, the Frenchman believed that he could overcome the legal

obstacles which existed to such trade. Their respective tasks completed, Ramón and St. Denis set out for East Texas, one seeking an end to his ordeal, the other looking forward to the beginning of a great enterprise. Both were disappointed by subsequent events.[22]

On reaching East Texas, they learned that two more religious establishments had been completed. To St. Denis' dismay, San Miguel de Linares do los Adaes had been located only twenty-one miles from his post at Natchitoches. Spaniards wishing to insure against further French encroachment, had built an establishment that would allow them to maintain a careful watch on their wiley neighbors. Los Adaes marked the fartherest advance by the Spanish into Texas, leaving the two nations facing one another across the Red River as a common border.

Despite this setback, St. Denis returned to San Juan Bautista, still hoping to sell or trade the goods he had acquired in Louisiana. The Spaniards, he theorized, might see things differently if he could demonstrate to them the advantages--and comforts--that trading with the French would bring. However, on reaching San Juan Bautista, he once more was arrested by Diego Ramón, now his grandfather-in-law. He was told that it equally was illegal for Spanish citizens to bring foreign goods into Spanish colonies, and, for the second time, his goods were confiscated. Once more he was taken to Mexico City for questioning. There he pleaded ignorance of the law he had offended, and, in completion of his repeat performance, St. Denis was released from custody. His request to be allowed to return to Texas was denied, but he was given the money which had been gained from a public auction of his confiscated goods. Twice St. Denis had violated Spanish law, and twice he had talked his way to freedom. However, he longed for his countrymen;

on September 5, 1718, he slipped away from Mexico City and returned to Natchitoches, taking his bride with him. It had been five years since his journey to Mexico had begun; during that time he had acquired a wife, changed his nationality, and been arrested twice. His actions had set off a chain of events which culminated in the formation of a Franco-Spanish border along the Red River. And he had triggered a conflict over control of the territory along that river which would last for more than four decades--for within a year of his return another remarkable Frenchman began trading along the waters of the Red River.[23]

FOOTNOTES

[1]See George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds., Narratives of the Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542, 2 vols. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), passim.; Richard Hakluyt, trans., The Discovery and Conquest of Terra Florida by Don Ferdinando De Soto and Six Hundred Spaniards His Followers, edited by William B. Rye (New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), Reprint of edition of 1611, pp. 131-135.

[2]Robert C. Clark, "The Beginnings of Texas," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, V, No. 3 (January, 1902), pp. 171-175; Odie B. Faulk, A Successful Failure (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1965), pp. 39-59.

[3]Melville B. Anderson, ed., Joutel's Journal of La Salle's Last Voyage (New York: Burt Franklin Publishers, 1968), p. 7ff; for La Salle's life see Francis Parkman, La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West, third part of France and England in North America (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1927); see also Robert S. Weddle, Wilderness Manhunt: The Spanish Search for La Salle (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), passim.

[4]Joutel's Journal, pp. 15-22.

[5]Ibid., passim; William E. Dunn, Spanish and French Rivalry in the Gulf Region of the United States, 1678-1702 (Austin: University of Texas Bulletin No. 1705, January 20, 1917, Studies in History No. 1, pp. 31-48.

[6]Ibid., pp. 51-58.

[7]Ibid., pp. 59-109; Weddle, Wilderness Manhunt, p. 62ff; Clark, "Beginnings of Texas," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 175-176; Elizabeth H. West, "De León's Expedition of 1689," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, VIII, No. 3 (January, 1905), pp. 199-224.

[8]Ibid., pp. 176-180; Dunn, Spanish and French Rivalry, pp. 111-129; "Carta De Don Damián Manzanet a Don Carlos de Siquienza Sobre El Descubrimiento de la Bahiá Del Espiritu Santo," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, II, No. 4 (April, 1899), pp. 254-280; English translation by Lilia A. Casis, pp. 281-312.

[9]Ibid.; Dunn, Spanish and French Rivalry, pp. 110-144; Bethel Coopwood, "Notes on the History of La Bahiá Del Espirita Santo," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, II, No. 2 (October, 1898), pp. 162-169.

[10]Dunn, Spanish and French Rivalry, pp. 140-144.

[11]Ibid., pp. 185-215; Isaac J. Cox, "The Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, No. 1 (July, 1906), pp. 1-75; Charles B. Reed, The First Great Canadian: The Story of Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur D'Iberville (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1910), p. 186ff.

[12]Clark, "The Beginnings of Texas," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 175-178; Pierre Margry, ed., Decouvertes et Etablissements des Francais dans L'Quest et dans L'Amerique Septentrionale, 6 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie De D. Jouaust et Sigaux, 1879-1888), IV, pp. 430-437.

[13]Robert C. Clark, "Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis and the Re-establishment of the Tejas Missions," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, VI, No. 1 (July, 1902), pp. 1026; Charmoin C. Shelby, "St. Denis' Declaration Concerning Texas in 1717," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVI, No. 3 (January, 1923), pp. 165-168; Lester G. Bugbee, "The Real Saint-Denis," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, I, No. 4 (April, 1898), pp. 216-281; E. J. P. Schmitt, "Who was Juchereau de Saint-Denis?," ibid., I, No. 3 (January, 1898), pp. 204-215.

[14]Edmund R. Murphy, Henry de Tonty: Fur Trader of the Mississippi (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), p. 64ff.

[15]Reed, The First Canadian, pp. 196-208.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Robert C. Clark, "Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis and the Re-establishment of the Tejas Missions," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 6-9; Margry, Descouvertes, IV, pp. 487-539; ibid., V, pp. 420-422; Ross Phares, Cavalier of the Wilderness (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), p. 23ff; Margry, Descouvertes, V, p. 498; Clark, "Saint-Denis," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 10-20.

[18]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[19]Ibid., pp. 15-17; Charmion C. Shelby, "St. Denis," Declaration Concerning Texas in 1717," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 165-171; Milton Dunn, "History of Natchitoches," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, III, No. 1 (January, 1920), pp 26-56; Phares, Cavalier of the Wilderness, pp. 52-58.

[20]Clark, "Saint-Denis," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 20-25.

[21]Ibid., pp. 25-31.

[22]Charmion C. Shelby, "St. Denis's Declaration," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, pp. 168-174; Herbert E. Bolton, "The Native Tribes About the East Texas Missions," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XI, No. 4 (April, 1908), pp. 249-276.

[23]Charmoin C. Shelby, "St. Denis's Second Expedition to the Rio Grande, 1716-1719," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII, No. 3 (January, 1924), pp. 190-216; Margry, Descouvertes, V, pp. 527-532; Bugbee, "Saint-Denis," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, p. 275.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFLICT CONTINUES

Louis Jucherean de St. Denis returned to Natichotches, completing his journeys to Mexico, but the talented Frenchman's career was far from ended. After visiting the governor in Mobile and reporting the results of his escapades, St. Denis was appointed commander of the post which he had founded on the Red River. He remained there for the rest of his life with his wife María, who joined him soon after his escape for Mexico. Although the Spanish at Los Adaes attempted to thwart his trading excursions into Texas thereafter, he exercised considerable influence over the local Indians, continued to trade freely with them, and extended the area controlled by his country.[1]

While St. Denis had been in Mexico, the official makeup of Louisiana had undergone radical change. Antoine Crozat, having lost more than two million livres while holding the commercial monopoly for Louisiana, returned the grant to the crown in August of 1717. The new king, Louis XV, who had taken the purple on the death of his great grandfather in 1715 had been placed under the Regency of his cousin, Philippe, Duke of Orleans, a brilliant and meteoric nobleman. On the return of the charter to Louisiana, Philippe was approached by his close friend, John Law, with a scheme for the future of this territory in the New World.[2]

John Law had fled to France from England, where he was wanted for

killing a man in a duel over an affair of the heart. This exiled Englishman was a skilled promoter, a mathematical genius, and an inveterate gambler. Already while in France, he had organized a highly successful bank, with Philippe's blessings, and had endeared himself to the regent. Law proposed that he be allowed to create a company for the administration of Louisiana, a company which he would control. On September 6, 1717, the Company of the West was chartered, holding a monopoly for trade and colonization in Louisiana. The charter was for twenty-five years and included all the privileges which Crozat previously had enjoyed. In return, Law's company promised to send six thousand white settlers and three thousand black slaves to the colony within ten years. The Company of the West was capitalized at the fantastic amount of one hundred million livres. After arranging for this charter, John Law then went to work promoting the sale of stock--at five hundred livres each. A master of promotion, Law promised the people of France that within a matter of months the riches of Louisiana would swamp the entire nation with gold and silver from the mines and streams of the colony. France went speculation mad.[3]

As the first shares sold, Law then declared dividends--and the price per share was raised. Soon people were forming lines in the streets, demanding an opportunity to invest funds in Law's get-rich-quick company. Philippe d'Orleans was highly pleased with his friend's accomplishments, arranging for Law's private bank to serve as the Royal Bank of France. Through this bank, Philippe made France a partner in the Company of the West.[4]

In the New World, the Sieur de Bienville was appointed governor of Louisiana, a position he had held before Crozat's monopoly. Also, Law's

company decided that a city should be built astride the Mississippi near its mouth to make it forever a French stream. In September of 1717 orders were approved for the founding of New Orleans, a name chosen to honor the helpful regent. To facilitate this colonization plan, three hundred concessionaires were named, each granted huge estates in Louisiana. In return for the grants the concessionaires would gain control of the area and extend French domain. Among the concessionaires who came in 1718 was Bernard de la Harpe.[5]

La Harpe had served in the French coast guard for more than five years before he received his concession in Louisiana. He was known as talented, loyal, and brash--in short the type of man who attracted the attention of John Law and who complimented that great speculator's plan for Louisiana. Therefore, La Harpe had little trouble securing a grant from the Company of the West. Because of La Harpe's energetic and ambitious personality, his concession was located in the contested territory--on the Red River.[6]

La Harpe arrived in New Orleans late in the fall of 1718. Although the city was little more than a few log buildings, the colony's government already had been located there. The Council of Louisiana, seeing an opportunity to spread French influence, determined to appoint La Harpe commandant of the Nassonites, Cadodachos, Nadocos, and Natchitoches Indians. All of these were Caddoan groups inhabiting the area around La Harpe's grant. His task was to secure the loyalty and trade of these tribes. He also was ordered to explore the Red River and its tributaries, making contact with any natives in the area and bringing them under French influence. A trading post was to be established on the Red River, northwest of St. Denis' post. Finally, he was to renew

his efforts to open commercial routes with the Spaniards.[7] His instructions in hand, La Harpe departed for the Red River in December of 1718. With him went more than fifty traders, soldiers, and laborers, traveling in a pair of large boats and a trio of smaller canoes. The trip to Natchitoches was unpleasant. High waters made movement upriver tedious and back breaking, while cold weather made the travelers uncomfortable and ill. However, the party persevered, reaching the mouth of the Red early in January of 1719 and Natchitoches later the same month. There La Harpe met St. Denis, and the two adventurers discussed the possibilities of opening trade with the Spaniards.[8]

Soon after his arrival La Harpe received disturbing news that the Spanish governor of Texas, Don Martín de Alarcón, had ordered the establishment of a post on the Red River in the area of La Harpe's concession. La Harpe responded by notifying Alarcón of his presence and intentions, after which he left for his grant. The Indians under La Harpe's command were living along the Great Bend of the Red River; he arrived in this area early in the spring of 1718, picking a location in present-day Red River County, Texas, because the "...spot seemed to me very beautiful, having a beautiful coast spread toward the river." The site was approximately two leagues above a Nassonite village on the river. Title to the location was obtained from a Nassonite chief for thirty pistols and a small amount of merchandise. La Harpe immediately ordered construction of a log house to serve as a warehouse for the goods he had brought and as a center for his future activities.[9]

Having established a headquarters on the Red, La Harpe began the task of gaining the trust and loyalty of the neighboring natives. Because he had brought great quantities of merchandise as gifts including

firearms, which the Spanish refused the natives he easily was able to gain the friendship of the Indians. At a massive meeting with the Nassonites, Cadodaquions, Natsos, and Natchitoches, La Harpe gave gifts and promised to supply all their needs in the future. Sacred songs were sung and vows of allegiance were exchanged during the festival, which lasted twenty-four hours. Afterwards La Harpe caused a block house for trade goods to be built at the Nassonites' village.

Following his orders, La Harpe initiated contact with the Spaniards in East Texas, hoping to open trade. He wrote Father Margil, a Franciscan missionary who was in charge of the Spanish missions of East Texas, suggesting that the friar cooperate with the French in securing illegal trade with the Indians and Spaniards in Texas in return for a liberal commission on sales made through the priest's cooperation. Margil responded favorably. Thereby French commercial influence was extended into the lands under Spanish occupation.[11]

In May of 1719 La Harpe received a reply to his correspondence with Governor Alarcón of Texas. The Spaniard noted that he was somewhat surprised by the presence of Frenchmen among the Nassonites; surely La Harpe must realize that they and their lands belonged to Spain, he wrote. The Nassonites, Alcarcón asserted, were under Spanish control as an extension from settlements in New Mexico. Oddly, Alarcon did not note the explorations of Captain Terán de los Rios in the 1690s or the missionary activities in East Texas as points which supported Spanish claims. La Harpe replied that the governor was mistaken, delineating the foundation of French claims to the Nassonites. Because the post was located on the Red River, a tributary of the Mississippi, it belonged to France, he asserted. Frenchmen had explored and settled the

Mississippi, and it and all its tributaries were French domain. Thus rather than the French encroaching on Spanish territory, it was the Spaniards who were usurpers. The province of Texas was part of Louisiana because of Sieur de la Salle's settlement, and because of other actions which La Harpe noted but failed to specify. Finally, the Frenchman responded to Alarcón's warning that La Harpe should vacate Spanish territory or face physical expulsion by suggesting that the Spaniard come and try. Understandably the undermanned Spaniard declined to accept La Harpe's offer.[12]

Having secured the friendship of the local natives, opening trade with them and with Spaniards in East Texas, and having established French dominion over the Great Bend of the Red River, La Harpe set out to explore the territory upriver from his post. Because he wished personally to explore the region north of the Red, he sent the Sieur du Rivage with an expedition westward on the Red. He instructed Du Rivage to contact the "roving bands" who lived along the river's course. To insure ready friendship, Du Rivage carried with him a larger number of gifts for the natives he hoped to meet. He was to learn the location of the nearest Spanish settlement, the distance to New Mexico, and all information concerning neighboring natives. If possible Du Rivage also was to make an alliance with these roving nations. These tribes, La Harpe perceived, would make excellent allies because of their proximity to New Mexico. Early in the summer of 1719 Du Rivage set out.[13]

With Du Rivage went four soldiers, six French traders, and eight Indian warriors. The latter were to serve as interpreters and guides. Traveling along the banks of the Red River, Du Rivage encountered several groups of "roving nations," including the Quidehais, Naouydiches,

Joyuan, Huanchane, Huane, and Taovaya, tribes that were branches of the Wichita. The Frenchmen were greeted cordially by these Wichitan groups, who declared their friendship for the Europeans. They were happy to receive the French because of the continuing hostilities between themselves and the Lipan Apache who lived on the river to the west. Du Rivage learned that the Wichita recently had returned from a clash with the Apaches, whom he called the "Cancys." This recent battle had ended in victory for the Wichita, but the Apache were receiving aid from the Spaniards.[14]

Du Rivage learned that for seventy leagues west of the Nassonite the various bands of Wichita Indians were masters of the land. However, the Apache had been expanding continually eastward. At that time the Apache had accepted aid from Spaniards because of the invasion of their lands by the Comanche. Unwisely the Spaniards had allied themselves with the Apache against the Comanche. For this they later would pay dearly. Although the Spaniards had refrained from giving the Apache firearms, they had given them good horses, swords, and other equipment which allowed them the advantage over the Wichita.[15]

Du Rivage learned that sixty leagues west of the Quidehai village, a sub-tribe of Wichita, where he had parlayed with the various Wichita chiefs, the Spaniards had mined some type of precious metal. He also was told that the Lipan-Apache were heavy populated along the Red River. The Wichita had pursued the Apache as far as their villages on the Red, but the Spaniards had forced a retreat by using cannon in the affair. Having completed his task, Du Rivage returned to La Harpe's post, taking two Quidehai warriors with him to act as guides for La Harpe's journeys north of the Red River.[16]

Before La Harpe was ready to depart on his explorations, he received the disturbing news that war had begun between Spain and France. "Seeing that the war was an obstacle to commerce that had attempted to make with the Spanish [sic] and that I had nothing to fear from them for the present at my post, and thought it would be of interest...."[17] La Harpe decided, to explore the region north of the Red River and set out. His travels carried him to the mouth of the Canadian River where he was told that Spanish settlements in New Mexico could be reached via the Arkansas River.[18]

The war which precipitated La Harpe's excursion had begun in France. A quarrel between the Bourbon monarchs over the island of Sardinia had turned to open conflict. Although the conflict ended quickly and undecisively in Europe, it changed the course of events in the New World. The French at Natchitoches received word of the conflict before their Spanish counterparts at Los Adaes. The military commander at the French post, Corporal M. Blondel, led a small party across the Red toward Los Adaes, hoping to extend French influence. The Spaniards, hearing the news of war and a French advance, beat a hasty retreat from their posts in East Texas. Blondel, in one movement, had secured East Texas for France.[19]

Although Blondel's coup appeared to swing the advantage to France, there were many in Louisiana who disapproved of his action. Spaniards almost certainly would attempt to reassert themselves in East Texas; also, French control of the area was not entirely advantageous to the Frenchmen of Louisiana. Indeed, when Bernard de la Harpe returned from his explorations, he was shocked when told of Blondel's forceful actions. The removal of the Spaniards from Los Adaes would decrease his

prophets! If Spaniards remained in San Antonio, La Harpe's contraband trade would cease. The unfortunate Blondel was forced to write an humble letter to the frightened friars, asking their gracious forgiveness for his most inappropriate actions and begging them to reestablish their missions in East Texas.[20]

Despite the restoration of peace between Spain and France, along with Blondel's act of contrition, Spanish officials in Mexico were determined to prevent a recurrence of the fiasco. They decided that East Texas had to be resettled with a sufficient force to preclude any future French intrusion. A willing leader for the expedition was found in the Marques de Aguayo, a resident of the province of Coahuila. Previously this wealthy Marques had sought the opportunity of settling Texas. Officials in Mexico had not found Aguayo's plan suitable; however, after the affair of 1719, the Marqués was granted his request.[21]

In 1720 Aguayo led five hundred men into East Texas. The missions and their presidial partners were to be reoccupied. Any resistance, French or Indian, was to be crushed. Such a large force was entirely unnecessary. The French sincerely desired a Spanish return to the missions around Los Adaes--at least for the present. St. Denis met the Spaniards at the Neches River, greeting them as old friends. The French, St. Denis reported, had withdrawn from East Texas to Natchitoches. Also, the Frenchmen had asserted his influence over the natives, smoothing the Spaniards' return to Los Adaes. Nonetheless, the Spaniards remained unconvinced of the Frenchman's sincerity. Well they might.[22]

After greeting the Spaniards, St. Denis journeyed to Mobile to report their arrival to Governor Bienville. The latter had opposed the

return of Spaniards, but had been overruled by officials of the Company of the West, who were more desirous of commercial profits than controlling territory. In accordance with his orders, Aguayo rebuilt the missions and presidios of East Texas. By 1721 his task was completed. Los Adaes was reestablished, and once again Spaniards and Frenchmen faced each other across the Red River.[23]

That year, when Spanish officers visited the French settlement at Natchitoches, they were received cordially. They asserted that the reoccupation of Los Adaes was merely a return to the status quo of 1719, not an act of aggression. In turn the French promised to refrain from any overt act of war. Bernard de la Harpe, having argued in writing in 1718 that the boundary of Louisiana extended to the Rio Grande and New Mexico, acknowledged the right of Spaniards west of the Red River, bowing to commercial pragmatism.[24]

In 1720, while Spaniards and Frenchmen juggled the boundary along the Red River, the Company of the West collapsed. Its founder and director, John Law, fled France, for his bubble had burst. Although the Company continued for nine years after its financial crumble, Louisiana was divided into nine judicial districts, ranging from New Orleans to Illinois, from Arkansas to Mobile. A council was created to oversee the affairs of the colony. Thus the efforts of La Harpe and St. Denis to reap the benefits of commerce for the Company were ended. However, the conflict along the Texas-Louisiana frontier continued.[25]

Spaniards had accepted the presence of Frenchmen in Louisiana, but they had not admitted any French right to the province. Following the war of Spanish Succession in 1713, Spain's policy had been to permit a French presence as a buffer to the English colonies along the Atlantic

seaboard. This policy of winking at French encroachment in Louisiana extended only to existing settlements. The policy in Madrid and Paris was to ignore each other's New World colonies. However, this was not the policy in Mexico City or New Orleans. Certainly it was not the policy along the Red River.[26]

The year following the failure of the Company of the West, Bernard de la Harpe traveled again into the region north of the Red River, attempting to open a route to New Mexico. However, the frontier remained relatively quiet for several years. Indeed in 1727 Don Pedro de Rivera made an inspection of the East Texas missions and presidios. A brigadier in the Spanish army, Rivera was to inspect the area and make suggestions. Apparently he believed Spaniards were secure on this northern frontier, for he decreased sharply the number of soldiers in the region. In 1735, however, the frontier again became unsettled when the French moved Natchitoches a small distance westward. This was done to escape the flooding of the Red River, which frequently inundated the settlement. In carrying out this move, St. Denis believed the French to be entirely within their rights. The area, which lay along the Arroyo Hondo, a small tributary of the Red, had for many years been considered French domain because that nation had controlled the several ranches which dotted the region. The Spanish reaction was surprisingly firm. José Gonzales, the lieutenant governor of Texas, declared that the move was a breach of the unspoken contract which had regulated the frontier since the confusion of 1720. Accordingly he voiced his protest to St. Denis, and he informed his superior, Governor Juan Manuel Sandoval, of the seeming French aggression. The governor, evidently feeling the time had come for a hard policy, ordered his aide to command

the French to remove their offending post. Gonzales was to repeat the demand thrice. If the French ignored this admonition, they were to be expelled forcibly.[27]

St. Denis was neither terrorized by Gonzales' threats nor impressed by the Spanish claim to the area west of the Red River. He knew that the limited number of Spanish soldiers in Texas precluded physical expulsion. The talented Frenchman had answers both for Spanish threats and claims. He informed Governor Sandoval that neither country legitimately could claim the area between Los Adaes and Natchitoches. When Governor Sandoval realized that St. Denis would not evacuate to the original location of Natchitoches short of overt hostilities, he referred the affair to officials in Mexico City. This action effectively ended the dispute; questions asked in Texas rarely brought answers from Mexico City. Natchitoches remained at its new location.[28]

Although the dispute between St. Denis and Sandoval ended in a tactical victory for the Frenchman, the Spaniard had the final word. Either out of anger at St. Denis' obstinancy or because of his determination to stop French commercial encroachment, the governor decreed that all trade between Texas and Louisiana should cease. Clanesdine commerce continued after Sandoval's proclamation, but overt trading was discontinued, creating severe shortages in Natchitoches. Spanish enforcement had become so lax that the French had become dependent on Los Adaes for supplies! Another result to the affair was of more long-lasting importance. In recognition of an accomplished fact, the two commanders thereafter observed the Arroyo Hondo as the boundary of their colonies.[29]

While St. Denis and Sandoval had been arguing over the boundary

between Louisiana and Texas, another struggle had been taking place, one for control of the various Indian tribes who lived along the contested border and the Red River. The natives of the region were the key to controlling the country. Neither the French nor Spaniards were able or willing to garrison a sufficient number of men along the Red River or in the surrounding area to dominate the other; also, neither was able to colonize the area along the common border and overwhelm the other. Thus each was forced to rely on the Indians as allies, attempting to create alliances strong enough to compel the opposing nation to give up the struggle.[30]

While the Spaniards were striving to break Caddoan allegiance to France, the latter were moving to bolster their position. The same year that Margil was sent to East Texas, a group of Caddoan Indians, the Yatasi, was moved down the Red and settled among the Natchitoches. This move further enhanced the French position and precluded any Spanish efforts among these tribes. The establishment of Nassonite Post among the Indians of that name by Bernard de la Harpe was the final act in the struggle for the allegiance of the Caddos. This effectively ended any Spanish expansion into the area along the Red River from its Great Bend to its mouth. This length of the river was French.[31]

With La Harpe among the upper Caddoan tribes and St. Denis among their counterparts downriver, there was no question of Spanish encroachment after 1719. This situation was continued by the presence of St. Denis at Natchitoches from his return from Mexico in 1719 until his death in 1744. Like a father, St. Denis watched over the Caddo and insured their allegiance to France.[32]

West of the Caddo the Wichita Indians remained aloof from the

struggle until the coming of Bernard de la Harpe to the Great Bend of the Red River in 1719. The first visitor to the Wichita by a European was probably Sieur du Rivage; he came during the explorations which had been ordered by La Harpe. Du Rivage established friendly relations with the Wichita by a liberal distribution of gifts. He found several of the Wichitan tribes living on or near the Red River; also, he found them at war with the Lipan Apache. Further French contact with the Wichitan tribes was made that same year by La Harpe. He traveled northward into present-day Oklahoma, meeting several sub-tribes of the Wichita at a great convocation near the mouth of the Canadian River. There La Harpe presented many gifts to the natives and promised to return often with trade goods. Because these Indians needed firearms and because they cherished the shiny manufactured goods which La Harpe showed them, they quickly proclaimed their love for France. Sacred songs were sung, and the peace pipe was passed. In return for the presents which La Harpe brought and in demonstration of their friendship, the natives treated La Harpe as a king and made him presents of salt, ultra-marine, and a slave, an Apache. Although the Indians were leaving for their annual hunt, ending La Harpe's plan to establish a trading post at the site of the gathering, the Frenchman did raise the royal ensignia of France there to remind the natives of their French friends.

Two years after his original trip to the Wichita, La Harpe attempted to ascend the Arkansas River to the location of the Wichita villages near the site of present-day Muskogee, Oklahoma. Although he was prevented from attaining his goal by low water and illness among his men, he did meet several Wichitan Indians and rekindled his friendship with them. Thus the French had laid the basis for a strong friendship

with the Wichita.[34]

However, all the activities of the French among the Wichitas were needless. The Spaniards in Texas and New Mexico virtually forced the Wichita to become allies of the French, although Spanish contact with this tribe was almost nonexistent. The reasons for this were twofold. Primarily, the Wichitas were shielded from the Spaniards in Texas by their enemies the Lipan Apache, and from the Spaniards in New Mexico by the Comanches. Second, Spaniards appeared to ally themselves frequently with the Apache. As demonstrated by the events during Du Rivage's and La Harpe's explorations, the Apache and Wichita were constant and bitter enemies. Thus the Spanish alliance with the Apaches forced the Wichitas to turn to the French for aid.[35]

After the early visits to the Wichita by La Harpe and Du Rivage, trade between the natives and the French continued unabated until the cession of Louisiana to Spain in 1762. The extent of French influence over the Wichita was indicated in 1753 by Governor Kerlerec of Louisiana who wrote concerning the Wichitas and the Caddos, "...they all agree unanimously in recognizing the French Governor of Louisiana as their father, and they never deny his wishes in the least...." Also, as early as the 1720s the fleur-di-lis was flying over Wichita villages along the Red and Arkansas rivers as symbols of the solidarity between the French and the Wichita.[36]

This alliance with the Wichita was highly useful to the French. It negated any chance of Spanish encroachment, and it provided a reliable and profitable source of raw products, such as furs, salt, and ultramarine. However, the most important aspect of the alliance was the contact which it provided between the French and the Comanche. The

Comanche were the most powerful nation along the Red River and were a nominal ally of the Wichitas because of their mutual hatred of the Lipan Apache. Through the Wichita, the French were introduced to the Comanche tribes that lived on the upper Red. The result was a triple alliance, the Wichita in the middle holding the other two together. Through this alliance the French were able to dominate the entire length of the Red River with the exception of a short stretch between the Wichita and the Comanche which the Lipan-Apaches controlled.[37]

The friendship of Comanche and the Wichita enhanced the value of the Wichita as a source of trade goods. During the years after 1720, the French supplied the Wichita with firearms--which the Wichita then traded to the Comanche, heightening their already awesome military prowess. In return for these weapons the Comanche traded articles which they had taken from Spaniards in New Mexico and Texas. These included horses, mules, and gold. Also the Comanche exchanged Indian slaves, mostly Lipan Apaches, to the Wichita. The Wichita then traded these horses, mules, and slaves to the French in Louisiana for more firearms and other supplies, ending one cycle of the trading circuit and beginning another. This commercial alliance was beneficial to all three groups involved; however, it was highly detrimental to the Spaniards and the Apache.[38]

In addition to the advantages of commerce, the Wichita and Comanche were strong military allies to the French, as demonstrated by events in the late 1750s. For many years the Comanche had been pressuring the Apache from the north, driving them southward into the settled areas of Spanish Texas. The Apache in turn had raided isolated Spanish towns. The Spaniards had reacted by attempting to missionize the Apache, and

bring them under Spanish influence. These attempts had been futile until 1757 when the Apache asked for a mission to be built for them on the San Saba River in present-day West Texas. Hard pressed by the Comanche, the Apache hoped to secure some relief by diverting Comanche attention to the Europeans. The Spaniards, for their part, believed this mission would prevent a French expansion toward New Mexico, stop Apache raids on Spanish settlements, and create a buffer area between themselves and the Comanche. In the spring of 1757 Mission San Sabá de Santa Cruz was constructed on the San Saba River (near the present Menard, Texas). Father Alsonso Giraldo de Terreros was placed in charge. An accompanying presidio, under the command of Colonel Diego Ortíz de Parrilla, was built about two miles upriver from the mission. However, the Apache did not settle at the mission; in June three thousand of them passed by the establishment, saying they had to hunt the buffalo but promising to return afterward. The Apache realized that the Spaniards had announced their friendship to them by constructing the mission; in doing this they thereby incurred the enmity of the Comanche and their allies. The Apache were waiting to see what the Comanche reaction to the mission would be. The answer came in March of 1758.[39]

During the winter of 1757-1758 the padres at Mission San Sabé heard rumors that the Comanche planned to destroy the settlement. On March 2, the presidial herd was stolen, and Colonel Parrilla attempted to persuade the fathers to flee to the presidio for safety. However, the padres refused. Two weeks later, on the morning of March 16, two thousand Comanche warriors arrived at the mission, demanding a letter from Father Terreros that would give them admittance to the presidio. The father understandably complied, and the Indians rode off in the

direction of the presidio.[40]

Reaching the fort at mid-morning, the Indians presented the letter to Colonel Parrilla--who, not surprisingly, refused to admit the natives. Thwarted in this plan, the natives returned to the mission to avenge their setback. With the exception of nine Spaniards who barricaded themselves inside a room at the mission, the entire company at the mission was murdered. The Comanche then left, taking what they could carry as loot and setting fire to the religious establishment. That night Parrilla sent a scouting party which found four of the men who had hidden inside the mission still alive. Parrilla immediately reported the massacre to the viceroy in Mexico City.

The viceroy called a council of war after he received Parrilla's report, and in the latter part of June, 1758, the council determined that the Comanche could not go unpunished for their transgression. Mission San Sabá was to be re-established, and a force under command of Colonel Parrilla was to march northward to chastise the offending natives. However, the reasons behind this expedition went deeper than merely punishing the Comanche; Spanish honor had been offended, true, but failure to punish the Comanches would embolden other natives to rise up in rebellion. No Spaniard would be safe on the northern frontier. Therefore, Colonel Parrilla was ordered to raise a force sufficient to defeat the Comanche in armed conflict.[41]

By August of 1769 Parrilla was at San Antonio with a force of more than five hundred men, having recruited where possible. Among the men he had gathered were a few trained soldiers. However, most were merchants, tradesmen, and laborers, hardly a force capable of overwhelming the war-wise Comanche. Parrilla hoped that numbers would bring him

victory. In addition he had more than one hundred Apache volunteers accompanying him; they hoped to gain vengeance on their hated enemy.

Leaving San Antonio in August, the party marched northward in search of the enemy. For more than three hundred miles Parrilla pushed northward with no sight of the Comanche until he reached the Red River (near the location of present-day Ringgold, Texas). There at a Wichita village, Parrilla found the enemy--in a palisaded fort with a moat around its perimeter and the French flag flying above![42]

At this time Spain and France were allies in Europe, fighting against England. However, along the Red River they were enemies. With the aid of French advisers, the Comanche and their allies, the Wichita, had constructed a European-style fort. Although surprised and dismayed by this turn of events, Parrilla ordered his force to attack. The cannon which had been brought by the expedition were called into play. However, the natives had constructed their fortress well. The cannon had little effect. Parrilla later reported that the Indians greeted each blast with shouts of laughter. Dutifully Parrilla ordered a charge, hoping to overwhelm the natives inside. The Comanche, armed with modern weapons, easily rebuffed the assault. Parrilla then encamped for the night, hoping some miracle would bring him victory. That evening the colonel learned that the enemy was attempting to encircle his position, cutting off his route of retreat. Also, the garrison inside the fort was growing in number as more Indians arrived. Some Spaniards already were deserting, as had the entire force of Apache volunteers. His only recourse was to retreat to San Antonio, leaving the cannon behind. The march southward was marked by repeated Comanche attacks on stragglers and the main body. The expedition to avenge Spanish honor had ended

with another blemish on Colonel Parrilla's record.[43]

The defeats at San Sabá and Spanish Fort, as the Wichita village on the Red became known, were never avenged. Four years later news reached the area that the whole of French Louisiana had been ceded to Spain during the settlement of the Seven Years War. That conflict had ended in tragedy for the Spaniards and French. France had lost most of its possessions in North America, while Spain had lost Florida to the English. In payment for the loss of Florida and to preclude a British seizure, France gave the Louisiana territory to Spain. The Red River no longer was a boundary; the Mississippi now separated Spanish and foreign territory.[44]

During the years of French ownership of Louisiana, the Red River had played an important role in their domination of the region. Not only had it served as an international boundary, but also it had given the French the upper-hand in their struggle to open trade with Spaniards. Because it stretched from the Mississippi, in the heart of Louisiana, to the country of the Caddo, Wichita, and Comanche, the Red acted to tie these natives to the French. The river was a natural highway for commerce between them and French Louisiana. The Spaniards in Texas were connected with the Indians on the plains by endless miles of hostile country, discouraging all but the most determined travelers. Commerce between the natives and Spaniards had proven expensive and sporatic. Thus the Red River had helped the French to win the loyalty of the Indians of the region. Yet France had lost Louisiana on the battlefields of Europe and the Atlantic seaboard, not along the Red River.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Ross Phares, Cavalier of the Wilderness (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), pp. 143ff; Pierre Margry, Decouvertes at Etablissements Des Francais dans L'Ouest et dans Le Sud de L'Amerique Septentrionale, 6 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Jouaust et Siqaux, 1879-1888), VI, pp. 198-213; Isaac J. Cox, "The Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, No. 1 (July, 1906), pp. 9-30.

[2]Charles Gayarre, Louisiana; Its Colonial History and Romance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851), pp. 197ff; H. Montgomery Hyde, John Law: The History of an Honest Adventurer (Denver: Alan Swallow, Inc., 1948), pp. 57-68.

[3]Ibid., pp. 79-100.

[4]Gayarre, Louisiana, pp. 211-221.

[5]Ibid.; Hyde, John Law, pp. 79ff.

[6]Walter P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, 2 vols. (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1952), II, p. 8.

[7]See Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, 11; Margry, Decouvertes, pp. 217ff; Anna Lewis, Along the Arkansas (Dallas: The Southwest Press, 1932), p. 33.

[8]Ibid., pp. 33-34; Margry, Decouvertes, pp. 243-254.

[9]Quoted in Lewis, Along the Arkansas, p. 34; Margry, Decouvertes, pp. 255-267; La Harpe to Martín de Alarcón, in ibid., p. 267.

[10]Ibid., p. 266.

[11]La Harpe to Pere Margil, in ibid., p. 268; Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, p. 11.

[12]Alarcon to La Harpe, May 20, 1719, quoted in Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., Vol. 2, 1819, pp. 1777-1778; La Harpe to Alarcón, July 8, 1719, ibid., p. 1778. La Harpe cheerfully wrote to Alarcón, "If you will do me the pleasure to come into this quarter, I will convince you I hold a post I know how to defend."

[13]Margry, Decouvertes, pp. 272-273.

[14]Ibid., pp. 276-278.

[15]Ibid., pp. 279-280.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 280.

[18]Ibid., pp. 280-299.

[19]Odie B. Faulk, A Successful Failure (Austin: Steck-Vaught Company, 1965), pp. 84-86.

[20]Margry, Decouvertes, pp. 300, 304-306; Blondel's letter quoted in ibid., p. 306.

[21]Eleanor C. Buckley, "The Aguayo Expedition into Texas and Louisiana, 1719-1722," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XV, No. 2 (October, 1911), pp. 1-65; Juan A. Morfi, History of Texas, 1673-1779, edited and translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, 2 vols., (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1935), pp. 187-228.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, pp. 13-15.

[24]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[25]See Lewis, Along the Arkansas, p. 61; Gayarre, Louisiana, pp. 220-232.

[26]Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, p. 15ff.

[27]Ibid., pp. 16-18; Margry, Decouvertes, IV, pp. 543ff; for River's report, see Morfi, History of Texas, II, pp. 244-274.

[28]Ibid., pp. 282-285.

[29]Ibid., p. 285; Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, X, p. 20.

[30]Ibid., pp. 20ff; Morfi, History of Texas, pp. 285-295; Herbert E. Bolton, ed., Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-State Frontier, 1768-1780, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914), I, pp. 17-61.

[31]Margry, Decouvertes, VI, pp. 278-289.

[32]Phares, Cavalier of the Wilderness, passim.

[33]Margry, Decouvertes, VI, pp. 280-299.

[34]Ibid., pp. 357-382.

[35]William E. Dunn, "Apache Relations in Texas," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XIV, No. 3 (January, 1911), pp. 198-274; Bolton, Athanase de Mezieres, I, pp. 45-56.

[36]Ibid.; quoted in ibid., p. 47; E. A. Harper, "The Taovayas in Frontier Trade and Diplomacy," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXI, No. 3 (Autumn, 1953), p. 274.

[37]Ibid.; Bolton, Athanase de Mézières, pp. 50-61.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Robert S. Weddle, The San Sabá Mission: Spanish Pivot in Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 53-60; Morfi, History of Texas, II, pp. 371-372.

[40]Ibid., pp. 61-71; Paul Nathan, ed. and trans., The San Saba Papers (San Francisco: J. Howell, Inc., 1959), p. 104; William E. Dunn, "The Apache Mission on the San Sabá River," Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Society, XVII, No. 4 (April, 1914), pp. 379-414.

[41]Weddle, San Sabá, pp. 72-78; Nathan, San Sabá Papers, pp. 95-97.

[42]Ibid., pp. 43-45, 73-77, 84-92; Weddle, San Sabá, pp. 72-84.

[43]Ibid., pp. 118-128; Morfi, History of Texas, II, pp. 388-390.

[44]Weddle, San Sabá, pp. 120-128; Morfi, History of Texas, II, pp. 390-391.

[45]Bolton, Athanase de Mézières, pp. 66-68.

CHAPTER IV

SPAIN AND THE RED RIVER

The province of Louisiana, French for more than six decades, suddenly had become Spanish in 1763. From Mobile to Natchitoches, from New Orleans to Chicksaw Bluffs, loyal citizens of France were changed into subjects of Spain by the signing of a treaty in Europe. Thousands of Indians scattered across the extensive territory were suddenly made allies of Spain. Many of these natives for years had been taught by the French that Spaniards were the enemy--an enemy to be used, cheated, and sometimes fought. The new owners of Louisiana inherited the task of pacifying both Frenchman and Indian.

Most Frenchmen in Louisiana cared little what nation called itself master of the province. They were more interested in their commercial ventures than in national loyalties; yet the citizens of New Orleans in 1768 forced the first Spanish Governor, Antonio de Ullola, to flee the city because of armed insurrection for reasons that had little to do with mere national loyalty. Although the Spaniards re-conquered New Orleans with an army under Alexandro O'Reilly in 1769, they found taming the Indians of Louisiana, especially the tribes along the Red River, a far more difficult problem.

Fortunately for the Spaniards, many of the Frenchmen in Louisiana not only were apathetic about the ownership of the land they inhabited, but also were willing to aid their former enemies. Because the French

frontiersmen had dealt with the Indians for many years, their aid was considerable. And because the Indians along the Red River were located between the valuable commercial outpost of Natchitoches and the Spanish city of Santa Fe, relations with these natives were crucial. These tribes--the Caddo, Wichita, and Comanche--were traditional enemies of Spaniards. Luckily the Spaniards found a man both capable and willing to pacify the natives--Athanase de Mézières.[1]

When Louisiana was ceded to Spain, Christophe Athanase Fortunat de Mézières was a captain at Natchitoches Post. The son of a well-to-do couple, Louis Christopher de Mézières and Marie Antoinette Clugny, he had come to Louisiana in 1733 and had established himself as a talented soldier and Indian agent, as well as becoming successful in various commercial ventures. About 1740 he had moved to Natchitoches where he would spend the rest of his life. During the years between 1740 and 1763 De Mézières had risen steadily through the ranks. Under Governors Bienville, Vaudreuil, and Kerlerec, he had maintained the favor of the government. Also, he had won the respect and friendship of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis. In 1746, two years after the legendary figure's death, De Mézières had married Marie Petronille Feliciana Juchereau de St. Denis, the daughter of Louis and María St. Denis, the couple that had fled San Juan Bautista almost three decades previously. Unhappily, Marie had died in 1748.[2]

By 1763 De Mézières had shown himself a valuable asset to the garrison at Natchitoches. However, the advent of Spanish ownership precipitated his premature retirement; he was discharged on September 15, 1763. Little is known of De Mézières' activities after his retirement other than that he remained at Natchitoches, trading with the natives

and planting his crops. He must have been restless, however, for in 1769 he was agreeable to an offer of service in the Spanish army. A replacement was needed for Baltazar de Villieis, another Frenchman who had been retained as commander of Natchitoches by the Spaniards. To fill this gap Governor Alejandro O'Reilly chose Athanse de Mézières. The Frenchman was appointed lieutenant-governor of Natchitoches, becoming once more an official of the state. It matter little that the French lilies had been replaced by the Spanish castle and lion; Anthanse de Mézières would utilize his considerable skills and experience to insure a smooth administration in Louisiana and amicable relations with the natives along the Red River.[3]

The Spaniards realized that the Indian policies which they had employed west of the Red River were not applicable in Louisiana. They also realized that maintaining the French policy of trading and allying with the natives of Louisiana was advisable. However, certain changes were necessary--even mandatory--for the welfare of Spanish Texas and New Mexico. Most important was an end to the trade in mules, horses, and slaves along the Red River. This trade had aided the French by supplying a demand for these articles in Louisiana and by creating ties between them and the natives. Only Spaniards, from whom the Indians stole these articles, had been injured by the trade. However, stopping this trade and keeping the natives content seemed impossible. When De Mézières was enlisted in the service of Spain, the task fell to him.[4]

Alejandro O'Reilly, himself an alien in the service of Spain, evidently believed De Mézières was equal to the job. On September 23, 1769, he wrote, "I know that you are better able than anyone else to give me correct information regarding everything relating to your

district...."[5] Immediately after accepting O'Reilly's appointment at Natchitoches, De Mézières began making plans for a meeting with the natives on the Red River. He hoped the proposed conference would provide him a chance to settle all matters of dispute. However, Governor Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, who replaced O'Reilly in 1770, was tardy in granting permission for the gathering. After almost four months of admonitions from De Mézières, Unzaga y Amezaga agreed on September 20, 1770, but warned the Frenchman that he should "...make sure that the peace which they [the Indians] ask is single-minded, pure, and free from any criminal machinations."[6] A week later De Mézières replied that several chiefs of the Caddoan tribes had visited him and that he was traveling to the Caddocho village on the Red River to attend a meeting with these tribes.[7]

After the cession of Louisiana to Spain, the Caddoan and Wichita tribes had adopted a policy of raiding Spanish outposts. Spaniards had stopped the French traders whom the Caddos had come to rely on for European goods. Although attempts had been made to placate them by allowing the traders to resume their business, the Caddo had remained troublesome. De Mézières, during their visit, vowed to them that he would listen to their grievances and establish an equitable peace.[8]

Early in the fall of 1770, De Mézières left for the Caddocho village located on the Red River one hundred leagues above Natchitoches. He was guided by the leaders of the Caddocho. With him went several individuals from the Spanish posts at Los Adaes and Natchitoches, a delegation which he had chosen purposefully. From Natchitoches six soldiers were selected, and from Los Adaes came five soldiers. The mixture was made in order to demonstrate the solidarity of the two

provinces of Texas and Louisiana. Additionally, the Franciscan superintendent of the Los Adaes missions, Fray Miguel Santá María y Silva, accompanied the expedition. The padre was selected for the mission because, as De Mézières later reported to Unzaga y Amezaga, "...it offered the opportunity to impress upon the barbarian Indians with whom I proposed to treat--who had sacrilegiously killed...when the mission of San Sabá was sacked by them [1758], two ministers of the same habit [Franciscan], ...by showing my respect for that worthy religion, the respect with which they ought to regard all of his seraphic order...in the future...."[9] De Mézières, a naturalized Spaniard, realized that he needed to demonstrate his loyalty to Spain not only to the natives, but also to his Spanish superiors who at times voiced their mistrust of the former Frenchman.[10]

The party traveled up the Red River through the country of the Adaes, Yatassi, and Peticado (or Lower Caddo). These natives, situated in the midst of an area that had been under the control of Spain and France for almost a century, had remained friendly after the cession of Louisiana. They demonstrated their friendship to the party by raising the Spanish flag and by offering supplies. After visiting with these tribes, the party traveled to the Caddochoan village, having been joined by representatives of the tribes.[11]

The party was greeted at the Caddocho village by their chief, Tinhioven, an old friend of the European who had willingly utilized his good offices to arrange the meeting. De Mézières was informed that the convocation would be held the day after their arrival. Waiting at the village were the chiefs of several of the Wichitan tribes. He was disappointed to learn that only part of the Wichita had arrived because

many had turned back during their journey to the village, fearing the meeting had been called as a trap. The chiefs who had come noted that they too feared such a design, but they asserted that their valor had overcome their fears.[12]

At the established hour the chiefs of the offending Wichitan and Caddo tribes met with the Spaniards. De Mézières spoke for the Europeans. He stated that the French had urged the natives to injure the Spaniards previously, noting that these abuses were "worthy of eternal silence since with remembrance of it alone one's eyes were filled with tears...."[13] But those times had passed. France had left Louisiana, and the Frenchmen, including De Mézières, had become naturalized Spaniards. He warned the Indians that the Spanish king was the mightiest monarch on earth, and that the natives were in danger of incurring his terrible wrath if they continued their warlike policy. However, the king was as magnanimous as he was powerful; if the natives would repent their sins, the king would grant them peace and friendship. De Mézières also noted that the Wichita were surrounded by possible enemies and urged them to consider their fate. Finally he reminded the natives that the French were gone forever and that their only hope was honest and forthright friendship with Spain. His benediction was to embrace each of the Spaniards present, demonstrating "the close and sacred pact which binds us."[14]

After De Mézières' speech, Tinhioven, the Caddocho chief, and Cocay, the chief of the Yatassi, another Caddoan tribe which had remained friendly after the Spaniards had taken Louisiana, urged the Wichita to accept Spaniards as friends. Then a spokesman for the Wichita rose to speak. He stated that the trouble between the Wichita and

the Spaniards had resulted from the latter's aid to the Apache. Before this the Wichita had refrained from injuring Spaniards. However, the spokesman asserted the hatred had died. The Wichita were ready for peace. Finally he noted that their coming to the meeting with the Spaniards had seriously irritated their old allies, the Comanche. The latter accordingly had begun hostilities on the Wichita, sorely pressing their existence.[15]

After listening to the Wichita, De Mézières rose again. He expressed his pleasure at the statement of the natives, but demanded they travel to San Antonio, the site of many of their depredations, and seek peace with the commander there. The Wichita demurred at this demand, asserting that this would involve traveling through the country of the Apache, and that they had much work to accomplish before leaving on such a long journey. De Mézières replied that they at least should accompany him to Los Adaes where they could ask the Spanish commander for forgiveness and swear their allegiance to Spain. Again the Wichita refused. To De Mézières it became evident that the natives feared appearing at San Antonio or Los Adaes because of possible punishment. Finally, he decided to keep the gifts he had brought until the Wichita decided to comply with his demands. The Wichita promised to gather again in the spring to consider his offer; meanwhile they would remain peaceful and pursue the hunt. The meeting was then adjourned.[16]

Athanse de Mézières reported the events of this meeting to Governor Unzaga y Amezaga, emphasizing that he believed the natives sincere in their statements. As proof of their sincerity, De Mézières noted that the Taovayan were willing "to return the two brass cannons which they had taken from Parrilla in 1759."[17]

Regardless of De Mézières' confidence in the natives, many Spanish officials remained skeptical, including those who had accompanied the Frenchman to the Caddocho village. The general attitude in Texas, and to a lesser extent in Louisiana, was that De Mézières had made promises which would not be kept and that the natives had misrepresented their intentions. Few officials believed De Mézières' efforts would achieve a workable settlement. Nonetheless, the Frenchman maintained his optimism.[18]

A year after his first meeting with the Wichita, De Mézières was rewarded for his work by the signing of a treaty of peace with the Wichita. Coming to a meeting at Natchitoches, the Wichita promised to refrain from further hostilities against Spain, to notify the commander of San Antonio if they should approach that city, to punish criminals who broke the treaty, to return the cannon which had been taken from Parrilla, to return all Spanish captives, and to attempt to prevent future hostilities by their allies, the Comanche. Peace at last had been established along the Red River. The Wichita fulfilled the promises of the treaty, except the provision which called for controlling the Comanche, who remained hostile to the Spaniards.[19]

Athanse de Mézières' task thus was far from complete. English encroachment into the Red River Valley to trade with the Wichita and continued obstinance by the Comanche required much additional effort; however, he had accomplished the first phase of his plan to bring the natives of the Red River under the domination of Spain. To further his program, De Mézières' traveled to the headwaters of the Brazos and Trinity rivers in 1772, trying to persuade the natives there to accept Spanish rule peacably. During the expedition of 1772 De Mézières

learned that the Wichita on the Red River had been trading with Englishmen from the Arkansas River region. As a result he attempted to convince them to move southward, away from Englishmen. Although he was unsuccessful in that the Wichita continued to trade with the English, the commerce was infrequent and sparse. Also, during this expedition De Mézières was able to settle some of the wandering tribes of Texas, such as the Xaraname, who had left Mission Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, with sedentary tribes.[20]

Soon after returning from Texas, De Mézières was granted permission to visit Europe to settle several personal matters. During his visit he was promoted by the King of Spain to lieutenant colonel and made a knight of the Order of St. Louis in recognition of his accomplishments along the Red River.[21]

While De Mézières was in Europe, Indian problems erupted again in Texas. The Wichita along the Red River, principally the Taovaya, had maintained their trade in horses with the English, acting as middlemen for the Comanche. This tribe secured horses by raising Spanish settlements, repeating the events of years earlier. Also, the Osage who lived along the Arkansas River had begun to intrude along the Red River, agitating the natives and Europeans in the area. Possibly because De Mézières was not available, J. Gaignard was appointed by Governor Unzaga y Amezaga to lead an expedition up the Red River to pacify the natives. Gaignard began his ascent of the Red River on October 1, 1773, at Natchitoches, accompanied by a small party of Spaniards and Frenchmen. The group moved up the Red River, passing through the lands of the Peticado to the Caddocho, where they stayed eighty-four days. The Caddocho told Gaignard of silver mines further up the river.[22]

On January 16, 1774, Gaignard left the Caddocho village, traveling with several Wichita guides. Soon after leaving, the Wichita demanded that Gaignard give them booty. On February 5 the natives demanded blankets. Gaignard also had serious doubts about the intentions of his companion Manuel Sausier. Quickly these doubts were confirmed. On the tenth Gaignard was approached by the chief of the Wichita village at which he had camped; the chief informed him that Sausier had ordered him to seize half of the goods which the Spaniard had brought as gifts. The chief and his council refused to carry out this order and the conniving Sausier was dismissed. However, Gaignard soon afterward was attacked by the Wichita and all of his goods were taken. Gaignard reported, "They stole even my blanket; two days afterward snow fell and I nearly froze."[23]

Despite the loss of his goods, Gaignard pushed onward, arriving at a Wichita village one hundred leagues above the Caddo. Gaignard found the Wichita, whom he called the Panis, separated into four principal groups along the Red River. He listed them as the Taovaya, Wichita or Quatchita, Niscaniche, and Toyacane. At the time of his visit, Gaignard reported one thousand warriors. He asserted that the men did little but hunt and fight, while the women were engaged in agriculture. To his disgust he noted that "when they take a slave capable of returning, they boil him and eat him," and that "they are very cruel, and are liars and thieves, the women as well as the men."[24] Also, he found two cannon which had been taken from Colonel Parrilla.[25]

On the twenty-second of February a great assembly was held. A chief of the Wichita spoke, declaring that he would love the Spaniards as he had the French and that he desired peace, but that he desired

some small gift as a token of Spanish esteem. Gaignard complied with the native's request by giving him eight pounds of powder, sixteen pounds of shot, twenty-four hunters' knives, and tobacco. He then proceeded to make a speech similar to that given by De Mézières in 1770, emphasizing that the French were gone forever and that the Spaniards were now allies. The Wichitas replied that they were entirely receptive to Spanish rule.[26]

Despite the Wichitas' protestations of loyalty to Spain, Gaignard learned two days after the meeting that the Indians were making plans for two groups to attack the Spaniards in Texas. Gaignard immediately demanded that the chief explain the reasons for the sudden change in attitude. He was told that many of the young men wished to make war because De Mézières' promises of gifts had not been fulfilled. Gaignard said he would rectify the situation and asked that the chief stop the proposed raids. Gaignard then sent a messenger to Natchitoches to report what had happened. Despite this accomplishment, Gaignard's troubles were only beginning.[27]

Gaignard's mission was to treat with both the Wichita and the Comanche. Although he was able to notify the leaders of one branch of the latter tribe, the Naytana, of his wishes to meet with them, subsequent events prevented this meeting. On March 4, 1774, one month after Gaignard notified the Comanche of his desired meeting, a band of the Naytane arrived at the Wichita village, returning from a battle with the Apache. They reported that Spaniards had given firearms to the Pacloucah, another branch of the Comanche with whom the Naytane were at that time unfriendly. This news created a great stir among the Wichita, and they renewed their demand for gifts. Gaignard was understandably

discouraged by this turn of events. However, his hopes were revived a week later by the appearance of a chief of the Naytane who reported that the great chief of the Naytane was pleased with Gaignard's presence, that the Naytane desired peace, and that the great chief desired a meeting. Gaignard was hopeful that his mission finally would prove successful.[28]

Soon after the Naytane had left, a group of French traders arrived at the village from the Arkansas River. The Wichita stated that they liked the French from the Arkansas better than those from Natchitoches because the former wanted horses, mules, and slaves, articles which were prohibited at Natchitoches.[29]

Gaignard remained at the Wichita village until October of 1774. Despite repeated requests by the Naytane for Gaignard to visit their camp, he was unable to comply because of protests made by the Wichita. This group continually refused to allow the Spaniard to leave their village. Finally he decided to return to Natchitoches, his mission uncompleted. The journey home was as unpleasant as had been his stay with the Wichita. Nonetheless, Gaignard finally reached Natchitoches on November 24, 1774, a year after he had left.[30]

In his report Gaignard noted that further expeditions to the Wichita and Comanche were mandatory. He emphasized that the trade from Arkansas should be stopped and that only the most persuasive agents should be sent to deal with the natives on the Red. The frontier still was restless--and in need of another expedition by Anthanse de Mézières.[31]

It was evident from Gaignard's report that De Mézières again was needed along the Red River. However, the problems in Louisiana and

Texas were legion. Also, De Mézières was charged with fulfilling the responsibilities of his post at Natchitoches. Thus two years passed before the Frenchman again was ready to journey to the Red River. Meanwhile De Mézières made certain that the Wichita were given presents and pacified.[32]

By March of 1778 De Mézières was ready to focus his attention on the problems of the Red River frontier. With the blessing of commandant-general of the Interior Provinces Teodoro de Croix, another Frenchman who had entered the service of Spain, De Mézières organized another expedition to visit the natives of the Red River. However, this mission was not to the Wichita, but rather to the natives who inhabited the headwaters of the Red River--the Comanche. The Wichita had refrained from creating further disturbances in Texas. De Mézières' policy of liberal gift distribution seemingly had worked with that tribe. But the Comanche had remained a problem, stealing and raiding along a network of Spanish settlements in northern Texas and New Mexico. It was clear that neither missionization, which had been attempted until 1772, nor military conquest, which had been initiated after 1772, could end the problem with the Comanche. Therefore, Athanse de Mézières again was ordered to utilize his extensive abilities in dealing with the natives.[33]

The expedition was organized at San Antonio de Béxar, present-day San Antonio, Texas. Accompanying De Mézières were a lieutenant and twenty-two soldiers from the garrison at Béxar, six militiamen whom he had brought from Natchitoches, and the Frenchmen's two sons. The party officially departed from San Antonio on March 18, 1778, following the royal road to Presidio Santa Cruz at Arroyo del Cíbolo. From that

place the group traveled northward, meeting the royal road at its ford on the Guadalupe River. After leaving the Guadalupe the group then crossed the Colorado and Brazos rivers before reaching Presidio Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Bucareli near the Trinity.[34]

At Bucareli the party rested while De Mézières collected information about the surrounding area for his report to the commandant-general. On March 23, 1778, the expedition departed, having added thirteen militiamen, a captain, and the Reverend Francisco José de la Garza to its number.[35]

From Bucareli De Mézières led his group to the headwaters of the Brazos where he met with the Tawakoni Indians, a Coahuiltecan tribe which traditionally had befriended Spaniards; he also spoke to a band of the Xarame tribe, which had settled near the Tawakoni. However, the Xarame were unwilling to negotiate with the Europeans, having deserted their missions in South Texas. The Tawakoni were happy to see Spaniards because the Comanche had continually raided their villages and carried away stock. They complained to De Mézières and demanded that Spaniards stop the raids. After speaking with the Tawakoni, De Mézières led his party upriver to another settlement of the same tribe. The inhabitants of this place repeated the complaints of the first--the Comanche were warring along the northern frontier. At the second Tawakoni village a portion of the party, including Fray de la Garza, returned to San Antonio because of poor health.[36]

From the villages of the Tawakoni the group moved northward, reaching the Wichita villages near the Red River early in the spring. During the journey De Mézières reported his first sighting of the Cross Timbers, which the natives called the "Grand Forest." He noted that

the long stretch of trees served as guide for the natives of the region and that at times the dense growth provided refuge from the elements or enemies.[37]

On the Red River the Frenchman found the Wichita living in two villages, one on either side of the stream. He estimated that the total number of natives at the villages was more than eight hundred. He noted the advantages of the location: the river supplied potable water, buffalo were numerous, and the Cross Timbers provided firewood. Despite these obvious advantages, De Mézières commented that the Wichita suffered from their neighbors: the Apache to the south and the Osages to the north constantly warred on the Wichita, and, "the Comanche, who in the guise of friends, make them repeated visits, always with the purpose of stealing."[38] He added that the Wichita pretended not to perceive the thefts of the Comanche "lest they should make other enemies, when they already have too many."[39]

While with the Wichita, De Mézières noted the advantages which the Red River offered to Spaniards. He wrote, "Since it joins the San Luis, or Micissipi [sic], sixty leagues above the city of New Orleans, and five hundred below its source, taking into consideration its sinuosity, we owe to it easy access to and communication with the settlements of Natchitoches and the neighboring Indian nations."[40] He urged in his report to Croix that a settlement should be made among the Wichita on the Red, noting that this would aid in controlling the Comanche and that the location on the Red River would provide easy communication with the centers of government.[41]

The Wichita, who had treated Gaignard badly five years before, greeted De Mézières with joy. They asked that Spaniards be sent to

settle within their lands and noted that they had refused admittance to two English traders from the Arkansas River region. De Mézières was pleased with the attitude of the Wichita because it reflected the success of his policies. Also, he received the two brass cannon which had been taken from Parrilla nearly twenty years before.[42]

On April 8, 1778, De Mézières received a disturbing report. Most of the warriors from a nearby Comanche village had recently traveled southward to attack Spaniards, and had returned with many horses and the scalp of the lieutenant paymaster of the presidio of San Antonio, whom they had found traveling across the region. He also was informed that the Comanche had determined to cease their raids on San Antonio and the surrounding area because the risks were too great and because the region around Laredo provided an easier target. On hearing this report De Mézières was greatly discouraged and considered abandoning his mission. He wrote to Croix, asking, "Why should I go? To offer my hand to hands that I might see stained in our blood? To be witness of the spoliation of my nation? To fondle and protect barbarians whose crude understanding would ascribe our conduct to fear?"[43] However, after counciling with the chiefs of the Wichita, De Mézières decided to continue.[44]

He dispatched a Comanche warrior, whom he had found wandering in the region, with a message from the Comanche chiefs, notifying them of his presence and demanding that their recent actions be explained. Also, De Mézières included a warning that if the natives continued their warlike manners, Spaniards would be forced to inflict punishment on their people. The Frenchman then waited, his spirits downcast and his expectations for success destroyed, at the village of the Wichita.

Meanwhile he wrote to Croix, suggesting that Spaniards urge the various nations along the river to make war on the Comanche should the latter refuse to negotiate.[45]

De Mézières waited at the village of the Wichita during April. He then transferred his force southward to Bucareli, having received no replies to his message to the Comanche. However, his mission was not a failure. The Tawakoni had been placated, at least for the moment, and the Wichita had demonstrated their friendship for Spaniards. Only the Comanche remained unsettled--as they would for many years to come.[46]

On May 2, 1778, De Mézières informed Croix that his mission was completed, and that he would return to his post at Natchitoches. However, Croix and other officials in Mexico believed that De Mézières could better serve his country in Texas; late in 1778 the Frenchman was ordered to return to Texas where he would be promoted to Colonel and lead another expedition to the frontier.[47]

The reasons for De Mézières third mission to the natives on the northern frontier varied; however, his principal objective was further pacification of the Comanche. Early in 1779 the aging Frenchman set out for Texas. He passed through East Texas to Bucareli, which recently had been abandoned, and from there went to the Brazos where he treated with the Tawakoni once more. After meeting with these natives, De Mézières journeyed to San Antonio, where, to his surpsied, he learned he had been appointed governor of Texas in recognition of his skills and past services. However, De Mézières never assumed his new position. He had returned from his last expedition in ill-health, suffering from the effects of a serious fall from his horse during the journey. On November 2, 1779, he died after serving Spain for twenty

years. Although he had not solved all the problems which the natives of the region had created, he at least had offered some succor to a dying empire--an empire that had replaced that of his own nation and an empire that would soon vanish in North America. The day after his death he was buried at San Antonio de Béxar in the cemetary of the parochial church. His burden was shouldered by others.[48]

Despite the continued efforts by commandant-general Croix and Domingo Cabello y Robles, who had been appointed governor of Texas after De Mézières' death, the Comanche remained a nuisance--and at times a major problem--for Spaniards in Texas and New Mexico. This tribe had been the great trouble in De Mézières' life, and they continued to haunt other officials who tried to deal with them. However, their enemies, the Apache, proved to be a more pressing problem, and in 1780 Spaniards in Texas focused their attention on settling their long debt with the Lipan Apache.

Commandant-general Croix determined that although the Comanche had repeatedly broken vows of friendship and continually raided Spanish settlements, they could be used to the benefit of the Europeans. A policy of extermination was initiated against the Apache. As a result of the Royal Regulation of 1772, which had been promulgated in an attempt to solve the Indian problems in New Spain by creating the Interior Provinces from Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, Sinaloa, Nuevo Leon, and Nuevo Santander, Spanish Indian policy was altered from mismisionization to military conquest. Whereas the Comanche had been originally the principal target, Croix decided that the war-like tribe should be urged to make constant war on its traditional enemy--the Apache. By the end of 1781 the Apache sued for peace. They were

settled on the Rio Grande as a buffer to future Comanche raids into Mexico.[49]

Croix realized that the policy of making war on the Apache was merely a temporary solution to the Comanche problem. Therefore he moved in 1780 to achieve a permanent settlement. Another expedition would go to the Comanche and attempt to arrange some type of agreement that would end the raids. Unfortunately for the Spaniards, Athanse de Mézières lay dead in San Antonio. He alone had seemed capable of negotiating a long-lasting peace with the Comanche. Nevertheless, Nicolas de la Matte, another alien in the service of Spain, was appointed to lead an expedition to the Red River. La Matte set out for the frontier in November of 1780, reaching the villages of the Wichita on the Red River three months later. He distributed gifts and harangued the natives to maintain peace. However, he apparently did not reach the villages of the Comanche, but rather notified them through their nominal allies of the Spanish desire for peace.[50]

Despite the efforts of La Matte, the Comanche continued to sweep down from their villages on the Llano Estacado and the Red River and spread death, destruction, and bloodshed in their wake. In 1785 the citizens of Spanish Texas were relieved of the Comanche pressure by a treaty with the Kotsoteka and Penateka branches of that tribe which temporarily established friendly relations. The treaty was gained after Spanish officials in Texas overlooked repeated depredations by the natives, and by the liberal distribution of gifts among the tribe. Indeed, the eighth article of the treaty promised that: "...each year presents would be distributed to the chiefs and principal tribal members as a proof and manifestation of our [the Spaniards] good will."

However, soon after the document was signed the natives began to raid into Texas, claiming that Spaniards had not fulfilled their portion of the agreement. Thus the treaty of 1785 was soon abrogated. From this time forward the Comanche continually raided Spanish settlements in Texas, striking seemingly at will from the Gulf of Mexico to the Rio Grande. Spanish officials in Texas and in Mexico, recognizing a fact known on the frontier for many years, finally abdicated authority on the frontier, trying only to pacify the natives with gifts and sporadically demanding that the small presidial guard in Texas punish the savages. The Comanche were a problem which another nation would have to settle--and only after great expenditures of money and men would a solution be achieved.[51]

Although Spaniards in Texas were unable to establish a permanent peace along their northern border, other problems pressed them for solutions. Since the cession of Louisiana to Spain in 1762, Louisiana had been ruled by governors appointed by the viceroy in Cuba, while Texas and New Mexico had been under the control of the viceroy of New Spain, based in Mexico City. Although officials in each province had attempted to cooperate with their counterparts in other provinces, communication had been sporatic and difficult. By 1780 officials in New Mexico realized that the provinces were in dire need of connecting roads. These roads would serve several purposes, in addition to making connunication easier. They would allow supplies to be brought from Louisiana westward at far less expense than bringing them overland from Mexico, and the products of Santa Fe could more easily be brought from New Mexico. Also, the roads would bind the provinces together, an important fact because the Spaniards feared encroachment from the newly

established United States of America. French traders for many years had been trading with the Wichita on the Red River by crossing overland from the Arkansas. Spaniards thus hoped that roads connecting Santa Fe, San Antonio, and Natchitoches would discourage this trade, as well as intrusion by Americans.[52]

Regardless of the advantages which routes between Santa Fe, San Antonio, and Natchitoches would provide, Spaniards were faced with the problem of surveying such roads. Less than a dozen expeditions had been made into the areas between these cities, and many of the men who had led the expeditions, such as Athanse de Mézières, were dead. Also, the country was infested with natives who often were hostile to Spaniards. The first problem was to find a man capable of blazing a trail between the cities, a man like Louis Jucehereau de St. Denis or Athanse de Mézières. Such a man was found in Pedro (Pierre) Vial, another Frenchman who enlisted in the service of Spain.[53]

Pedro Vial, as he was known to the Spaniards of the Southwest, was born at Lyon, France, about the middle of the eighteenth century. Sometime during the 1770s he came to the New World, trading along the Missouri River during the American Revolution. Little is known of his background; however, he was in the Southwest in the 1780s, and evidently had acquired much of experience in the wilderness, judging from his subsequent activities. The Red River would play an important role in the traveler of Pedro Vial.[54]

The first matter at hand was the opening of a road from Santa Fe to San Antonio de Béxar. Because of Indian hostilities and because of insufficient knowledge of the region, travel between the two cities was forced to follow a circuitous route: from Santa Fe southward to

Chihuahua via El Paso, then to Satillo, and from there to San Antonio--more than fifteen hundred miles. Finding a shorter route was Vial's first assignment.[55]

The origin of the order for a survey to be made from Bexar to Santa Fe is obscure. However, it probably came from Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola, commandant-general of the Interior Provinces, who was in a position to realize the importance of communication between the two cities. Regardless of the origin of the order, Governor Domingo Cabello of Texas was authorized to organize such an expedition. He also was informed that Pedro Vial, who had lived among the Indians of Texas for some time, had offered his services to fulfill this order. Undoubtedly pleasing to the economy-minded Spaniards was Vial's offer to make the trip with only one companion; the fewer travelers, the less money expended.[56]

Vial promised to blaze the most direct path possible from Béxar to Santa Fe, stopping at Indian villages along the way. On October 4, 1786, the intrepid explorer set out from San Antonio de Béxar; he was accompanied by Cristobál de los Santós, his only companion. Two days after their departure, the pair suffered a mishap in crossing the Guadalupe River. One of their pack horses was caught by the rising waters and drowned. Besides the loss of the horse, all the supplies which it carried were lost. Nonetheless, Vial pushed northward. On October 8 the paid arrived at the Colorado, where Vial became ill. When he recovered somewhat, they then followed the Colorado to the northwest, using the river as a guide, a trait which Vial demonstrated throughout his explorations. They followed the Colorado until the fourteenth. During this portion of the journey, Vial's sickness became critical, and the

explorer fainted, falling from his horse, to lay unconscious for two hours. The severity of his illness was illustrated by his companion's request for a document from Vial exonerating him from any wrong-doing in Vial's death! However, Vial responded, "I trusted in God that I should not die...," and the journey was continued.[57] Leaving the Colorado, the two turned to the northeast, heading for the Brazos by a trail which Vial believed to be used by the Tawakoni, a branch of the Wichita, while stealing horses from San Antonio. Two weeks after leaving Colorado, they reached the Brazos, where Vial searched upriver looking for the camps of the Wichita. He located the natives in their village called "El Quiscat" near the location of present-day Waco, Texas. The chief of the tribe, Quiscat, greeted Vial as a friend. From the end of October until the middle of December, Vial stayed with the Wichita, living in the chief's lodge and recuperating from his illness.[58]

On December 15, 1786, Vial and Santós set out once again on their journey, traveling along the Brazos--using the river as a guide. For several days they followed the river, reaching another Wichita village on December 28. This village was probably near the site of present-day Wichita Falls, Texas. Near this Wichita village, Vial met a Spaniard traveling with a Wichita. He was informed that the two had been stealing horses, although they did not clarify from whom they had taken the stock. Also during the march he learned that a group of Wichita had gone south to steal horses from Spaniards. Therefore, when he reached the Wichita village, he inquired about the recent raids and demanded an explanation. He warned the natives that if they were "among those who send their people to make trouble at San Antonio, there will be no one

to save you from those who may harm you"[59]--strong words for a man alone in the wilderness and surrounded by possibly hostile natives. However, the Wichita replied that Vial's statement was correct and asked for forgiveness, promising to remain peaceful in the future.[60]

Although the meeting with the Wichitas had begun badly, the natives soon warmed to the Spaniard. They told Vial that they were waiting for one of their chiefs to return from a visit to the Comanche, and they would then trade with that tribe. Vial decided to wait for the Chief to return in order to ascertain what the situation among the Comanche might be before venturing into their lands.[61]

The Wichita chief returned on January 6, 1787, accompanied by six Comanche braves. Vial then set out for the camps of the Comanche. He found them nearby and held a conference with their chiefs. During this meeting the Comanche told Vial that San Antonio was far away and that a Spanish settlement at the abandoned site of San Sabé would be welcomed. Also, Vial was approached by the great chief Guaquangas, or Coat of Mail, who told the explorer that he would like to go to San Antonio to speak with the governor and asked Vial to take him there. However, Vial would not be deterred from his mission, and on January 18, he departed in a westerly direction. Two days later the pair made winter camp in an arroyo near the present-day city of Burkburnett, Texas. They remained at the camp until March 4, 1787.[62]

After the cold days of January and February passed, the party set out northward again, and on March 15 Vial reached the destination he apparently had been seeking since leaving San Antonio--the Red River. Evidently Vial had learned previously that the Red would guide him to Santa Fe; his route from San Antonio had been generally north.

Undoubtedly the explorer knew that Santa Fe lay to the northwest. Vial apparently had set out for the Red River, ignoring the fact that a shorter and more direct route was possible, because he preferred the security of traveling along a river. During his journey from San Antonio to the Red he demonstrated, by following the Colorado and Brazos, his propensity for using streams as natural means of navigation.[63]

Reaching the Red River, Vial turned westward, following the stream. Sometime during this portion of the journey, Vial and Santos were joined by the Comanche chief Zoquine, who promised to guide them to Santa Fe. Despite the presence of the Comanche chief, the party was threatened by another group of Comanche who asserted that Vial had come to take the natives to Santa Fe where they would be murdered. Vial responded, with his usual confidence, that these men were liars and that the Spaniards were not black-hearted like the Comanche. Again his strong statement served him well, and natives allowed him to continue.

The explorer followed the Red for most of April, leaving the stream as it entered the Llano Estacado. From the Red, Vial went to the South Canadian, which he followed into New Mexico. On May 26, 1787, he reported to Spanish officials at Santa Fe, having journeyed via North Texas from the city of Saint Anthony to the city of the Holy Faith for the first time. He and Santos had traveled more than one thousand miles, most of them alone, in less than one year. Moreover, they had passed through the lands of the most feared Indians in the Southwest. This was the first of Vial s remarkable accomplishments.[65]

Pedro Vial's journey from San Antonio to Santa Fe was a great feat of exploration and courage; however, he found Spanish officials in New Mexico unsatisfied. There must be another, more direct route between

the two cities. Vial's road was too circuitous, too time-consuming, and too dangerous. Therefore they determined to send another explorer to find a more direct connection. Juan Bautista de Anza, the governor of New Mexico and himself an accomplished explorer, appointed José Mares to lead another expedition. Mares was ordered to travel from Santa Fe to San Antonio by the most direct route possible. On July 31, 1787, less than two months after Vial had reached Santa Fe, Mares departed for San Antonio accompanied by Cristobál de los Santos, Pedro Vial's former companion, and Alejandro Martín, an Indian interpreter who had worked previously for officials in New Mexico.[66]

San Antonio, more than five hundred miles to the east and south of Santa Fe, lay at a forty-five degree angle from the New Mexican city. Therefore Mares' direction should have been to the southeast to open the most direct route between the two outposts. He began his journey in this direction, traveling to the Pecos and then to the Gallianas; however, he then turned to the northeast, heading for the Red River. He ascended the Llano Estacado and reached the Tule River, a tributary of the Red. Leaving the Tule on the Llano, Mares marches to the Peace River, another tributary of the Red, followed the Peace for several days, and then marched to the Wichita River. He crossed that stream and continued to the Little Wichita, which he called the Rio de los Taguayazes, or the River of the Taovayas (for the sub-tribe of the Wichita who lived near the mouth of the stream on the Red River). Throughout this portion of the journey, the Spaniard repeatedly met bands of Comanche who greeted him as a friend and traveled with him for varying spans of time. Many of the natives accompanied the Spaniard to the village of the Wichita, to trade. On September 5, 1787, Mares reached the villages

on the Red, and his party was greeted as friends by the natives. The Spaniards stayed four days on the Red River, leaving on September 9. From the Red, Mares led his expedition almost directly toward San Antonio, forming a rough right angle. Why had the Spaniard, having received strict orders to find the most direct route, chosen to repeat Vial's visit to the Red? Mares' return journey to Santa Fe--after severe chastisement by the governor of Texas for going via the Red--was one-third shorter than his march from Santa Fe to San Antonio. Undoubtedly Mares went to the Red River for two similar reasons: the Wichita villages on the river were a well-known point of determination, for the travels of De Mézières and Vial had definately located the villages; and the river itself was a well-known point of demarcation. Probably going to the Red River, Mares had split his journey to San Antonio into two portions; only the first part involved blazing a new trail. His second reason was that because the Wichita villages were well known and a trading center for natives in the region, he believed that a route from Santa Fe to San Antonio should pass through this important marketplace.[67]

José Mares returned to Santa Fe in 1788, making the journey in four months. His return trip pleased Spanish officials in New Mexico because it demonstrated the possibility of direct traffic between the major cities of New Mexico and Texas. However, the third city of the Spanish trinity in the Interior Provinces, Natchitoches, remained separated from the others. It perhaps was the most important of the three because of its location on the Red River, which was navigable; this made it an important lini in any future trading system the Spaniards might devise. If Santa Fe and San Antonio were joined to Natchitoches

by good roads, then supplies could be brought to the post on the Red by water and thence transferred to the other posts via the roads. Conversely, products from New Mexico and Texas could be brought out of the interior by the same route. Therefore the Spaniards next step was to connect Natchitoches with its sister outposts.[68]

Before José Mares left San Antonio, Pedro Vial had suggested to Governor Anza that an expedition should go from Santa Fe to Natchitoches. The governor had forwarded Vial's comments to Commandant-general Jacobo Ugarte. Evidently Vial believed his work between San Antonio and Santa Fe was sufficient and did not wish to seek a more direct route. Despite dissatisfaction with Vial's first expedition, Spanish officials were willing to utilize his experience and courage once again in order to open a road from Santa Fe to Natchitoches. Anza's replacement as governor of New Mexico, Fernando de la Concha, accepted Vial's offer to go to Louisiana, and on June 24, 1788, less than a month after Mares had returned from San Antonio, Pedro Vial set out once more into the wilderness. With Vial went four Spaniards, who would make the entire journey with him, as well as several individuals who would make only part of the trip; included was Santiago Fernandez, who would go only to the Wichita villages on the Red River and then return to Santa Fe to report the progress of the mission to the Spanish officials. The four who would accompany Vial were Francisco Xavier Fragoso, José María Romero, Gregorio Leyva, and Juan Lucero.[69]

The expedition set out in the same direction which José Mares had taken a year before, crossing the Pecos and Gallinas rivers to the headwaters of the Red River, and passing the region near present-day Tucumcari, New Mexico. Near Palo Duro Canyon the party reached the

Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River, which it followed eastward. Following the river, which the Spaniards called the Rio Blanco, the party was met by a Comanche near the mouth of the Tule River. The native took the Spaniards to his camp where they were treated as guests and refreshed from their journey. After visiting with the Comanche, the group set out again to the east, following the river. About the middle of July the group descended from the Llano and continued along the stream, noting the entrance of the North Fork and the Pease rivers, which greatly enlarged the river's size. Near the mouths of these streams, several groups of Comanche were sighted. These natives, like the ones met earlier, were friendly to the Spaniards and volunteered to guide the party to the villages of the Wichita, an offer Vial accepted because among them were those who had led him to Santa Fe on his first exploration.[70]

On July 20 Vial reached the mouths of the Wichita River and Cache Creek, which entered the Red from the south and north respectively. The next day the party found the camps of the Wichita which Vial had visited a year and a half before and which José Mares had passed through earlier. These villages had changed little from the time when Athanse de Mezieres had visited them in 1778, although the population of both appeared to have decreased markedly. De Mézières reported the number of inhabitants as more than eight hundred, but Vial found each village consisting of only seventeen huts. However, Vial's chronicler, Fragoso, noted another village east of the two which had not been reported earlier. Possibly the presence of this third village accounts for the decrease in the population of the other two settlements.[71]

The Spaniards spent six days with the Wichita, allowing themselves

and their animals to recuperate for the last portion of their journey to Natchitoches. On May 26 they set out from the last Wichita village, leaving the Red River to travel overland. Evidently Vial knew that by cutting across present-day East Texas he could reach Natchitoches much quicker than by following the river along its great bend. After leaving the Red, the party marched almost directly to Natchitoches, crossing the headwaters of the Trinity north of present-day Dallas. During this portion of the march, Fragoso was repeatedly impressed by the terrain, noting the Cross Timbers and the divide between the watersheds of the Red and Trinity rivers where two small streams rose, one flowing north, the other south. On August 14 they crossed the Sabine, reaching settled areas near the abandoned site of Los Adaes. Six days later the group entered Natchitoches, ending a journey of more than nine hundred miles.[72]

Pedro Vial stayed at Natchitoches for two weeks and then set out for San Antonio. He then traveled to Santa Fe, which he reached on August 20, 1789. In less than three years he had completed the original task which had been given him by officials of the Interior Provinces--with a little help from José Mares. From October 4, 1786, to August 20, 1789, he had crossed the entire breath of Texas once, joining Santa Fe, San Antonio, and Natchitoches. Throughout his travels the Red River had played a major role, guiding him from San Antonio to Santa Fe, as it did José Mares. Like an aquatic Polaris, the Red was a sign which pointed the way for Pedro Vial.[73]

Despite the successes of Vial and Mares in connecting Santa Fe, San Antonio, and Natchitoches, these roads did not prevent the encroachment of foreigners into Spanish territory. A decade after Vial's

journey from Santa Fe to Natchitoches, Louisiana's fate again was decided by European diplomacy; by the Treaty of San Illedefonso the province was retroceded to France by Spain. Napoleon had decided to rebuild the French empire in North America.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780, 2 vols. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914), I, pp. 17-19, 66-79; Isaac J. Cox, "The Texas-Louisiana Frontier," Texas State Historical Association Quarterly, X, No. 2 (Summer, 1908), pp. 1-75.

[2]Bolton, ed., De Mézières, pp. 79-87. This work is a compilation of De Mezieres' correspondence and reports. As such they provide a complete base for a study of his career.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Alejandro O'Reilly to Athanase de Mézières, September 23, 1769, Bolton, ed., De Mézières, I, pp. 130-131. Correspondence and reports cited hereafter are taken from this work unless otherwise noted.

[6]De Mézières to Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, February 1, 1770, I, pp. 136-137; De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, February 1, 1770, I, pp. 140-142; De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, May 20, 1720, I, pp. 166-168; De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, June 27, 1770, I, pp. 202-203; Unzaga y Amezaga to De Mézières, September 20, 1770, I, p. 204.

[7]De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, September 27, 1770, I, pp. 204-205.

[8]Ibid.

[9]"Official Relation by the Lieutenant-Governor of Natchitoches to the Captain-General of Luisiana concerning the Expedition which, by Order of His Lordship, He Made to Cadodachos to Treat with the Hostile Tribes Whose Chiefs Met in that Village," Report by De Mézières, October 29, 1770, I, p. 207.

[10]Ibid., pp. 207-208; "Deposition of Sergeant Dowmingo Chirinos," I, pp. 222-223.

[11]"Report, De Mézières," I, pp. 207-208.

[12]Ibid., pp. 208-209.

[13]Ibid., p. 209.

[14]Ibid., pp. 210-211; "Deposition, Chirinos," I, p. 223.

[15]"Report, De Mézières," I, pp. 211-212.

[16]Ibid., p. 212.

[17]Ibid., pp. 215-216.

[18]Ibid., p. 220; "Deposition, Chirinos," I, pp. 223-224; "Deposition of Christobal Carabaxal," I, pp. 224-227; Unzaga y Amezaga to De Mézières, November 18, 1770, I, pp. 231-232; Joseph Gonzalez, "Exhortation sent to the Reverend Father President," I, pp. 227-228.

[19]Charles Raymond Cox, "Caddoan Relations with the White Race Previous to 1801," (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1930), pp. 162-179; Herbert Eugene Bolton, Texas in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1915), pp. 409-411.

[20]"Official communication sent by the lieutenant-governor of Natchitoches, concerning the peace which the Apaches are attempting to secure with other tribes, both of this district and that of Adaes, or Texas," De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, February 25, 1772, pp. 283-351.

[21]Unzaga y Amezaga to De Mézières, April 23, 1773, II, pp. 31-32; I, p. 100.

[22]Rogue de Medina to Hugo O'Conor, March 8, 1774, II, pp. 32-36; Luís Antonio Menchaca to O'Conor, March 9, 1774, II, pp. 36-41; Rafael Martínez Pacheco to O'Conor, April 20, 1774, II, pp. 42-44; O'Conor to Antonio Bucareli y Ursua, April 20, 1774, II, pp. 44-46; O'Conor to Baron de Ripperda, April 21, 1774, II, pp. 46-49; De Ripperda to Unzaga y Amezaga, April 17, 1773, II, pp. 29-31.

[23]J. Gaignard to Unzaga y Amezaga, January 6, 1774, II, pp. 81-82; J. Gaignard, "Journal Kept Exactly According to the Orders of M. de Villier to Make, With the Help of God and the Holy Virgin, the Journey at the Panis and Naytane, Begun at Natchitoche on the Day of my Departure October first, 1773," October 1, 1773, pp. 85, 83-100.

[24]Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 86.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., pp. 86-89.

[29]Ibid., p. 87.

[30]Ibid., pp. 88-100; Gaignard to Bernado de Gálvez, November 10, 1777, II, pp. 101-102.

[31]Gaignard, "Report," II, pp. 98-100; Unzaga y Amezaga to Baltazar Villeis, February 21, 1774, II, p. 102; De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, June 30, 1774, II, pp. 104-108.

[32]Ripperda to Teodora de Croix, April 27, 1777, II, pp. 122-129; De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, May 2, 1777, II, pp. 130-131; Baron de Ripperda to Croix, October 28, 1777, II, pp. 135-137; De Mézières to De Galvez, September 14, 1777, II, pp. 142-147; De Mézières to Baron de Ripperda, "Plan for Campaign Against the Apaches," February 20, 1778, II, pp. 172-186; De Mézières to Croix, March 18, 1778, II, pp. 187-190; De Mézières to Croix, March 23, 1778, pp. 190-193; De Mézières to Croix, April 5, 1778, II, pp. 193-196.

[33]De Mézières to Croix, March 18, 1778, II, pp. 187-190.

[34]Ibid.

[35]De Mézières to Croix, March 23, 1778, II, pp. 190-192.

[36]De Mézières to Croix, April 7, 1778, II, pp. 196-197; De Mézières to Croix, April 8, 1778, II, pp. 197-199.

[37]De Mézières to Croix, April 18, 1778, II, pp. 201-204.

[38]Ibid., p. 203.

[39]Ibid., pp. 201-204.

[40]Ibid., p. 204.

[41]Ibid.

[42]De Mézières to Croix, April 19, 1778, II, pp. 204-207.

[43]De Mézières to Croix, April 19, 1778, II, p. 212.

[44]Ibid., pp. 212-214.

[45]Ibid.

[46]De Mézières to Croix, May 2, 1778, II, pp. 214-215; De Mézières to Croix, May 2, 1778, II, pp. 215-216; Croix to De Mézières, September 10, 1778, II, pp. 216-218; Croix to Bernardo de Gálvez, September 10, 1778, pp. 218-219; Croix to José de Gálvez, "The Commandant-General of the Interior Provinces of New Spain Reports the Successful Outcome of the Journey of Lieutenant-Colonel Don Atanasio Demésières to the Northern Indian Nations," September 23, 1778, II, pp. 220-224; Croix, "Summary of the Notices Communicates to the Government in Sixteen Letters, by Don Atanasio de Mésières, Lieutenant-Governor of the Presidio of Natchitoches in the Colony of Luisiana, of the Results of the Expedition which he made to Visit the Northern Indian Nations," September 23, 1778, II, pp. 224-230.

[47]De Mézières to Croix, May 2, 1778, II, pp. 215-216; Croix to De Mézières, September 10, 1778, II, pp. 216-217.

[48]De Mézières to Bernardo de Gálvez, February 7, 1779, II, pp. 239-240; De Mézières to Bernardo de Gálvez, March 17, 1779, II, p. 214; Bernardo de Gálvez to Croix, March 21, 1779, II, pp. 242-244; De Mézières to Croix, May 27, 1779, II, pp. 256-257; De Mézières to Bernardo de Gálvez, June 24, 1779, II, pp. 257-258; De Mézières to Croix, August 21, 1779, II, pp. 258-260; De Mézières to José de Gálvez, September 4, 1779, II, pp. 267-268; De Mézières to Croix, September 13, 1779, II, pp. 274-276; De Mézières to Croix, September 30, 1779, II, pp. 289-291; De Mézières to Croix, October 7, 1779, II, pp. 291-298; De Mézières to Croix, October 13, 1779, II, pp. 319-322; De Mézières to Matias de Gálvez, October 28, 1779, II, p. 324; De Mézières to Croix, nd., II, pp. 324-325; Bachelor Pedro Fuentes y Fernandez, "Record of the Burial of De Mézières," November 3, 1779, II, p. 327.

[49]See Teodoro de Croix, "General Report of 1781," Croix to José de Gálvez; A. B. Thomas, Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), pp. 74-83; Odie B. Faulk, "The Comanche Invasion of Texas, 1743-1836," Great Plains Journal, IX, No. 1 (Fall, 1969), pp. 28-31.

[50]Ibid., p. 29; Croix, "Report of 1781," p. 80; "Estado de las tropas...provincias de Texas," Croix to Gálvez, June 27, 1783; Thomas, Croix, p. 63.

[51]Faulk, "Comanche Invasion," pp. 29-50.

[52]Ibid., pp. 29-31; Noel M. Loomis and Abraham P. Nasatei, Pedro Vial and the Roads to Santa Fe (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), pp. 262-263; Carlos E. Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1931-1958), V, pp. 158-161.

[53]Loomis and Nasatir, Pedro Vial, pp. 262-265.

[54]Ibid., pp. 265-266.

[55]Ibid., pp. 262-265; see Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage, V, pp. 148-151; see also Bolton, Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California, 1915), p. 128.

[56]Jacobo Urgarte y Loyola to J. B. de Anza, October 26, 1786, New Mexican Archives.

[57]"Diary of Pedro Vial, Bexar to Santa Fe, October 4, 1786, to May 26, 1787," in Loomis and Nasatir, Pedro Vial, p. 270. Following citations to Vial's journeys are taken from this work.

[58]Ibid., pp. 268-273.

[59]Ibid., pp. 275-276.

[60]Ibid., pp. 271-276.

[61]Ibid., p. 276.

[62]Ibid., pp. 277-282.

[63]Ibid., p. 281.

[64]Ibid., pp. 283-284.

[65]Ibid., p. 285.

[66]Ibid., pp. 288-289; Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage, V, pp. 146-147.

[67]"Journal of José Mares, Santa Fe to Bexas, July 31 to October 8, 1787," in Loomis and Nasatir, Pedro Vial, pp. 289-314.

[68]Ibid., pp. 315-317.

[69]"Diary of Santiago Fernandez from Santa Fe to the Taouayas and Return to Santa Fe, June 24-July 21, 1788, and July 24-December 17, 1788," in ibid., pp. 318-326; "Diary of Francisco Xavier Fragoso, Santa Fe to Natchitoches to San Antonio to Santa Fe, June 24, 1788-August 20, 1789," ibid., pp. 327-347.

[70]Ibid., pp. 327-339; "Diary, Fernandez," ibid., pp. 318-319.

[71]Ibid., pp. 319-326; "Diary, Fargoso," ibid., pp. 339-343.

[72]Ibid., pp. 345-361.

[73]See Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage, V, pp. 151-158, and map facing p. 267.

CHAPTER V

SPAIN'S NEW FOE

France had lost Louisiana in 1762 because of problems not connected with the province. In 1803 the situation recurred. Because his armies could not quell the insurrection in Santo Domingo, because war was imminent in Europe, and because he did not want Louisiana to fall into the hands of the British, Napoleon, once he regained Louisiana, sold the province to the willing Americans for the bargain price of fifteen million dollars. Despite Thomas Jefferson's constitutional objections to the purchase, the United States quickly accepted the province of Louisiana as its own. The only questions was what had the United States brought? The French refused to define what they had sold, answering American questions concerning the boundaries of Louisiana with suggestions that obscure borders provided a chance to steal some Spanish land! The Spaniards, who remained in physical control of the province until its transfer to the United States had an answer, but the United States was unwilling to accept their somewhat biased judgment. The only boundary which could be found for Louisiana with any certainty was the Mississippi. West of that great stream the continent remained virginal and unexplored except for the small areas of Spanish occupation in the Southwest. There were serious questions as to the validity of Spanish claims, especially along the Red River.[1]

President Thomas Jefferson for many years had been interested in

the exploration of the Trans-Mississippi West, suggesting various missions during the latter part of the eighteenth-century. As president his interest had not waned. He suggested the expedition of Meriweather Lewis and William Clark before the Louisiana Purchase was made and became an American soil by an accident of European diplomacy. But Jefferson's interest was not limited to the Northwest; in 1803 the President wrote to three individuals, Daniel Clark, the American consul at New Orleans; William Dunbar, the foremost scientist of the Mississippi Valley; and William C. C. Clairborne, governor of the newly created Louisiana Territory, asking for information regarding the Red River. The responses to Jefferson's questions were vague, general, and brief. Therefore he determined that another expedition, similar to that of Lewis and Clark, was in order. He then wrote William Dunbar requesting him to lead an expedition up the Red River to its source and then cross over to the Arkansas and descend that stream, noting that his plans were contingent on the appropriation of funds by Congress. Happily the legislative branch was cooperative, and three thousand dollars were set aside for the suggested purpose--exploration of the Red and Arkansas. Jefferson thereupon wrote Dunbar again, asking him to make preparations for the journey. Also, he informed Dunbar that Dr. George Hunter, a chemist living in Philadelphia, would accompany the mission to make scientific observations.[2]

Preparing for his proposed journey up the Red, Dunbar wrote to Peter Walker, a trader who frequently ascended the river, to repeat the questions about the stream which Jefferson earlier had asked. However, he made few physical preparations, and when George Hunter, having descended the Ohio and Mississippi rivers by flatboat, arrived at Dunbar's

plantation on the Mississippi he learned that boats and provisions for the journey had not been acquired. Lieutenant Colonel Constant Freeman, military commander at New Orleans, had been ordered by Secretary of War Henry Dearborn to provide these articles, but he had decided to wait until Hunter's arrival to begin preparations. Thus the expedition immediately was behind schedule in setting out.[3]

Hunter, having determined that he would have to make the necessary preparations, went to New Orleans where he had the flatboat in which he had descended the Mississippi altered, and obtained the provisions for the journey. After two months in New Orleans, Hunter returned to Dunbar's plantation. When he arrived, he learned that the expedition again had been delayed. In July President Jefferson had been visited by a delegation of the Osage Nation. The Indians had informed him of the split in the nation which had resulted in the settlement of one band on the Verdigris River, a tributary of the Arkansas in present-day Oklahoma, and another band on the Neosho, another tributary of the Arkansas located east of the Verdigris. They warned Jefferson that an American expedition on the Arkansas would be attacked by the band located on the Verdigris. Therefore Jefferson had written Dunbar to suggest that the proposed expedition to the Red and Arkansas be postponed. Instead Dunbar and Hunter were to ascend the Ouachita, a tributary of the Red which flowed from south-central Arkansas, entering the Red a few miles above its mouth, in order to utilize the men and supplies which had been collected. The President urged Dunbar to forward a report of his actions in order that Congress could be apprised of the journey--and asked to appropriate additional funds. Finally, Jefferson noted that the delay was fortunate because it would allow Americans to

settle their difficulties with Spaniards, difficulties which had arisen over the Texas-Louisiana boundary.[4]

As noted, Spain and the United States had quarrelled because of the vagueness of the limits of Louisiana. France, the conduit through which Louisiana had passed to the United States, had claimed that the province included Texas, citing La Salle's settlement as proof of such a claim. The United States, seeing an opportunity make a good deal better, re-asserted the French claim to Texas for many years, was in no mood to allow the upstart Americans to take the province. Indeed, Spaniards proclaimed that the Arkansas was the southern boundary of Louisiana, asserting that the province of Texas had expanded during the years of Spanish domination in Louisiana (1762-1800). Therefore they were not willing to allow an American exploring party to ascend the Red River. Their attitude had been summarized in Commandant-General Nemesio Salcedo's proclamation in May of 1804 that all American attempts to enter Texas or to survey the boundaries of Louisiana would be stopped and the men arrested. Wisely, Dunbar and Hunter decided that the Ouachita would make an acceptable object of exploration--no Spaniards were there.[5]

The expedition left the Mississippi on October 4, 1804, and returned in February of 1805, having reached the head of navigation on the Ouachita near the mouth of the Fourche de Chalfat. Thus the first American expedition on the Red River proved abortive. But the mission was not entirely unsuccessful. The reports by Hunter and Dunbar contained valuable advice to latter explorers in the area: special boats were needed, an authoritative officer was mandatory to control the enlisted men, and sophisticated scientific equipment was necessary to

make workable observations.

While Hunter and Dunbar had been waiting to ascend the Ouachita, President Jefferson was approached by a man with additional information concerning the Red River. John C. Sibley, a native of Massachusetts, had settled at Natchitoches in 1802 and had involved himself in the affairs of the area. More important to Jefferson, Sibley had journeyed up the Red River in 1803, making copious notes and observations. In March of 1804 he wrote to Jefferson relating his geographic knowledge of the region and of its natives. Although Sibley's knowledge was limited to the lower reaches of the river below the great bend, his letters whetted Jefferson's appetite--and got Sibley an appointment as contract surgeon for the Natchitoches area. In 1805 Jefferson appointed Sibley to head the Natchitoches Indian Factory, which burdened him with the task of controlling the natives of the Louisiana-Texas frontier. He performed this task well, remaining a thorn in the side of Spaniards, as had St. Denis a hundred years before.[6]

Despite the failure of Hunter and Dunbar, Jefferson was intent on sending an expedition up the Red River. The President hoped that the boundaries of Louisiana could be defined quickly, but he was not willing to allow haste to cheat the United States of any part of its rightful property. The Spaniards were equally adamant in their determination that Texas should not be lost to Americans. Therefore, the exploration of the Red which Jefferson desired would have to be made into disputed territory--territory under the physical control of Spaniards. The President had two problems: he needed someone to lead the expedition, and he needed some method of obtaining Spanish cooperation, or, at least, Spanish permission for the expedition.[7]

On March 12, 1805, Jefferson wrote to Dunbar expressing his hopes for a second mission. Inasmuch as neither Dunbar nor Hunter was willing to assume leadership of this mission, Jefferson included a list of the names of several men whom he believed capable of the task. Unfortunately, none of these men were willing to accept the position. Finally, Thomas Freeman was selected to lead the exploration. Jefferson realized that Freeman, who was an experienced surveyor, could not perform the botanical observations which were necessary. Therefore Dr. Peter Custis was selected to accompany the party as the scientific specialist. Jefferson meanwhile had decided that the journey should be limited to the Red River, rather than ascending the Red and then marching overland to the source of the Arkansas. By restricting the exploration to the Red, the problems of transporting the men and their supplies overland and the difficulties with the Osage on the Arkansas would be avoided. Jefferson thus had secured a leader for the mission. His second problem--the Spaniards--proved more difficult.[8]

In the same letter to Dunbar which spoke of new goals for the expedition, Jefferson noted that Dunbar should write Governor Claiborne of Louisiana, asking him to approach the former governor of Spanish Louisiana, the Marquís de Casa Calvo, who had remained in New Orleans as a boundary commissioner, to ask for a passport for the expedition. Claiborne was dutifully informed, and in July of 1805 he asked Casa Calvo for the desired document. The American was careful to emphasize that the mission was solely for purposes of gathering scientific data and in no way was an encroachment on Spanish territory. Despite these promises, Caso Calvo was leery of the Americans. He was certain the mission was designed to collect military information about the region

and to agitate the local natives against Spaniards. The Marquis also was confident that the Americans were planning a military invasion of the region to secure their claims. However, Clairborne's request was difficult to refuse. In addition to the vows of good faith, the Americans offered to allow Spaniards to accompany the mission, and the request was endorsed by the secretary of the Spanish boundary commission, Andres López Armesto. Casa Calvo decided to grant his permission; however, he simultaneously informed Spanish officials in Texas of the planned mission. Finally, he noted that he could not interfere with any decisions made in Texas concerning the expedition. This effectively negated the power of the passport given to Claiborne. What worth is a passport which carries no authority? Casa Calvo had determined to remain friendly to the Americans, while assuring that the Spanish officials in Texas would act against the proposed mission. Thus he avoided making a decision.[9]

Casa Calvo's actions set both Americans and Spaniards to working. Commandant-General Salcedo, who earlier had issued an order banning all Americans from Texas, moved to preclude any advancement into Spanish territory by ordering troops to be garrisoned at Bayou Pierre (near the site of the ancient post of Los Adaes). This would block the path of the proposed expedition. However, in February of 1806 the commander of the American detachment at Natchitoches sent a force of sixty men to compell the Spaniards to withdraw. This force, under the command of Captain Edward Turner, found the Spanish force, consisting of twenty men, near Los Adaes. The Spaniards, under the command of Ensign José María Gonzales, protested, but they agreed to withdraw, a wise decision considering the inequity of opposing forces. Although this action cleared

the path for the expedition, it also strengthened the Spanish distrust of Americans. In addition, the Marquis de Casa Calvo was asked to remove himself from the soil of the United States on February 12, 1806.[10] This action increased the susupicions of Spaniards toward the Americans, and it decreased the value of the passport which Casa Calvo had given to Claiborne.[11]

Despite all these problems, the expedition departed in April of 1806, almost a year after Jefferson had suggested the mission. The leaders of the party were Freeman and Custis; Lieutenant Enoch Humphrey was assistant to Dr. Custis in making botanical observations; and Captain Richard Sparks was the military commander of the group. In addition, there were two non-commissioned officers, seventeen privates, and one black servant. Two flatboats and a smaller pirouge were utilized to carry the group upriver. At Natchitoches thirteen more privates were added to the company, increasing the number in the expedition to thirty-seven.[12]

Late in May the party left Natchitoches. Above that village the river became increasingly difficult to navigate because of driftwood and mud which clogged the channel. This was the lower reaches of the "Great Raft" which lay further north. The jams were called rafts because they bore a resemblance to rafts which had been formed by sticking logs and brush together with mud. The rafts made travel tortuous and slow. Boats had to be lifted over shallows which had been created by collections of wood and mud, and a serpentine course was followed because the rafts had filled the main bed of the river, leaving the waters to flow through myriad miniature channels. Much time was wasted searching for open paths through the woody barrier because channels

were continually changing--opening and closing. A course which was open one day might be closed the next by the whims of water and wood.

On June 8 the party's problems increased. A runner from John Sibley at Natchitoches notified Freeman that a Spanish force of considerable magnitude had left Nacagdoches, the center of Spanish athority in East Texas, with orders to stop the Americans. That afternoon Sibley reached the party with the same warning. Although Freeman had no wish to fight with a larger Spanish force, he and his fellow explorers decided to push onward, hoping to evade the Spaniards.

On June 11 the party reached the "Great Raft," an almost solid mass of wood, brush, and mud which had jammed together by the wind and water to clog the river's channel for more than fifty miles. Attempting to pass through the Great Raft was useless. Therefore the party, led by French guides, followed a circuitous path around the raft which consumed more than one hundred miles. Finally, two hundred miles above Natchitoches, and just below the Great Bend of the Red, the group reentered the unclogged channel of the river. Two days after they emerged from the raft the explorers reached the village of the Alabama-Coashutta Indians: this tribe had moved into the region from the east during the latter part of the eighteenth century, fleeing from the pressures of white men. However, the natives received the explorers well. At the village Freeman received news that a Spanish force of approximately three hundred recently had visited the nearby Caddo village, searching for the Americans.

In keeping with the American policy of courting the friendship of natives in that area, Freeman gave the chief presents, including an American flag. On July 1 chiefs from the neighboring Caddo villages

arrived, and Freeman again distributed gifts. Also he made speeches declaring that Americans were friends of the natives and praising the chiefs for their bravery and abilities. The Indians replied by lauding the Americans, promising never to make war on whites, and inviting them to visit their villages often. Thus the Americans followed the French policy of endearing themselves to the natives of the region. Two days after their arrival, the Caddo departed, promising to warn the Americans of movements by the Spaniards.

On July 11 the party left the Alabama-Coashutta village, having won the friendship of the natives, and continued upriver, entering its Great Bend. Two weeks after leaving the village, the explorers emerged from the bend, reaching the former location of the Nassonite village where Benard de La Harpe had erected his trading post eighty-seven years before. A few rotting posts were the only remains of the old French fort. The day after the explorers arrived at the abandoned fort, they were met by three Caddo Indians who warned that the Spaniards recently had visited their villages. The Spanish commander, whose force numbered one thousand, had berated the chiefs for accepting the Americans, pulled down the flag which Freeman had left, and swore to kill the American explorers if they attempted to continue their journey. The natives, evidently impressed by this Spanish show of strength, urged the Americans to retreat and avoid contact with the terrible Spaniards. However, Thomas Freeman refused their admonitions and commanded his force to push onward.

Despite his determination to continue, Freeman realized that the Spanish force represented a serious threat to his party and his mission. Therefore he ordered his men to bury part of their equipment, including

their instruments and notes. Also, he urged them to remain alert. The group then advanced cautiously, expecting to meet Spaniards at each turn of the river.

While the American force had been visiting with the natives and pushing upriver, the Spaniards in Texas had been busy. After the Spanish force had been ejected from the area around Bayou Pierre by the American force under Turner, Spanish officials in Texas had believed that armed conflict was imminent along the Texas-Louisiana border. The commander of the forces at Nacogdoches, Captain Sebastian Rodriguez, had asked that his garrison be increased, and that he be replaced by a more experienced officer. Governor Antonio Cordero y Bustamante evidently had agreed with Rodriguez because Captain Francisco Viana had been placed in command at Nacogdoches in June. Viana had wasted little time in preparing for the expected American assault, bolstering garrisons in East Texas and deciding to repulse the American expedition up the Red River. On July 12 he left Nacogdoches, heading for the Red River. Moving quickly and forcefully, the Spaniard reached the villages of the Caddo where he learned of the recent visit by Americans. Realizing that Americans would follow the circuitous route of the river, Viana then marched overland, arriving at the river ahead of the Americans. On the river he arranged his force and readied them for battle, expecting armed conflict with the approaching Americans.[13]

On July 28 the Americans reached the waiting Spaniards. However, the expected battle did not occur. Rather the American and Spanish officers met to find a peaceful solution to the impasse. Viana demanded that the Americans withdraw, promising to enforce his demand with arms if necessary. Freeman had little choice. Either he could retreat or his

party would surely perish. However, the American demanded that Viana put in writing his reasons for turning back the expedition, evidently wishing to have some document to give President Jefferson when he returned without completing his mission. Stubbornedly Viana refused, stating only that he was acting in accord with the wishes of officials in Mexico. The Spaniard, confident in his numerical superiority, ended the meeting by asking when the Americans planned to depart. The next day the Americans withdrew, leaving the Spaniards victorious, although many of Freeman's party favored battle.[14]

In August Freeman's party returned to Natchitoches, having overcome the elements and the river but not the Spaniards. Again President Jefferson's hopes of exploring the Red River had been dashed by the fortunes of international diplomacy and Spanish arms. However, the results of Freeman's mission were not entirely negative. The Americans had succeeded in winning the friendship of the Alabama-Coashutta and the Caddo. And Viana's unseemly behavior at the village of the Caddo had demonstrated to the natives the differences in attitude of Spaniard and American. Thus, while Viana had won an immediate victory for his nation, he had laid the foundation for permanent American control of the region along the Red.

Repulsing the American exploring party was seen by Spanish officials in Texas as a prelude to full scale conflict along the border. The Spaniards believed that the expedition had been arranged to collect military information and to win the aid of the natives of Northeastern Texas. Therefore they believed that Americans, thwarted in their exploring, would soon return in force to seize the region west of the Red River. Preparations to fight such an invasion already had begun

before Freeman had been turned back. Viana's appointment had been part of the strengthening of the defenses of East Texas, as had been the transferring of troops from Mexico to Texas. Furthermore, Lieutenant Colonel Símon de Herrera, the government of Nueva Santander, had been ordered by Commandant-General Salcedo to take military control of East Texas. By the time Viana was ushering Thomas Freeman down the Red River, there were more than thirteen hundred Spanish troops in Texas. Of these more than eight hundred were garrisoned at Nacogdoches. Spanish troops also were stationed east of the Sabine River near the location of Los Adaes. About four hundred men of the garrison at Nacogdoches were sent to Bayou Pierre under the command of Colonel Herrera. The Spaniards were determined to defend their territory east of the Sabine along the Red River.[15]

In Louisiana the Americans were equally determined to drive the Spaniards west of the Sabine. The Spaniards were seen as counter-revolutionaries who were the enemies of the republicanism of the United States. Also, many Americans coveted the rich lands which lay between the Red and Sabine rivers. Feelings ran high in Louisiana for war; orators called for militiamen to rally together to aid the Army in driving the Spanish invaders back. Newspapers proclaimed that the American Revolution should be spread to the people of Texas. Finally, General James Wilkinson, the military commander of Louisiana, moved toward the Texas-Louisiana border accompanied by reinforcements for the garrison at Natchitoches.[16]

On reaching Natchitoches, Wilkinson notified Governor Cordero y Bustamante that the Spanish force at Bayou Pierre had to be removed or conflict would result. Cordero replied that his authority did not

include yielding Spanish territory to foreign armies. It was September, and war seemed inevitable.[17]

James Wilkinson did not want war. His fuzzy, double-dealing association with Aaron Burr was reaching a watershed, and the general did not want a conflict with the Spaniards to draw attention to his district. However, his orders were explicit: the Spanish force east of the Sabine had to be ejected. Wilkinson had little choice but to initiate hostilities if the Spaniards did not retreat.[18]

Suddenly, almost as if by design, Herrera moved west of the Sabine! Inexplicably the Spaniard ordered his force away from Bayou Pierre. Possibly Herrera had decided that his position was untenable; possibly he had decided that the starvation and illness plaguing his troops had to be eased. Whatever his motive, Herrera's move ended the crisis. His only comment to his superiors was that he was preserving the territory of his nation. Possibly he believed that by avoiding a military defeat Spain might regain the area by diplomacy.[19]

Wilkinson, about to betray Aaron Burr instead of his country, was astounded by Herrera's move. However, he was not stumped for a course of action. Four weeks after the Spaniard withdrew, Wilkinson moved to the Sabine. There he issued a proposal to the Spanish officials: if Spaniards would remain west of the Sabine, Americans would remain east of the Arroyo Hondo; the area in between would become a neutral ground, separating the two nations. On November 4, 1806, Herrera agreed--without consulting his superiors. Despite Herrera's oversight, officials in Mexico City subsequently gave their consent to the agreement, realizing that this pragmatic solution was better than a military defeat. The permanent settlement to the dispute border between Louisiana and

Texas would be left to diplomats in Washington and Madrid. Once more the Red River was the boundary between Texas and Louisiana.[20]

While these pawns were jousting along the frontier, diplomats were making little progress in Europe. Although a commission had been established after the Louisiana Purchase to define the borders of Louisiana and Texas, and although James Monroe and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney had been sent to Spain, a settlement had not been reached. The international impasse was similar to the one that Wilkinson and herrera had solved. Carlos IV, the King of Spain, and his prime minister, Manuel de Godoy, the self-styled Prince of Peace, were determined to hold Florida and Texas. The Americans were hopeful of grabbing at least part of these provinces. Along the border between Texas and Louisiana, Americans were willing to compromise: the Colorado River instead of the Rio Grande was an acceptable boundary for Texas. This solution would have split the province of Texas in half, giving the Americans the rich and fertile portion and leaving the Spaniards the barren and wild area. But Spain remained adamant--and its position was supported by Napoleon and the armies of France. Therefore war was not a solution which the United States considered, at least after Napoleon's intentions were made clear to the American minister in France, General John Armstrong. Unfortunately for the diplomats they could not arrange a temporary settlement as had the soldiers on the frontier.[21]

Defining the Louisiana Purchase was an unenviable task, and the problems multiplied soon after the sale was made. Napoleon sold Louisiana because his American dreams had been shattered, but his aspirations in Europe remained strong. Soon after the sale he threw Europe into war, continuing the conflict that had begun during the French Revolution.

The Americans were attempting to walk a tightrope between the navies of Britain and the armies of France. By 1808 Spain was torn by civil war because of Napoleon's attempt to place his brother Joseph on that nation's throne. The question of Louisiana and Texas was cast into obscurity by the larger problems of national survival. Until 1815 the United States was struggling to maintain its sovereignty against Great Britain. Texas had to wait.[22]

The world war that Napoleon created--and almost won--ended in 1815. Nothing was the same again after the great dictator retired into exile. Spain had lost--or was losing--much of its empire in America, and the new king, Ferdinand VII, was ill-prepared to guide his nation back to supremacy. The United States emerged from the war scarred and in debt; however, Americans reacted boldly and adventurously. The young nation, on the verge of defeat in 1814, convinced itself in 1815 that Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans had recouped all previous losses, and that the United States was entering a golden era of republicanism while Europe was sinking into a leaden period of decadence.[23]

In Europe the leaders seemed bent on fulfilling the American prophecies. In Vienna, Austria, France, and Prussia, the leaders worked to reap the spoils of war rather than render the world from the shambles that Napoleon had made. Spain ineptly demanded that the Congress of Vienna return Louisiana, or at least give it the fifteen million dollars which France had received for the province. The others refused, knowing that Spain would have to accept the decisions they made. England, growing more and more isolated from its European neighbors, watched uneasily.[24]

Spain's problems were legion. Revolutions had swept its American colonies; Mexico, long a money-making province, was in the midst of revolt, and colonies throughout South America were burning with rebellion. Hard-pressed in Europe, as well as in America, Spanish officials had to settle the problem of the boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase--and time had not strengthened their position.[25]

The task of negotiating a settlement fell to the Spanish minister to the United States, Luís de Onís y Gonzales, a career diplomat whose uncle had been the Spanish ambassador to Saxony and Russia. Onis had been the minister to Saxony, and had been in charge of relations with France before his appointment to Washington in October of 1809.[26]

Onís' arrival in the United States had not been greeted with enthusiasm. Indeed, President James Madison had refused to recognize the Spaniard's appointment because of the civil war in Spain. Onís had chafed under his non-recognition and had made his feeling evident to all concerned. By 1814 Onís was extremely unpopular with American officials, including Secretary of State James Monroe. Monroe wrote the American minister in Madrid, George Erving, that Onís was unwelcome in Washington and that the administration would favor his replacement. However, Monroe added, should the Spanish government sincerely wish Onís to remain, a request from the king would suffice to reinstate Onis into good standing. Although the Spanish government balked at lowering itself to asking a favor of the Americans, the request was forwarded, and Onís remained in America. And in 1816 the Spaniard was granted full powers to treat with the Americans concerning the question of the boundaries of Louisiana.[27]

Meanwhile, the Americans had been attempting to settle the

problem by diplomacy in Madrid. In 1815 George Erving had been sent to Madrid to consul with the Spanish Secretary of State for foreign affairs, Pedro Cevallos. The Spaniards had not been willing to discuss the matter, much to Secretary Monroe's disgust. In August of 1816 Cevallos refused to speak with Erving, asserting that all papers concerning the problem had been sent to Onís. Thus negotiations were transferred to Washington at the insistence of the Spanish government. Indeed, Spaniards had transferred the talks without consulting the Americans or even notifying them.[28]

With the removal of the talks to Washington, the situation surrounding the problems of defining the Louisiana Purchase began to improve. Pedro Cevallos, who repeatedly had demonstrated his inadequacy as a diplomat, was replaced by José Garcia de León y Pizarro, a talented and perceptive diplomat who possessed both the ability and the temperament to aid in the solution of the problem. Pizarro was in his forty-sixth year when he was appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs. He had spent more than twenty-five of his years as a diplomat, serving a Spanish minister to Prussia before his appointment to an administrative position. Under his leadership and guidance, Luis Onis was able to negotiate freely and seriously. The tightly reined administration of Cevallos had prevented such movements.[29]

The appointment of John Quincy Adams as Secretary of State in Monroe's administration aided greatly in creating circumstances favorable to a settlement of the dispute between Spain and the United States. Adams had spent most of his life in the diplomatic service. As a teenager in 1781 he had gone with Charles Francis Dana to the Russian court as secretary to the American minister. Later he had served as

American council to Prussia and Russia, and he had been an important member of the American committee negotiating at Ghent during the talks which ended the War of 1812. By 1817 he long had deserted the Federalism of his father in favor of Jefferson's republicanism. Therefore, in light of his diplomatic experience and his political inclination, he was a natural choice to head the Department of State.[30]

Perhaps the most important attribute that Adams carried to the Department of State was his scope and depth of knowledge. Having visited many of the nations of Europe and having studied the nature of many of the people of the world, Adams was uniquely qualified to treat with the Spanish minister on any problem, including the settlement of the boundary between the United States and the Spanish colonies in the New World.[31]

Until 1817 efforts to settle this dispute had been limited to proposals and counter-proposals; each side was unwilling to compromise, maintaining that its claims were just and honest. The differences were many, but the major problem was settlement of the southern and western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase and ownership of Florida. In the Southwest, Spaniards claimed that the Arkansas River was the limit of Louisiana, while Americans claimed that all of Texas had been included in the purchase and that Louisiana extended to the Pacific Ocean. The United States also claimed that Louisiana included part of West Florida and that this area had been bought from France. Spain replied that Florida had never been part of the French domain and could not have been included in the Louisiana Purchase.[32]

Although Onís in 1816 was given full power to settle the problem, several factors delayed initiating negotiations. The administration of

Pizarro in Spain needed time to develop its policies, and the formation of Monroe's administration after the election of 1816 delayed matters until the spring of 1817. However, when Onís received his instructions from the home office in 1817, and when John Quincy Adams took possession of the Department of State, negotiations could begin, at least that early sparring which invariably occurred before major negotiations were begun. By the end of the summer of 1817 Onís was provided with a full set of instructions. However, the proposals of the Spanish government were similar to those already presented: the province of Louisiana had limited and well defined borders which did not include Texas or West Florida. Also, the Spaniards suggested that the Floridas might be sold to Great Britain.[33]

Luís Onís had little confidence in the instructions which his government had forwarded. The United States was in no mood to forsake its claims, and there was a movement afoot in Congress, led by a young Westerner named Henry Clay, to recognize the independence of Spain's rebellious colonies in South America. With apprehension Onís arranged a meeting with Secretary Adams on December 1, 1817, to announce his nation's proposals. As expected, Onís' demands were rejected immediately by Adams. Then the two diplomats began detailed talks, discussing the respective needs of their nations. These talks would last many days and search into many subjects before a final agreement was reached.[34]

Despite Adams' rejection of his offers, Onís evidently believed that he and the New Englander could hammer out an agreement. However, on the same day that he met with Adams he received a notice from Pizarro announcing that the British had offered their good offices to mediate the dispute. This added another dimension to the negotiations--for the

British were not offering their aid from altruism, and England's offer had come as a result of Spain's plea to its European friends for aid. However, the offer was contingent on requests from both Spain and the United States to Britain for mediation. Onís' reply to this news was vague. He asked his superiors to return the talks to Madrid, and he warned them of the dangers of delaying a settlement of the affair. Americans, he asserted, might seize Spanish territory by force if an agreement was not made quickly, and Spanish defenses in both Texas and Florida were appallingly poor. No mention of the English offer was made, and the matter was dropped.[35]

In January of 1818 Adams and Onís again met to discuss their differences. Adams expressed his distress that the Spaniards had wasted time in reaching a settlement, noting that a treaty could be made in a matter of days if Spaniards would negotiate in good faith. The problem, Adams asserted, was not insurmountable. Nonetheless, Onís countered Adams's statement by stating that any treaty made quickly would have to be based on uti possidetis as of 1809; each nation would receive the territory it had possessed that year. This arrangement was clearly unacceptable to the United States because it would deprive it of Texas and most of Florida. Thus negotiations continued.[36]

While these talks were proceeding, Adams warned his Spanish counterpart that problems along the frontier might necessitate American intervention into Spanish territory. In Florida the Seminole Indians had continually raided across the international boundary into American territory. Also, pirates based on the coast of Texas were creating a hazard to American shipping. In the Treaty of San Lorenzo of 1795, Spain had promised to control the natives of its territories and to

prevent their injuring the citizens of the United States. Adams warned that Spain was not fulfilling this agreement. Already General Andrew Jackson, military commander of the southern area of the United States, had been given broad powers to punish the offending Seminoles.[37]

Onís was not impressed by Adams' arguments. On January 16 Adams and Onís again met to discuss the affair. The American raised the thought of using the Colorado River as a boundary for Louisiana and the cession of all territory east of the Mississippi by Spain to the United States in return for the Americans giving up a claim to Texas! Onís' reply was to ask if Adams was referring to the Colorado of Natchitoches. This was one of the Spanish names for the Red River; surely, Onis queried, Adams could not be speaking of the Colorado River which flowed through the middle of the Spanish province. Whether the Spaniard was attempting to cloud the issue or to chide Adams for his boldness in demanding Spanish territory is unclear. However, in his reports to Spain, Onís seemed certain which river the American meant. Nonetheless, Onis used this play on names to stall the issue for several weeks, and he displayed great surprise when Adams explained the situation to him in detail. Onís' shock--real or feigned--delayed the negotiations further, and the futile bantering between the two men continued.[38]

Although the Spaniard seemed to be purposefully delaying the talks, he was waiting for a more favorable time to settle the affair. However, he realized that too much waiting could result in military action on the frontier. Finally, in April, Onís was ordered to offer the Americans a compromise: Spain would cede the Floridas to the United States, settling the eastern boundary dispute, and a line would be drawn between Natchitoches and Los Adaes straight north to the Missouri River,

then follow that stream to its source, thence straight north again, ending the western boundary dispute. Onís had been given instructions that would at least allow the beginning of give-and-take negotiations. This was the moment for which John Quincy Adams had been waiting. However, before Onís forwarded these proposals to Adams, the diplomats were shocked by news from the frontier--Andrew Jackson had invaded Florida![39]

Luis Onís was looking to the end of the cold and wet winter when the news of Jackson's invasion reached him, spoiling his good spirits. He immediately issued protests to the American government. However, despite the uproar which Jackson's bold action created, the action provided the incentive that the diplomats needed to spur them to serious negotiating. After the frontier clash, both Onís and Adams realized that a settlement to the affair was needed quickly to avoid further incident--and possibly war--between the United States and Spain. Neither Adams nor Onís wanted war.[40]

In October, after the furor over Jackson's invasion had abated slightly, the Spaniard made new proposals. Florida would be ceded to the United States, as had been proposed previously. However, in the west the Spaniards were willing to compromise further. A line would be drawn following the Arroyo Hondo as before, but it would then follow the course of the Red River to 32° north latitude, then run north to the Missouri, and then west along that stream's course. It was a small concession, but it was something. Finally, fifteen years after the Louisiana Purchase had been made, negotiations to settle the disputed boundary began in earnest.[41]

Adams rejected the Spanish offer, but countered with his own proposal. The cession of Florida had become assured except for the fate

of Spanish land grants that had been made in that region. Thus the problem was negotiating the western boundary. Adams proposed that a line be drawn running up the Sabine River from its mouth to the 32nd parallel, thence north to the Red, up that stream to its source, then north to the 42nd parallel, and then west along that degree to the Pacific Ocean. This proposal, Adams told Onís, was the final American offer. Spain either could accept these terms or negotiations would end.[42]

Nonetheless, the Spaniard demurred. In mid-November, Onís announced new Spanish terms: the line would begin at the Sabine, but would then go straight north to the Missouri and thence along that river to its source. In the period before Adams' offer and Onís' reply, the Spaniard received permission from his government to withdraw Spanish claims to the Colorado River. However, Onís evidently believed that he could make an agreement without yielding part of Texas and concealed this news from Adams.[43]

At this time the negotiations were delayed by outside events. The matter of Jackson's invasion had to be settled and a new administration assumed control in Spain. Following the invasion of Florida, Spaniards demanded that preparations be made for the damages done by the American troops and that General Jackson be reprimanded publically. Most American officials, including President Monroe, believed that Jackson had made a serious error in judgment and that the United States had been put in an awkward position by his actions. However, John Quincy Adams saw the matter differently. He asserted that Jackson had been merely aiding the Spaniards with their Indian problem; rather than a reprimand, he said, Jackson should be thanked for his actions. Thus

the Spaniards, who believed the affair had given them the upper hand in the negotiations, were presented with a surprising situation. Adams had turned an embarrassing incident into an American advantage by noting that the Spaniards had not performed their promise to control the natives in Florida.[44]

In Spain financial troubles and court intrigues caused the fall of Pizarro's ministry. He was replaced by the administration of the Marqués de Casa Irujo, who had been the Spanish minister to the United States during Jefferson's presidency. Fortunately for the diplomats, this new government continued Pizarro's approach to negotiating. Thus when Onís was notified of the change in government late in November, his instructions were similar to those issued previously by Pizarro. Therefore negotiations continued, altered only slightly by Adams' offensive use of the affair in Florida.[45]

After Onís received his new instructions from Irujo, and after Adams laid the dispute over Jackson's invasion to rest, the two men were near a settlement. On February 1, 1819, the Spaniard issued a revised offer to Adams, embodying new and liberal compromise terms. A line would be drawn up the Sabine to its source, then run north to the Red River; it would then follow that stream to the 95th meridian, thence straight north to the Arkansas and along that stream to its source, then run due west to the Williamette and follow that river to the Pacific. Of course, the Willamette, a tributary of the Columbia, did not flow into the Pacific, but neither Adams nor Onís was armed with specific information concerning the geography of the West. The agreement worked on paper, and for their purposes proved satisfactory.[46]

The Americans rejected Onís' proposal, however, and issued a

counter-proposal. Adams suggested that a line be placed either on the 101st or 102nd meridian, run to the 41st parallel, and then move along that line to the Pacific. Onís responded by offering to fix the boundary at the Sabine north to the 32nd parallel, thence north to the Red, follow that stream to the 100th meridian, run north to the Arkansas, and go up that stream to the 42nd paralle, go west to the Williamette, follow that river to the 43rd parallel, and then go west to the Pacific. Again inaccurate geographical information prevented the diplomats from noting that the Arkansas did not touch the 42nd parallel.[47]

The Spanish proposal was well received by the Americans. President Monroe expressed his pleasure at the terms, noting that a settlement seemed near. However, John Quincy Adams was dissatisfied because the agreement did not include the cession of Texas to the United States. Yet Monroe was adamant that the dispute be settled.[48]

With minor changes the treaty was signed on February 22, 1819. Florida was ceded to the United States in return for that nation's assumption of debts owed by Spain to American citizens. And the Louisiana boundary was similar to that proposed by Onís: it began at the mouth of the Sabine River, it then followed the west or south bank of the Sabine to the 32nd parallel, then ran due north to the Red River, followed that stream along its south or west bank to the 100th meridian, then west straight north to its source, then went due north to the 42nd parallel, and followed that due west to the Pacific Ocean. The boundary was placed on the southern or western banks of the streams mentioned at Adams' demand. He had been forced to give up his claim to Texas; therefore he demanded that Spain in return grant sole ownership of the rivers to the United States. This appeared to be a small matter, for

Spaniards retained the right to navigate the streams; however, Adams' insistence on the south or west bank would later create many problems for the State of Texas in disputes over mineral rights in the beds of the Sabine and Red rivers. Also included in the treaty were minor settlements of claims and damage suits and protection of the rights of Spanish citizens living in the ceded territories.[49]

The Adams-Onís Treaty, as it became known, was greeted with loud protests because it did not secure Texas for the United States. Some officials, led by Henry Clay, wanted to reject the treaty because Adams had forsaken all American claim to Texas. However, there was little hope of success for the treaty's opponents. Adams had negotiated the first agreement which extended American ownership of the Pacific. Also the agreement defined the southern and western boundaries of the Louisiana Purchase. The vagueness of Louisiana had become a festering sore by 1819. Settlers wishing to move into the area along the Red River could not be certain whether they were on American or Spanish soil until this boundary was drawn. Therefore, whatever the drawbacks of the treaty, its ratification was inevitable. Although disputes over the fate of Spanish land grants in Florida delayed the exchange of ratifications until 1821, the agreement withstood criticism. The United States once more had definite borders in the Southwest, and once more the Red River had an important role. The Red had separated Spanish and French possessions in the New World for more than half a century; in 1819 it marked the division of Spanish Texas and the United States. With this agreement, the area along the Red River was open for willing settlers to carve homes in the wilderness.[50]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Thomas Jefferson, "Description of Louisiana," Annals of Congress, Eighth Congress, 2 Sess., 1804-1805, pp. 1498-1525; "State Papers and Correspondence Bearing Upon the Purchase of the Territory of Louisiana," 5 vols., House Doc., Doc. No. 431, Fifty Seventh Congress, 2 Sess.

[2]Paul L. Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 26 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), VIII, pp. 252-255; see also, William Dunbar to Thomas Jefferson, n.d., Eron Rouland, ed., Life, Letters, and Papers of William Dunbar (Jackson, Mississippi: Press of the Mississippi Historical Society, 1930), pp. 122-123; Dunbar to Jefferson, January, 1804, ibid., pp. 126-127; Henry Dearborn to Dunbar, April 4, 1804, ibid., p. 128; Dunbar to Jefferson, May 13, 1804, ibid., pp. 130-133; Dunbar to Jefferson, June 9, 1804, ibid., pp. 133-135; Isaac J. Cox, "The Exploration of the Louisiana Frontier, 1803-1806," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1904 (Washington: G.P.O., 1905), pp. 151-166.

[3]Dunbar to Peter Walker, June 10, 1804, Rowland, ed., William Dunbar, pp. 135-137; Dunbar to Constant Freeman, June 14, 1804, ibid., pp. 137-138; Cox, "Exploration of the Louisiana Frontier," pp. 159-161.

[4]Ibid.; Dearborn to Dunbar, May 24, 1805, Rowland, ed., William Dunbar, pp. 152-153; Dunbar to Jefferson, July 6, 1805, ibid., pp. 154-156; Jefferson to Dunbar, May 25, 1805, Ford, ed., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, X, pp. 126-127; Andrew Wheat, Mapping the American West: A Preliminary Study (Worchester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1954), pp. 64-66.

[5]See Marquís de Casa Calvo to Juan Bautista de Elguezabal, June 27, 1804 (Bexar Archives, University of Texas); Nemesio Salcedo y Salcedo to Casa Calvo, October 8, 1805 (Bexar Archives); Dunbar to Jefferson, July 6, 1805, Rowland, ed., William Dunbar, pp. 154-156; Salcedo to Antonio Cordero y Bustamente, October 8, 1805 (Bexar Archives).

[6]Dearborn to John Sibley, December, 1804, Letterbook of the Natchitoches Indian Factory, Office of Indian Affairs; Thomas Jefferson, "Message from the President of the United States Communicating Discoveries Made in Exploring the Missouri, Red River and Washita by Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley and Mr. Dunbar; with a Statistical Account of the Countries Adjacent, February 19, 1806," Annals of Congress, Ninth Congress, 2 Sess., 1805, pp. 1076-1105; Cox, "Exploration of Louisiana Frontier," Annual Report of the A.H.A., 1904, pp. 164-165.

[7]Ibid., pp. 159-160.

[8]Ibid., pp. 160-162.

[9]Ibid.; Salcedo to Cordero, May 3, 1804 (Bexar Archives); Casa Calvo to Elquezabal, June 27, 1804 (Bexar Archives); for the attitude of the Spanish officials, see Odie B. Faulk, The Last Years of Spanish Texas (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1964), pp. 119-127.

[10]Elquezabal to Salcedo, August 29, 1804 (Bexar Archives); Salcedo to Cordero, January 1, 1806 (Bexar Archives); Salcedo to Cordero, January 28 (Bexar Archives); Cox, "Louisiana Frontier," Annual Report, A.H.A., 1904, pp. 167-168.

[11]Probably the exclusion of Casa Calvo had little effect on the attitude of Spanish officials. Salcedo had already demonstrated his dislike of foreigners and Casa Calvo's passport would have made little difference. See Faulk, Spanish Texas, pp. 122-123.

[12]Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis, An Account of the Red River in Louisiana Drawn Up from the Returns of Messrs. Freeman and Custis to the War Office of the United States, Who Explored the Same in the Year 1806 (Washington: N.p., 1807). Unless otherwise noted the remainder of the narrative regarding the expedition is taken from this work.

[13]Salcedo to Sebastian Iturrigary, August 25, 1806 (Bexar Archives); Dionisio del Valle to Cordero, March 19, 1806 (Bexar Archives); Francisco Viana to Cordero, June 6, 1806 (Bexar Archives).

[14]Cox, "Louisiana Frontier," Annual Report, A.H.A., 1904, p. 173.

[15]See Faulk, Spanish Texas, p. 124; Miguel Serrano, "Estado que Manifiesta la Fuerze Total y Destinos de las Tropas que Existen en esta Provincia," June 26, 1806 (Bexar Archives).

[16]Walter Flavius McCaleb, The Aaron Burr Conspiracy (New York: Wilson-Erickson, Inc., 1936), pp. 93ff.

[17]James Wilkinson to Cordero, September 23, 1806 (Bexar Archives); Cordero to Wilkinson, September 29, 1806 (Bexar Archives).

[18]McCaleb, Burr Conspiracy, pp. 111-117.

[19]Ibid., p. 117.

[20]Wilkinson to Cordero, October 29, 1806, Ernest Wallace and David M. Vigness, eds., Documents of Texas History (Austin: Steck Company, 1963), pp. 37-38; Simon de Herrera to Wilkinson, November 4, 1806, ibid., p. 38.

[21]See "Relations with Spain," Annals of Congress, Ninth Congress, 1 Sess., 1805-1806, pp. 1156-1224.

[22]See Philip C. Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands: The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), pp. 1-28.

[23]Ibid.

[24]George Dangerfield, The Awakening of American Nationalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1952), passim; Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, p. 59.

[25]See John Lynch, The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808-1826 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1973).

[26]Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 13-14.

[27]Ibid., pp. 15ff.

[28]Ibid., pp. 71ff; "Relations with Spain," Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 1658-1670.

[29]Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 57-70.

[30]See Samuel Flagg Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of American Foreign Policy (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1950).

[31]Ibid.

[32]See James Monroe to Luis de Onís, January 19, 1816, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 1635-1640; Onís to Monroe, February 22, 1816, ibid., pp. 1640-1647; John Dick to Onís, June 10, 1816, ibid., pp. 1647-1657.

[33]Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 71ff; George Erving to Monroe, September 22, 1816, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 1661-1667; Pedro Cevallos to Erving, n.d., ibid., p. 1667; Onís to Monroe, January 16, 1817, ibid., pp. 1668-1670.

[34]Onís to John Quincy Adams, December 10, 1817, ibid., pp. 1704-1705; Adams to Onís, December 16, 1817, ibid., p. 1705; Onís to Adams, December 29, 1817, ibid., pp. 1705-1714; Onís to Adams, January 5, 1818, ibid., pp. 1714-1727; Onís to Adams, January 8, 1818, ibid., pp. 1727-1732.

[35]See Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 105-130.

[36]Adams to Onís, January 16, 1818, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 1737-1739; Onis to Adams, January 24, 1818, ibid., pp. 1739-1746.

[37]Bemis, John Quincy Adams, pp. 179-183.

[38]See Adams to Onís, March 12, 1818, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 1748-1777; Onís to Adams, March 23, 1818, ibid., pp. 1780-1798.

[39]Onís to Adams, March 27, 1818, ibid., pp. 1798-1804; Onís to Adams, May 7, 1818, ibid., pp. 1814-1815; Onís to Adams, June 17, 1818,

ibid., pp. 1818-1819; Onís to Adams, June 24, 1818, ibid., p. 1819; Onís to Adams, July 8, 1818, ibid., pp. 1819-1822; Onís to Adams, July 21, 1818, ibid., pp. 1822-1823.

[40]Onís to Adams, June 24, 1818, ibid., p. 1819; Onís to Adams, July 21, 1818, ibid., pp. 1822-1823; Adams to Onís, July 23, 1818, ibid., pp. 1823-1827; Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 137-142.

[41]Negotiations were terminated during the summer after Jackson's invasion. In October, Spanish officials agreed to resume the talks, see Erving to José Pizarro, August 31, 1818, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, p. 1887; Onís to Adams, October 18, 1818, ibid., pp. 1889-1890; Adams to Onís, October 23, 1818, ibid., p. 1890; Onis to Adams, October 24, 1818, ibid., pp. 1890-1900; "Translation of Propositions Received in Mr. Onís's Letter of October 24, 1818," ibid., pp. 1900-1902.

[42]Adams to Onís, October 31, 1818, ibid., pp. 1902-1906.

[43]Onís to Adams, November 16, 1818, ibid., pp. 1906-1912.

[44]See correspondence in ibid., pp. 1930-2101; see also Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 148ff.

[45]Ibid., pp. 154-155; Onís to Adams, December 12, 1818, Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 2101-2109.

[46]Onís to Adams, January 11, 1819, ibid., pp. 2109-2110; Onís to Adams, January 16, 1819, ibid., p. 2110; Adams to Onís, January 29, 1819, ibid., pp. 2110-2111; Onís to Adams, February 1, 1819, ibid., pp. 2111-2113; "Treaty Project," Onis to Adams, February 6, 1819, ibid., pp. 2114-2119.

[47]"Counter Project of a Treaty," Adams to Onís, February 13, 1819, ibid., pp. 2119-2124.

[48]See Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 158-165.

[49]Ibid., pp. 205-214; "Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits, Between the United States of America and His Catholic Majesty," Annals of Congress, Fifteenth Congress, 2 Sess., II, 1819, pp. 2129-2135.

[50]"Resolution of the Senate Advising Ratification," February 24, 1819, ibid., p. 2135; "Ratification by the President of the United States," ibid., pp. 2135-2136; Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands, pp. 191ff.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT RAFT

By 1819, when the Adams-Onís Treaty was signed, the lower valley of the Red River, that part below the Great Raft, was in the process of rapid settlement by Americans. Alexandria, near the mouth of the river, and Natchitoches, the old French trading post, had become centers of trade and marketing. Rapides Parish, where Alexandria was located, had 6,065 citizens in the census of 1820, while Natchitoches County that year had 7,486 inhabitants. Between these two towns were farmers, cutting timber and selling it to lumbermen, grubbing out stumps, and planting their fields with cotton. Traders still wandered the region, selling goods at isolated farmhouses and bartering for furs with the few Indians still living there. Louisiana was booming, thanks in part to statehood which had come in 1812, and the northern portion was gaining population rapidly.[1]

Upriver from the Great Raft, however, the valley of the Red River in 1819 was still largely the domain of Indians, as it had been for uncountable centuries. Prior to that time, few Americans had ventured into the area because national ownership of the region was uncertain. Then, when the Adams-Onís Treaty removed that problem, three barriers to settlement remained: the land to the south of the Red was controlled by Spaniards to 1821 and then by Mexicans, and their policies toward American settlers fluctuated rapidly; the land to the north of the Red

was forbidden to white settlers, for it had been set aside by the government of the United States as a permanent home for Indians, many of them refugees from the East; and, third, the Great Raft was blocking navigation of the river and flooding the surrounding countryside with backwater. Before the upper portion of the Red could be settled permanently, each of these barriers would have to be modified or changed drastically.[2]

As early as 1763, when Spain received Louisiana from France, Spaniards realized that the vast, sprawling province should be populated. But how to populate the area was a difficult problem. Despite repeated attempts by the Spanish government to encourage its citizens to colonize Louisiana, few Spaniards were willing to forsake civilization for the wilderness. However, after the American Revolution, some citizens of that republic were lured across the Mississippi by a Spanish promise of free or inexpensive land. At first Spanish officials were favorable to the colonization of Louisiana by Americans. However, these officials gradually grew fearful that Americans were plotting to wrest the province from Spanish control. This fear was heightened by the French Revolution, which caused the death of many aristocrats in Europe and which found many supporters in the United States. Spanish officials, most of them noblemen, were uninspired by the free-thinking republicanism espoused by revolutionaries. Indeed, many Spaniards, fingering their ruffled collars, saw American colonists as potential revolutionaries. In 1795 all foreigners were banned from the Spanish colonies--and all Frenchmen were ordered arrested![3]

After the Louisiana Purchase, Spanish officials in Texas became increasingly suspicious of the intentions of Americans who wished to

enter the province. They believed that the grasping attitude of the Americans concerning the boundaries of Louiaiana indicated rampant imperialism toward Spanish colonies. Thus Texas was closed to Americans in 1804 by order of Commandant-General Nemesis Salcedo.[4]

The passage of time gradually relieved these fears of American aggression, although several filibusters into Texas during the second decade of the nineteenth century had originated in the United States. By 1820 Spanish officials were again concerned by the scant population in Texas. Their fears were overcome by their desires to populate the province. Thus, they were receptive to the plan of Moses Austin in late 1820 to bring American settlers into Texas. However, they were careful to assure the loyalty of such Americans by demanding an oath of allegiance from the settlers.[5]

More directly, the creation of the Indian Territory, accompanied by a prohibition of white settlement of the area, prevented the population of the Red River valley in the present-day state of Oklahoma. However, the Indian policy of the United States led to the construction of the first military post on the Red River above Natchitoches. Hoping to prevent conflicts among the Indians, the United States Army established Cantonment Towson near the confluence of the Red and Kiamichi rivers in May of 1824. A small garrison was stationed at the post to keep the peace. However, the need for the troops elsewhere and the difficulties of supplying the post caused by the raft on the Red River forced the cantonment to be abandoned in 1829.[6]

After Cantonment Towson was abandoned, Indian troubles increased. A year after the troops left the post on the Red, they returned to establish Camp Phoenix. The post was opened in November of 1830; in 1831

it was renamed Cantonment Towson, using the name given to the original post at the site. Also in 1831 the army established another post on the Red. Farther upriver, near the mouth of the Washita, Cantonment Leavenworth was erected for reasons similar to those which had caused the building of Cantonment Towson.[7]

The establishment of the two military posts accentuated the need for the removal of the raft from the Red River. Boats carrying supplies to these posts were forced to circumnavigate the raft by entering the bayous and cut-offs along the course of the river, extending the time needed to make the voyage and endangering the vessels and their cargos. The time had come for the government to begin the long-awaited effort to remove the obstruction from the river.[8]

Many people had urged the government to remove the raft because the advantages were obvious. Of course, the primary gain would be easier navigation of the Red River. Cleared of this obstruction, the river would become a highway of commerce and settlement into the interior of the continent. This alone was justification for the necessary appropriations to remove the raft. However, other advantages were probable. The raft clogged the river to the intent that water which ordinarily would have flowed harmlessly downstream was backed up, flooding the low-lands which surrounded the river. Thus large areas of present-day northeast Texas, northwest Louisiana, southwest Arkansas, and southeastern Oklahoma were inundated annually. These lands were rich and fertile, ideal for farming, but could not be settled because of the high waters created by the raft.[9]

Removal of the raft could come only after Congressional action. Andrew H. Sevier, a leader of the Arkansas delegation, presented several

documents to Congress containing information about the raft. These were the first detailed reports which Congress received concerning the problem. One of the reports was especially informative because it came from Dr. Joseph Paxton of Mount Prairie, Arkansas, in the southwestern part of that territory. Paxton, a long-time resident of the region and a trained scientist, detailed the problems which the raft had created, and suggested methods for its removal.[10] To Sevier he wrote:

> Opening the raft, then, would reclaim at least three-fourths of the land at present occupied, and rendered entirely useless by it [the water], and thus would place at the immediate disposal of the United States, property in its present situation of no value, but which would then be worth the enormous sum of seven hundred thousand dollars.[11]

Realizing that Congressmen might be skeptical of such a large figure, Paxton explained his calculations:

> The raft is eighty miles long, and will average twenty in width. This section... would be more completely reclaimed, and when reclaimed, would be better, inasmuch as it would be more free from inundation, than the bottoms of this river generally; and the numerous lakes in this valley that formed by the river so frequently cutting across the necks of its bends, are filled up.--These circumstances, together with its advantageous situation in other respects, would render it equal, if not superior, in intrinsic value, to any section of its size whatever.[12]

Paxton tried to convince the national legislators that removal of the raft was in the national interest: "Opening the raft would prevent an immense destruction of United States' property. It must not be forgotten that the raft is not standing still, but is gradually progressing upwards, like a destroying angel, spreading desolation over a most lovely country."[13] This growth of the raft was costing "the appalling rate of near one hundred thousand dollars in each ten years."[14] Moreover, wrote the doctor, the raft was impeding the settlement of the area behind it, leaving tens of thousands of beautiful and fertile

acres desolate with so few people that they hardly constitute "three respectable counties." Next in his argument he appealed to American patriotism, asserting that if the raft was not removed the region up-river would remain under the influence of Spaniards and Indians.[15]

Fearing that his audience of Congressmen might not fully understand the advantages of appropriating funds for the removal of the raft, he summarized the benefits that would follow. Among these were easier transport for supplies bound for Cantonment Towson and greater control over the Indians living along the upper Red River. These two elements were directly linked together, for at the time he was writing, Paxton knew that Army officials were considering the removal of the soldiers from Cantonment Towson because of the difficulties of supplying them. Such a removal, he declared, would be a grave mistake; what was needed was more troops, not fewer. Angrily he wrote that the government "as well might send a bear in pursuit of an antelope, as troops after the Osages."[16]

Finally Paxton asserted that the lumber along the Red River that would be available once the raft was removed was worth the expenditure. He wrote:

> About forty miles above the head of the raft it [the forest] commences growing, and seems to take place and grow in the same kinds of soil that the cypress does below. It would be difficult for a person acquainted only with upland cedars, to form a correct idea of the beauty, size, and symmetry of those that grow in the bottoms of Red river. I have seen, with wonder and never-ceasing astonishment, those vast, lofty cedar groves, in many places for three hundred miles above the settlement. They had frequently been described to me, but I had formed no adequate idea of them; nor do I believe it is in the power of language to give a representation of their imposing grandeur, that would not fall far short of reality on seeing them. They would doubtless be a valuable acquisition, particularly to the Navy, and to the city and

> neighborhood of New-Orleans; nor can I believe that the time is far hence, when the cedars of Red river will become as celebrated in these United States, as those of Lebanon were once in Palestine.[17]

After praising the virtues of opening the Red River, Paxton turned to the matter of performing the task. Although he begged Congressmen to realize that he was not an expert concerning cost analysis, he asserted, "Opening the raft, however, would doubtless far more than remunerate government for any money that, with proper management, would be necessarily expended."[18] He suggested several ways of removing the raft, such as cutting canals to divert the waters of the Red into old channels of the river that had been forsaken by the whims of the river. By diverting the water the river bed could then be cleared of the raft. Also he suggested that the bayous and swamps along the river should be dammed to prevent the gathering of another raft because much of the driftwood which had formed the original raft had come into the stream from these sources. Finally, low banks that were apt to be washed away by high waters should be built up to prevent such an occurrence. Paxton concluded that the raft should be removed as soon as possible for the sake of the nation and the area along the river.[19]

The first Congressional appropriation for the removal of the raft, made on May 23, 1828, was twenty-five thousand dollars, a miniscule sum considering the magnitude of the task at hand. However, for four years little was done except plan. In 1832 Captain Henry Miller Shreve of the Army Corps of Engineerings, the first captain to take a steamboat above the rapids on the river at Alexandria, ascending the Red in the Enterprise in 1815, was appointed to direct the removal of the obstruction. At the time of his appointment, Shreve was Superintendent of the Corp's Western Waters Department. Originally, the Corps had planned to

circumvent the raft by digging canals and deepening bayous rather than by clearing the main channel. However, by 1832 the Chief Engineer of the Army, Brigadeer General Charles Gratiot, had determined that the plan "... of opening short canals and deepening bayous with a view to effect a passage around the raft, is not such as to ensure permanent benefit...."[20] Gratiot therefore wrote to Shreve, asking him to re-appraise the situation.[21]

On September 29, 1832, Captain Shreve replied to Gratiot that "by the application of the proper means to accomplish such an object...the raft may be removed at much less expense than canals can be excavated...and better navigation would of course be obtained...."[22] Shreve suggested that the raft could be removed easily if all obstructions below it were cleared; then the timbers of the raft could be loosened and allowed to float downstream. This not only would facilitate the removal of the raft, but also would improve the navigability of the lower section of the stream. Finally, Shreve suggested that the task could be performed by the snag-boat Archimedes, which he had designed and which at that time was working on the Ohio River.[23]

Evidently impressed by Shreve's ideas, General Gratiot on February 8, 1833, ordered the captain to proceed with all available machinery to the Red River and to commence operations to remove the raft. After a short delay, created by his absence from the Corps' western headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, Shreve departed for the Red River, arriving at the Great Raft on April 11, 1833.[24]

The day after his arrival Shreve reported to Gratiot, relating his first impression of the raft. He wrote that he had traveled five miles into the raft and had found it surprisingly easy to remove. However,

he noted that the serious problem would be disposing of the timber after it had been removed from the raft. He wrote, "it is impracticable to clear the banks of the timber and willows that grow to low water mark" because of the level of the water in the river. Hopefully he added that if this problem was solved the raft could be cleared away in two months.[25]

A month after his first report to Gratiot, Shreve wrote that some forty miles of the raft had been cleared. Thirty-one sections of the raft had been removed "by drawing them out, log by log, and separating them in such manner as to pass them down the bayous...." He continued that the bayous were filled with timber, and then the lumber was packed solid by ramming a snag boat against the logs. Thus two problems were solved. The unwanted timbers were disposed of and the bayous were filled, preventing the run-off of water from the main channel.[26]

On June 23, 1833, progress ceased because of low water. During the three months of work four snag boats, the Archimedes, the Souvenir, the Java, and the Pearl, had removed more than seventy miles of the raft. Shreve happily reported that the main channel was deepening because of the increased current created by the removal of the raft and the closing of the bayous. Shreve, evidently secure in his methods, ended his report by declaring that he was "...prepared to state to the department, in positive terms, that the whole of the great raft can be removed in such a manner as to be as permanent and safe a steamboat navigation as any part of the river, from the raft to the Mississippi."[27] All that was needed was congressional funds.

In his report to the Chief Engineer, detailing all the work done during the fiscal year 1833, Shreve noted that "the expense of removing

the raft...will be repaid at least threefold by the lands that must evidently be redeemed in the immediate line of the raft."[28] He then asked that Congress appropriate one hundred thousand dollars to complete the task.[29]

The national legislators responded to Shreve's request by allotting fifty thousand dollars for the project and work continued the next season. However, to the dismay of Shreve and his superiors, the raft had replenished itself during the off season. While the engineers had been prevented from working, the low waters had continued to deposit driftwood in the main channel. In addition, several of the dams that had been placed in the bayous had rotted and broken, allowing timbers to return to the raft and allowing water to drain from the main channel. The problems of removing the raft were greater than Shreve originally had supposed.[30]

Although Shreve had estimated that the raft could be removed for one hundred thousand dollars, costs continued to mount. In 1835 Congress again allotted fifty thousand dollars, bringing the total appropriation to Shreve's figure of one hundred thousand. However, work was not completed on the raft. Indeed, additional appropriations of forty thousand dollars in 1836, sixty-five thousand in 1837, and seventy thousand in 1838 were necessary to continue the task.[31]

Despite these large outlays of funds, the raft remained. Shreve had believed that the raft could be removed in a matter of months, but in December of 1839 Captain Abram Tyson, in command of the snagboat Eradicator, accompanied by a keel boat and a large group of men, reached the raft to begin operations. Work continued on the removal until April 15 when "an unusual high freshet in the river brought down a

heavy run of timber, and formed a new raft of 2,150 yards in the same place from which the raft had been removed...."[32] This new raft blocked the channel entirely, trapping two steamboats on the upper section of the stream. Also, in June of 1839 all appropriated funds had been expended; almost a quarter of a million dollars had been spent--and the river was still blocked by the contrary raft. Shreve, still in charge of the operation, estimated that another eighty-five thousand dollars was needed to complete the task.[33]

Henry Shreve evidently realized that Congressmen were growing unhappy with the continued expense involved in removing the raft. Therefore in his report for the fiscal year 1839 he added another list of advantages which would be obtained by removing the raft. However, Congressmen were unimpressed and no funds were appropriated in 1839 or 1840. Meanwhile, work on the raft stopped--and the obstruction grew. In December of 1839, Quartermaster General Thomas Jessup informed Secretary of War Joel Poinsett that supplies for Fort Towson would have to be transported overland because the raft made navigation of the Red River impossible. By the end of 1839 the raft had grown a mile in length. More than two hundred thousand dollars and five years of work would be negated by the whims of the river unless action was taken.[34]

Everyone realized that work had to be resumed to remove the raft. Finally in September of 1841 Congress appropriated seventy-five thousand dollars for the project. Meanwhile, the burden of directing the removal of the raft had passed from Henry Shreve to Colonial Stephen Harriman Long, an experienced engineer and scientist who had led an expedition into the Trans-Mississippi West twenty years before his appointment. In the spring of 1841 Long took command of operations on the

Red River.[35]

On reaching the Red, Long found the difficulties that Shreve had faced. These included constant additions to the raft made by each rise of the water, and the disposal of the timber which had been extracted from the raft. Work on the raft was limited to a few months each year, January to June, because of a marked decrease in the depth of the water during the summer and fall. During periods of low water, the river was flooded by sporatic rains on its upper watershed. These dramatic rises and falls of the water left large deposits of driftwood, enlarging the raft. Also, the timber which had been placed in bayous rotted and escapped, re-entering the raft. These problems had been compounded by repeated delays in progress to repair aging machinery. Long reported that on arriving at the raft he had found the snag boat Eradicator "lying at the shore of the river out of repair, and unfit for service."[36] The failure of Congress to appropriate funds for the project had prevented proper maintenance.

By Long's estimation seventy-five thousand dollars were needed for the removal of the raft. However, his report contained no promises of early completion and immediate benefits as had Shreve's. The Red River raft had become a complex and challenging problem, one not to be taken lightly. Long realized that many more dollars and man-hours would be needed to open the Red River.[37]

Although the Congress answered Long's request by appropriating seventy-five thousand dollars in 1841, little progress was made. Problems with the raft continued to negate the efforts of the engineers. Hoping to facilitate the task, Long turned to private contractors. In 1841 Thomas T. Williamson was contracted to remove three miles of the

raft for fifteen thousand dollars. Additional funds were provided for keeping the river open for four years.[38]

Williamson's contract granted him the right to dig artificial channels across bends of the river. Thus the river would be straightened and the loops of the bends could be used to store unwanted timber from the raft. However, residents of the river below the raft complained that the cut-offs would increase both the volume and speed of the river's current, flooding their lands and ruining their crops. Therefore Williamson was not allowed to create artificial channels. This increased expenses and slowed progress. Although the work was completed during the spring of 1842, the cost of removing three miles of raft was considerably more than fifteen thousand dollars. And a large freshet of water late in the spring brought large quantities of driftwood downriver after the work was completed, erecting a raft larger than the one that had been removed! The work had to be done again.[39]

Williamson continued to labor on the raft until 1845. That year the superintendent of the project, Captain Charles Linnard, wrote:

> Work of this kind cannot be done by contract. He who has sufficient means will not hazard them in so precarious and costly an undertaking and he who has not is, of course, unable to accomplish anything. Such work can be done only by the Government, with its own means, and under well-selected superintendents. It is not merely necessary that the materials of which they are composed be...destroyed....[40]

Thus the experiment in using private contractors to remove the Red River raft ended in failure. Most of the funds that had been appropriated in 1841 had been expended by 1845; and Congress was unwilling to make additional allotments. Work on the raft slowed to a standstill. Work was resumed briefly in 1852. Reacting to public demand, the Congress appropriated one hundred thousand dollars for the project and Colonel

Joseph E. Johnston was appointed to command the effort. The thrust of the work was consumed by the construction of canals around the raft. However, continued failures to develop a permanent solution caused work to cease again in 1856.[41]

Work resumed under the direction of Charles A. Fuller, a civilian agent of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. By 1855 only six thousand dollars of the appropriation had been spent. Fuller's report for 1855 gave little hope for a permanent solution to the problem of the raft. His suggestions were limited to annual expenditures for the removal of each new raft which formed with the rising water. Thus the project had deteriorated from permanently improving the Red River for navigation to merely repeating the task of removing the obstructions each year. This meant that the river would be open for navigation only a few months each year, and that an annual appropriation would be necessary. Congress, unwilling to see huge amounts of government funds float down the Red River each year, refused further appropriations after 1852. The nation was descending into the greatest crisis of its history, and national legislators were too busy with debates over slavery and trans-continental railroad routes to be concerned with inland waterways, especially one that had proven so expensive and uncooperative as the Red River. Congress would not appropriate additional funds for the removal of the raft until 1872, long after the problems of the 1850s had been solved by war and replaced by other questions.[42]

Although the first effort to remove the raft had failed, much of the upper Red River valley had been settled by 1855. A revolution in 1836 had ended the problem of Mexican ownership of Texas, and that state's subsequent annexation by the United States had led to the

migration of many Americans to the area along the southern bank of the Red. The north bank of the river had been populated by members of the Choctaw and Chicksaw nations; the populations of both Louisiana and Arkansas had increased measurably reaching more than 30,000 and 20,000 respectively in 1850. In the 1830s Shreveport, Louisiana, had grown on the west bank of the Red about one hundred miles north of Natchitoches. Jefferson, Texas, founded in the 1830s on Big Cypruss Creek fifty miles from the Red River, had become one of the leading towns in Texas with a population of more than five thousand by 1850. Also, by 1850 Jefferson was a leading waterport--because of the raft. With the raft clogging the main channel and backing up the waters of the stream, the water level was raised sufficiently to allow steamboats to reach Jefferson. Because of this Jefferson was the trading center of Northeast Texas. However, the prosperity which Jefferson enjoyed was tied to its connection with the Red. The removal of the raft would stop the shipment of goods and end the years of plenty.

Despite this growth of the population of the Red River valley, by 1850 the section west of the ninety-seventh meridian remained desolate, the home of the unchallenged masters of the southern plains, the Comanche. Since 1800 land west of the 97th meridian had remained unchanged. The buffalo still roamed the land feeding the natives, and the Comanche still swept down from their homes along the Red River to spread destruction across Texas. Thomas Jefferson's dream of an American expedition to the source of the Red River remained unfulfilled. In 1852 Randolph B. Marcy set out on one of the last great explorations of the American West to discover the headwaters of the Red River--and to still Jefferson's ghost.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Census for 1820, Fourth Census, Book I (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1821), p. 31.

[2]Emma Estill Harbour, "A Brief History of the Red River Country Since 1803, Chronicles of Oklahoma, XVI, No. 1 (March, 1938), pp. 58-65.

[3]See Odie B. Faulk, The Last Years of Spanish Texas (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1964), pp. 121-125.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Mattie Austin Hatcher, The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement (Austin: The University of Texas, Bulletin No. 2714, 1927), pp. 131-132; Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1936), VI, pp. 291-293; Walter P. Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, 2 vols. (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1952), I, pp. 80-81.

[6]Harbour, "Red River Country," Chronicles of Oklahoma, pp. 71-75.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.; Charles Thomas to Jefferson Davis, January 11, 1854, House Doc., Doc. No. 24, Thirty-third Congress, 1 Sess.; Thomas S. Jessup to C. M. Conrad, December 20, 1851, ibid.

[9]Report of the Chief Engineer of the Army for 1873 (Washington: G.P.O., 1874), pp. 644-646.

[10]"Letter from Dr. Joseph Paxton, of Hemstead County, to the Hon. A. H. Sevier, Delegate to Congress from the Territory of Arkansas, in Relation to the Raft of Red River," August 1, 1828, House Doc., Doc. No. 78, Twentieth Congress, 2 Sess. Paxton's letter is eighteen pages in length; following citations denote page numbers within the document.

[11]Ibid., p. 10.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 11.

[16]Ibid., p. 12.

[17]Ibid., p. 13.

[18]Ibid., p. 14.

[19]Ibid., p. 16.

[20]Henry M. Shreve to Charles Gratiot, September 29, 1832, House Doc., Doc. No. 98, Twenty-third Congress, 1 Sess.

[21]Ibid.; Report of the Chief Engineer of the Army for 1874 (Washington: G.P.O., 1875), pp. 704-709. Herein is printed a brief history of the early attempts to remove the raft; see also, Report for 1901, p. 1011; Charles Gratiot to Henry M. Shreve, September 5, 1832, House Doc., Doc. No. 98, Twenty-third Congress, 1 Sess.

[22]Henry M. Shreve to Charles Gratiot, September 29, 1832, House Doc., Doc. No. 98, Twenty-third Congress, 1 Sess.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Charles Gratiot to Henry M. Shreve, February 8, 1833, ibid.; Henry M. Shreve to Charles Gratiot, April 12, 1833, ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Henry M. Shreve to Charles Gratiot, May 8, 1833, ibid.

[27]Henry M. Shreve, "Report of Work Done at the Great Raft on Red River, Louisiana," ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Report of Chief Engineer of the Army for 1901, p. 1011.

[32]Henry M. Shreve to Joseph G. Totten, June 12, 1839, House Doc., Doc. No. 1, Twenty-fifth Congress, 1 Sess.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Thomas Jessup to Joel Poinsett, December 8, 1839, ibid.

[35]Stephen H. Long to J. J. Albert, June 1, 1841, Senate Doc., Doc. No. 64, Twenty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess. Long's letter is twenty-two pages in length; following citations denote page numbers within the document.

[36]Ibid., p. 21.

[37]Ibid., pp. 17-22.

[38]Charles Fuller to J. E. Johnston, January 18, 1855, Senate Ex. Doc., Doc. No. 62, Thirty-third Congress, 2 Sess.

[39]Chief Engineer's Report for 1873, pp. 644-649.

[40]Charles Linnard, "Report of Work Done at Red River Raft," Senate Doc., Doc. No. 37, Twenty-eighth Congress, 1 Sess.

[41]Chief Engineeer's Report for 1901, p. 1011; Charles A. Fuller to J. E. Johnston, "Report of Survey of Red River, in the Region of the Raft," Senate Ex. Doc., Doc. No. 62, Thirty-third Congress, 2 Sess.; Charles A. Fuller to James Kearney, February 17, 1855 (Supplementary Report), ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850 (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), p. 474; Webb, ed., Handbook of Texas, I, p. 909.

CHAPTER VII

RANDOLPH MARCY AND THE TERRA INCOGNITA

By mid-nineteenth century, the United States had expanded across North America, reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to Mexico. From New York to California, Americans could call the land theirs. The United States was coming of age, but despite the refinement of Boston and the bustling of San Francisco, much of the region stretching from the Mississippi to the Rockies and from Texas to the Dakota country lay unknown and unsettled, guarding its secrets from white men. Intripid explorers such as Zebulon Pike and John C. Fremont had wandered the American West, but much of the fact of what Jefferson had bought in 1803 remained veiled except to the eyes of wandering tribes of aborigines.

Thomas Jefferson had organized two expeditions to ascent the Red River to its source. Both had failed. Zebulon Pike had set out across the West in 1805 to discover the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers. He had failed, mainly due to problems of his own making. In 1820 Stephen Harriman Long, a dour and scholarly explorer, had failed to reach the Red River because he mistook the Canadian for his goal. Thus the upper reaches of the Red River remained the domain of the Redman. This situation could not be allowed to continue. The Red River, an important international boundary for many years, and, in 1850, the northern border of Texas, could not remain unknown to its owners. The task fell to Captain Randolph Barnes Marcy of the Fifth Infantry, an infantryman who possessed unique and outstanding abilities.[1]

Randolph Marcy was born in Greenwich, Massachusetts, in 1812, and graduated from the United States Military Academy twenty years later. Until 1849 his career had been undistinguished. That year he guided a group of two thousand westering settlers from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, blazing a trail along the southern bank of the Canadian as he went. This endeavor had won Marcy acclaim for his talents, along with further assignments as an explorer. From 1849 until 1852, Marcy explored the region surrounding the headwaters of the Trinity, Brazos, and Colorado rivers of Texas. During this period he noticed "the remarkable fact that a portion of one of the largest and most important rivers in the United States...remained up to that late period wholly unexplored and unknown, no white man having ever ascended the stream [the Red River] to its sources....In a word, the country embraced within the basin of Upper Red river had always been to us a 'terra incognita.'"[2] On March 5, 1852, Randolph Marcy was instructed to remedy this situation.[3]

Marcy was ordered to make his exploration without unnecessary delay. Therefore he proceeded to the Red River, arriving near the mouth of the Little Wichita River in May of 1852. His second-in-command was Brevet Captain George B. McClellan, a close friend and his future son-in-law. Arrangements were made for supplies to be shipped overland by wagons from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to the mouth of Cache Creek, the official starting point of the expedition. Therefore, Marcy, McClellan, and a small contigent of soldiers followed the Red from the mouth of the Little Wichita to Cache Creek, arriving there on May 13. Finding that the supply train had not yet arrived because of heavy rains, Marcy explored the surrounding area. The explorer was impressed by the plant

life of the area, noting the size and quantity of trees. The next day the baggage train arrived, and the expedition began in earnest.[4]

Staying along the river, the party moved westward. On the seventeenth buffalo tracks were found, exciting the explorers. Marcy remarked, "We are anxiously awaiting the time when we shall see the animals themselves, and anticipate much sport."[5] However, the Indians who had been hired as guides informed the party that the tracks were five days old, and that the buffalo were far away. The sport would have to wait. However, that evening the explorers got an unexpected and dubious surprise. One of the guides informed them that a cougar had crossed the river nearby and was heading toward their camp. Immediately the soldiers were armed and set their hunting dogs loose. The dogs, elated to be free from their shackles, sprinted into the darkness. However, Marcy noted that "the zeal which they manifested in starting out from camp, suddenly abated as soon as their olfactories came in contact with the track...." Nonetheless, the soldiers convinced the rightfully cautious canines to continue, and the cougar was soon treed. Marcy arrived at the scene first and "fired several shots, which took effect and soon placed him 'hors du combat.'"[6] Marcy's first big game trophy of the journey measured eight and a half feet from nose to tail.[7]

The next day the party was forced to leave the Red River because the rugged terrain prevented the wagons from transversing the banks. In the afternoon the party was astonished by a freshet in the waters of a small stream on which they had camped. An hour after they had found the stream empty except for occasional holes of water, it was filled with a "perfect torrent." Marcy was amazed because the skies had been

clear for several days; his Indian guides informed him that it was a gift from the Great Spirit.[8]

The next day the rains that had swollen the creek reached the party, drenching the men and making progress impossible for two days. On the twenty-second the group continued, having sighted the Wichita Mountains. That afternoon they reached a small tributary of the Red which they named Otter Creek in honor of the abundant inhabitants of the stream. A short excursion up this stream to its exit from the Wichitas revealed deposits of quartz which contained small flakes of gold. These same formations would lure latter-day prospectors to the region to search vainly for a mother lode.[9]

The rains which had slowed progress continued, leading Marcy to conclude that, because the region was usually dry, the effects of the Wichita Mountains protruding into the atmosphere had created the heavy downpours. On May 26 they sighted their first buffalo, and one was killed by an Indian guide. Marcy noted that the country changed near the mountains. Also, the river was different there. Whereas it previously had been wide and slow moving, it now was a narrow, rushing torrent.[10]

On the twenty-seventh the explorers met a party of Wichita Indians who had been hunting buffalo. The natives had many horses loaded with meat and were bound for their villages. The chief told Marcy that he had been searching for the white men for several days, having heard of their presence and wanting to know what their business was in his land. Marcy replied that he was going to the headwaters of the Red River, and assured the chief of the peaceful intent of his mission. Also, gifts were distributed among the natives. Marcy then warned the chief that

the Republic of Texas had become part of the United States, and that depredations into Texas would result in severe punishment for the offending Indians.[11]

After these preliminaries were concluded, Marcy asked the chief for information about the country upriver. The reply was disheartening. Marcy recorded the chief's assertion that

> ...we would find one more stream of good water about two days' travel...that we should then leave the mountains, and after that find no more fresh water to the sources of the river. The chief represented the river from where it leaves the mountains as flowing over an elevated flat prairie country, totally destitute of water, wood, or grass, and the only substitute for fuel that could be had was the buffalo 'chips.'[12]

Marcy then asked if holes of fresh water could be found. The chief replied that all water was soaked into the porous earth as soon as it fell from the sky.[13]

The natives soon left the party, but their information stayed. The explorer wrote that "it would seem that we have anything but an agreeable prospect before us."[14] But he would not forsake his mission: "As soon...as the creek will admit of fording, I shall, without subjecting the command to too great privations, push forward as far as possible into this most inhospitable and dreaded salt desert."[15] Randolph Marcy had not received command of the expedition for his timidity.[16]

The next day the explorers discovered by lunar observations that their camp was near the point "where the line dividing the Choctaw territory from the State of Texas crosses the Red River."[17] Accordingly the exact spot was marked by carving the longitude (100^{o} 0' 45") and latitude (34^{o} 34' 6") on a convenient tree. Also the next day, May 29, McClellan located and marked the point where the 100th meridian crossed the Red River.[18]

On May 30 the party marched to the confluence of the Red and its North Fork. Here the stream was six hundred and fifty yards wide. After passing the confluence of the streams, the explorers progressed up the North Fork without hardship for two days, arriving at the mouth of the Salt Fork. The contents of this stream were brackish and salty, polluting the contents of the main channel. Also, the waters in the main stream were found to contain minerals and salts which made it unpalatable. However, fresh-water springs were located which provided sufficient quantities of drinking water. Near the mouth of the Salt Fork the party found a large mountain which they named Mount Webster in honor of Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State.[19]

Ascending the North Fork, the party found signs of a hunting party of Comanche Indians; however, no natives were sighted. Marcy noted that his guides, who were Delaware and Shawnee, were enemies of the Comanche, but that they scouted far away from the main column each day without fear; he remarked that they were ready to fight any plains Indians if the odds were not greater than six to one.[20]

On June 7 Marcy and two of the Indian guides set out to explore the surrounding area. After traveling about three miles, the trio found fresh buffalo tracks. Marcy, still anxious to make his first kill, decided to follow the tracks, hoping to overtake the animals. On reaching a rise in the countryside, he sent one of his guides to its summit to survey the area for animals. The guide, John Bull, rode to the appointed spot, and then began a series of gyrations which ended by his leaving at a full gallop toward the horizon. Marcy and his companion followed to the top of the rise, arriving in time to sight Bull in hot pursuit of a fleeing buffalo. Marcy wrote that the native was

"mounted upon one of our most fractious and spirited horses, that had never been a buffalo before, and coming near the animal he seemed perfectly frantic with fear, making several desperate surges to the right and left, any one of which must have inevitably unseted his rider had he not been a most expert and skillful horseman."[21] Bull, on drawing near the beast, emptied his rifle in its direction; however, the great animal continued his fast pace. Reloading as he rode, the native pulled closer and "placed another ball directly back of the shoulder; but so tenacious of his life is this animal, that it was until the other Delaware and myself arrived and gave him four additional shots, that we brought him to the ground."[22] The three then took the best parts of the carcass and located a spring which Marcy determined would be the site of the next camp.[23]

The same day of the buffalo hunt Marcy dispatched McClellan with an interpreter to follow Comanche tracks found along the path. However, the party returned to report that the natives had departed southward.[24]

The party then proceeded up the North Fork signing the Llano Estacado on June 12, 1852. That same day the explorers camped near the remains of hunting lodges of a band of Kiowa Indians. The native guides told the white men that the camp had been Kiowa rather than Comanche because the former dug "holes for their fires about two feet in diameter, while the latter only make them about fifteen inches."[25]

Leaving this site, the party pushed farther up the stream, reaching its headwaters on June 16. There a bottle was buried to commemorate the occasion. A note placed in the bottle read in part:

> On the 16th of June, 1852, an exploring expedition, composed of Captain R. B. Marcy, Captain G. B. McClellan, Lieutenant J. Updegraff, and Doctor G.C. Shumard, with fifty-five men of company D fifth infantry, encamped here, having traced the north branch of Red river to its source.[26]

Also, a nearby tree was emblazoned with the message: "Exploring Expedition, June 16, 1852." The first leg of the journey had been completed.

The day after he found the source of the North Fork, Marcy and eleven of his companions set out northward to find the Canadian River. Marching about twenty-five miles, the group arrived at the Canadian and soon located a point on the stream which Marcy recognized from his exploration in 1849. Having completed this mission, the party returned to the main camp. The next day, June 20, Marcy directed his men southward toward the main fork of the Red River--and its source.[28]

For six days the explorers traveled southward, sighting a party of Kiowa on the twenty-second, but avoided contact. On June 26 they reached a massive prairie dog town which moved Marcy to remark on the characteristics of the burrowing rodent. He asserted that one town would cover 896,000 square acres, for he estimated "the holes to be at the usual distances of about twenty yards apart, and each burrow occupied by a family of four or five dogs, I fancy that the aggregate population would be greater than any other city in the universe."[29] Furthermore, noting that some had asserted that the rattlesnake and the prairie dog lived in harmony in the same holes, he remarked that "...we have satisfied ourselves that this is a domestic arrangement entirely at the variance with the wishes of the dogs, as the snakes prey upon them, and must be considered as intruders."[30] In support of this conclusion Marcy wrote that a rattlesnake that had been killed by the

explorers was found to have swallowed a full-grown prairie dog.[31]

Pulling himself away from his evident fascination with the prairie dogs, Marcy pushed southward, skirting the edge of the Llano Estacado. The party, on June 27, reached the main channel of the Red near its exit from the Staked Plains. They found the river nine hundred yards wide and flowing over a sandy bed. The next day they reached the Llano, rising eight hundred feet above the prairies. Marcy and McClellan set out to discover a route onto the escarpment which would allow passage for the wagons; however, this proved to be a futile task. Nonetheless, the excursion provided the explorers with excitement.[32]

During the brief survey of the area, the two explorers sighted a herd of antelope grazing quietly among a stand of mesquite. Marcy, ever a hunter, was determined to call one of the beasts within range of his rifle. Therefore he began a series of bleats with his call, which had been brought for such an occasion. Accordingly, one of the horned beasts approached. Marcy readied his weapon and was about to fire when his attention was captured by "...a rustling which I heard in the grass to my left. Casing my eyes in that direction, to my no small astonishment I saw a tremendous panther bounding at full speed directly towards me, and within the short distance of twenty steps."[33] His role now changed from the hunter to the hunted, Marcy continued:

> As may be imagined, I immediately abandoned the antelope, and directing my rifle at the panther, sent a ball through his chest, which stretched him out upon the grass about ten yards from where I had taken my position. Impressed with the belief that I had accomplished a feat of rather more than ordinary importance in the sporting line, I placed my hand to my mouth, ('a la savage,') and gave several as loud shouts of exultation as my weak lungs would admit, partly for the purpose of giving vent to my feelings of triumph, and also to call the Captain. [McClellan].[34]

However, Marcy's experience was not over. When McClellan approached and the two men returned to the spot of Marcy's feat, they found the prey "...upon his feet, making off."[35] Acting quickly, McClellan discharged his rifle into the beast and administered a clubbing with its stock "to give him his quietus."[36] The adventure was over.

Marcy, to his credit, noted that: "It occurred to me afterwards that it would not always be consistent with one's safety to use the deer-bleat...unless we were perfectly certain we should have out wits about us in the event of a panther or large bear (which is often the case) taking it into his head to give credence to the counterfeit."[37] Laconically, the explorer summed up the incident by writing, "The panther had probably heard the bleat, and was coming towards it with the pleasant anticipation of making his breakfast from a tender fawn; but, fortunately for me, I disappointed him."[38]

Undeterred, Marcy set out exploring the next day. Because the terrain was too rugged to support the wagons, the main party was left behind while Marcy, McClellan, and ten men pushed onto the Llany Estacado. Following the course of the river onto the Llano, the men were awed by the grandeur of the terrain. The great height of the escarpments encased the river bed gave the explorers the feeling of walking into a massive tunnel. The walls of valley "were worn away, by the lapse of time and the action of the water, and the weather, into the most fantastic forms, that required but little effort of the imagination to convert into works of art, and all united in forming one of the grandest and most picturesque scenes that can be imagined."[39] Marcy, as always ready to invoke his powers of description, wrote:

> We all, with one accord, stopped and gazed with wonder and admiration upon a panorama which was not for the first time exhibited to the eyes of civilized man. Occasionally might be seen a good representation of the towering walls of a castle of the feudal ages, with its giddy battlements pierced with loopholes, and its projecting watch-towers standing out in bold relief upon the azure ground of pure and transparent sky above. In other places our fancy would metamorphose the escarpments into a bastion front, as perfectly modeled and constructed as if it had been a production of the genius of Vauban, with redoubts and salient angles all arranged in due order. Then, again, we would see a colossal specimen of sculpture representing the human figure, with all the features of the fact, which, standing upon its lofty pedestal, overlooks the valley, and seems to have been designed and executed by the Almighty artist as the presiding genius of these dismal solitudes.[40]

But Marcy was aware of the power--and possible danger--of nature. He saw hidden within the grandeur and beauty of nature "...its unreclaimed sublimity and wildness...," the power and scope of the scene inspired him "...with that veneration which is justly due to the high antiquity of nature's handiworks, and which seems to increase as we consider the solemn and important lesson that is taught us in reflecting upon their continued permanence when contrasted with our own fleeting and momentary existence."[41]

Despite their wonderment at the beauty of the area, the explorers suffered. On the Llano fresh water was scarce, if not nonexistent. Several soldiers attempted to drank the brackish, mineral-laden waters of the river, but were rewarded by severe stomach cramps and vomiting. Nonetheless, the men retained their cheerfulness, discussing "...the relative merits of different kinds of fancy iced drinks would could be procured in the cities, and the prices that could be obtained for some of them if they were within reach of our party."[42] Even at might the group suffered. Sleep was an elusive goal despite the hardships of the day. Marcy noted that his "slumbers were continually disturbed by

dreams, in which I fancied myself swallowing huge draughts of ice-water."[43] One of the group offered two thousand dollars for one bucket of cold, clear water. However, Marcy sadly replied that "...this was one of those few instances in which money was not sufficiently potent to attain the object desired."[44]

On July 1, the determination of the explorers was rewarded by the discovery of a fresh water spring--and the source of the Red River. After refreshing themselves at the spring, the party proceeded to a place where the valley closed, uniting the walls of the escarpment. Here a spring burst "out from its cavernous reservoir, and, leaping down over the huge masses of rock below, here commences its long journey to unite with other tributaries in making the Mississippi the noblest river in the universe."[45] A nearby tree was blazed with the date. Marcy had seen the headwaters of the Red River. More important to him and his men at the moment was the fresh, sweet water which trickled from the ground, quenching their thirst.[46]

Two days after finding the source of the river, the party reached the main camp. On July 4, 1852, the explorers "turned our faced toward home...."[47] Captain McClellan, riding ahead of the main party, found a large cougar. Either through luck or skill he killed the cat with one shot, bringing the group's total feline trophies to three. The rest of the journey proved uneventful, and on July 28 the explorers marched into the confines of Fort Arbuckle, Indian Territory.[48]

Marcy had completed his task. He had found the sources of the main and north forks of the Red River. Moreover, he had fulfilled his task without loss of life, and, as he noted, the animals which were taken were returned "in fine condition, and are now much better capable

of performing service than when they came into our hands."[49]

The mission had been performed in the peace and serenity of nature; but the country to which the explorers returned was boiling with hatred and fear. While one of Jefferson's dreams was becoming reality, the nation that he had helped create was bursting at its seams--rent asunder by its sections.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Elliott Coves, ed., The Expedition of Zebulon Montgomery Pike to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, During the Years 1805-6-7, 3 vols. (New York: Francis Harper, 1895); Edwin James, Account of an Expedition from Pittsburg to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the Years 1819 and '20 by Order of the Hon. J. C. Calhoun, Sec'y of War: Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, 4 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904-1908), Volumes XIV, XV, XVI, XXII of Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels; Randolph B. Marcy, Adventure on Red River (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), edited by Grant Foreman, pp. 3-4.

[2]Randolph B. Marcy, "Expedition of the Red River of Louisiana in the Year 1852," Senate Ex. Doc., No. 54, Thirty-Second Congress, 2 Sess., pp. 2-3. This document is the report of Marcy regarding his exploration. Unless otherwise denoted the following is taken from this report, and pagination indicates pages within the document.

[3]Ibid., pp. 2-5; see Foreman, ed., Adventure on Red River, pp. v-vii.

[4]pp. 4-8.

[5]p. 10.

[6]p. 11.

[7]pp. 10-11.

[8]p. 12.

[9]p. 14.

[10]p. 15.

[11]pp. 17-18.

[12]p. 18.

[13]p. 18.

[14]p. 18.

[15]p. 18.

[16]p. 18.

[17]p. 18.

[18]p. 19.

[19]pp. 20-21.

[20]pp. 25-26.

[21]p. 27.

[22]p. 27.

[23]pp. 27-28.

[24]p. 28.

[25]pp. 32-33.

[26]pp. 38-39.

[27]p. 39.

[28]pp. 40-41.

[29]pp. 45-48.

[30]pp. 47-48.

[31]p. 48.

[32]pp. 49-50.

[33]p. 50.

[34]pp. 50-51.

[35]p. 51.

[36]p. 51.

[37]p. 51.

[38]p. 51.

[39]p. 56.

[40]p. 56.

[41]p. 56.

[42]p. 53.

[43]pp. 53-54.

[44]p. 54.

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[46]p. 55.

[47]p. 58.

[48]pp. 59-82.

[49]p. 82.

CHAPTER VIII

HIGHWAY OF WAR

In April of 1861 civil war burst upon the United States. The nation seemed suddenly to have gone mad, allowing itself to be destroyed by Southern "fire-eaters" and Northern abolitionists. However, the conflict was long in brewing. Slavery had troubled the nation since Washington's administration, and the struggle between the sections had grown steadily worse. The dispute over Missouri's entrance into the Union was, as John Quincy Adams wrote, "the first page of a tragic drama," and the Compromise of 1820 was a stop-gap measure rather than a solution to the problem of the extension of slavery into Western territories. The debate about the tariff in the early 1830s had led the nation to the brink of war, while the Compromise of 1850 had prevented war while making no one happy. In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act, establishing popular sovereignty in the Western territories, had brought bloodshed to Kansas, and the Supreme Court's refusal of Dred Scott's plea for freedom had made compromise an evil word.

After 1820 the Southern states had grown increasingly fearful of Federal infringement of their rights, and by 1850 South Carolina was proclaiming to the world that it had not lost its sovereignty by joining the Union. Should the nation follow a course detrimental to South Carolina's welfare, leaders in that state felt they were within their rights by seceding. South Carolina had joined the Union by choice; it

could leave by the same manner. The North denied this assertion, replying that the Union was inviolate. When Abraham Lincoln, a Republican who had made known his views on slavery, and whom the South deemed unacceptable, was elected to the presidency in 1860, South Carolina exercised its right to secede and demanded that all Federal possessions in the state be turned over to its officials. Lincoln refused, and on April 19, 1861, the "More Perfect Union" fragmented into war, torn by hatreds as old as the nation.

Both Rebel and Yankee believed the war would be brief. But Bull Run was followed by Shiloh, and mothers and wives wept because of deaths at strange-sounding places like Cold Harbor and Island No. 10. The nation soon learned the true meaning of civil war.

By the end of 1863, the Deep South was starving, strangled by the Federal "Anaconda." Lincoln had blocaded the coast of the South during the first year of the war, and the fall of Vicksburg late in the spring of 1863 had given the North control of the Mississippi, cutting off supplies from the West. It seemed only a matter of time until the South would be forced to capitulate. But how long? And how many more men would die?

After the fall of Vicksburg, General Ulysses S. Grant, commander of Federal forces in the Trans-Mississippi West, and General Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, commander of the Department of the Gulf, believed that Mobile, Alabama, should be the next target for a concerted Union assault. However, President Lincoln and Commanding General of the Army Henry W. "Old Brains" Halleck did not agree. The South was surrounded, and Federal armies were slicing into the heartland of the Confederacy. However, one state in the Confederacy stood scarred but unconquered--

Texas. Lincoln and Halleck, under the urgings of exiled Unionists from Texas, such as Andrew Jackson Hamilton, believed that the establishment of Federal supremacy in Texas was an urgent need to assure a quick end to the war. The psychological benefits from a successful invasion would be many, while an end to the trade between Texas and Mexico would deny rebels in the West a major source of supplies. Also, the disturbing news of the arrival of French troops in Mexico in June of 1863 created fears of an arrangement between France and Texas--possibly the annexation of the state to France. Federal conquest of the state would preclude any such agreement, and it would strengthen the American position with regard to France's violation of the Monroe Doctrine in Mexico. Additionally, huge quantities of cotton--more than enough to ease the shortages in the textile mills of the North--were stored in Texas.

With these goals in mind, Lincoln and his military chief urged Banks, who had more than thirty thousand men under his command, to plan and execute an invasion of Texas. Halleck advised Banks that the invasion would "be best and most safely effected by a combined military and naval movement up Red River to Alexandria, Natchitoches, or Shreveport, and the military occupation of Northern Texas."

However, Banks had his own ideas of how Texas should be assaulted. To him the long, lightly defended coast of Texas was an ideal target for any proposed invasion. The possibility of a concerted attack on the Texas coast had been explored in the latter part of 1862 when a large Federal force had easily captured the port city of Galveston. Although Union troops had been quickly forced out of the city by a well-conceived and executed Confederate assault, led by "Prince John"

Magruder, the success of the original attack had shown that the forces in Texas could not defend the entire strength of the state's coast-line. Banks believed that a well-armed attack could knife into the state and allow him to establish a Federal stronghold.[1]

Therefore in September of 1863 a large Federal flotilla, including four gunboats and twenty-two troop carriers, steamed up the Sabine River to attack the Confederates at Ft. Griffin. The rebel position was an earthwork fort defended by forty-seven men under the command of Lieutenant Richard W. Dowling. Amazingly, the Federal force was thrown back by the defenders, who maintained a withering fire of one shell every two minutes. Meanwhile, missiles from the cannon aboard the Federal ships bounced harmlessly off the earthen walls. The Union force was forced to retreat, leaving two gunboats disabled, and three hundred and fifty men in the hands of the rebels. Texas remained Confederate.[2]

After his plan to invade at Sabine Pass failed, Banks remained opposed to a suggested invasion via the Red River. Instead he decided that another strike along the coast would better serve his country. Accordingly, troops were landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande, and the defenders were routed. A Federal beachhead had been established in Texas, but it consisted of only one town. Lincoln was unimpressed.[3]

While Banks was attempting to invade Texas along the coast, the President and his close advisers had grown more adamant in their suggestions to the commander. To Banks, Halleck wrote on January 4, 1864, that Major General William T. Sherman agreed "that the Red River is the shortest and best line of defense for Louisiana and Arkansas and as a base of operations against Texas."[4] Banks chaffed under this pressure, asserting that the Red River was a dangerous and difficult route for

invasion, but Halleck persisted. Finally in late January, Banks ceased his protests, writing to Halleck his agreement that the Red was the shortest and best line on assault. The reasons for his sudden change in attitude were simple. Sherman had offered to loan part of his force in Mississippi to the effort, Halleck seemed determined, and Lincoln had a propensity for removing commanders who were overly quarrelsome. Indeed, Banks had received his position in Louisiana because the former commander, Banjamin F. Butler, had lost the President's favor. Also rumors persisted that huge stores of cotton were located along the Red River, enough to make a money-wise general wealthy.[5]

Once Banks was convinced, his only problem was carrying out the invasion. To coordinate the effort, Banks on January 25 wrote to Brigadier-General Frederick Steele, commander of the Department of Arkansas, asking for aid. The same day he wrote Sherman, asking what assistance he could provide. Also, he asked Halleck for specific instructions. Halleck, characteristically replied that he had no intention of designing a campaign for Banks, adding that he was pleased to see that the validity of his suggestions for an invasion up the Red River finally had been recognized. Also, the general-in-chief refused to appoint an overall commander for the expedition.[6]

Sherman responded to Banks missive by coming to New Orleans in March. He was fresh from a slashing excursion across Mississippi, and he wanted to command the invasion up the Red. However, he found Banks prepared for the invasion and ready to lead the expedition personally. Inasmuch as the latter outranked him, Sherman promised to send as many men as possible to Banks and left, grumbling that Banks was delaying the invasion to attend the inauguration of the new Union governor of

Louisiana, Michael Hahn.[7]

General Steele's reply to Banks was as elusive as that from Halleck. He complained that elections were soon to be held in Arkansas, and that his troops would be needed to oversee the balloting. In Mississippi, Sherman noted, "If we have to modify military plans for civil elections, we had better go home." Nonetheless, Steele wondered if a mere feint by his forces toward Shreveport, the primary target of the invasion, would suffice. He was tired, under-manned, and over-worked.[8]

Except for Sherman, Banks' colleagues seemed little concerned with his plight, or with the success of the mission. However, Grant, who had opposed the project since its inception, believed that all available Federal forces should be utilized east of the Mississippi, but wanted to aid Banks if possible. Early in March he was appointed General-in-Chief of the Army, replacing Halleck, and on March 15 he wired Steele, "Move your force in full cooperation with General N. P. Banks'. A mere demonstration will not be sufficient."[9] Grant's reputation for brevity and straight-forwardness was well deserved.

The last cog in the machinery for an invasion was completed when Admiral David Porter promised his cooperation, declaring that he would ascend the Red River with "every ironclad vessel in the fleet." Banks was ready--at least materially--for the invasion of Texas. The Red River Campaign was about to begin. Almost fifty thousand men would be sent against Confederate defenders in northwestern Louisiana and East Texas.[10]

The massive Federal land force would be under the commander of Major General Banks. Yet Halleck's refusal to appoint an overall commander, a decision that would plague the expedition, created a vacuum

of authority, leaving the design and execution of the campaign to the commander of the Department of the Gulf. Although Banks could have chosen another man to lead the force in the field, the glories of a successful invasion of Texas--which he believed assured--lured him from the refinements and delights of the Crescent City; Nathaniel Banks was a man who believed himself destined for greater things--even the presidency.[11]

Nathaniel Prentiss Banks had been born in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1816. His formal education had been cut short by his family's economic situation. Finding employment at the textile mill where his father worked as a superintendent, he had received the nickname, "Bobbin Boy of Massachusetts," which clung to him in later life. Despite this humble beginning, Banks was determined and ambitious, teaching himself Latin and Spanish as well as oratory and acting. However, he had turned to law, passing his bar exams in 1839. He had decided to make politics his future. As a Democrat he had been elected to the Massachusetts lower house in 1849 and to the national Congress in 1852. He had been reelected to Congress in 1854 as a member of the Know Nothing Party, beginning his conversion to Republicanism. In 1958 he had been elected governor of his home state and retained that position until 1860 when he became president of the Illinois Central Railroad, succeeding George B. McClellan.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Banks had been commissioned a major general of volunteers. His first service had been in the Department of Annapolis, but he had been transferred to the Department of the Shanandoah, where he had received the dubious honor of facing Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Despite Jackson's successes, Banks had fought

well. Afterwards he had been in charge of the defenses of Washington until his appointment as commander of the Department of the Gulf, where he had taken part in the siege of Vicksburg.[12]

As a soldier Banks was more determined and confident than talented. At Vicksburg he had ordered direct assaults which had resulted in heavy losses. However, his determination had aided in the success of the siege. Banks was one of the many political generals of the Civil War, appointed for his attitudes and inclinations rather than for any military prowess. Ambitious to a fault, he eyed the presidential election of 1864 with relish, believing that his past services combined with a successful invasion of Texas would sweep him into the highest office in the land. Therefore he enthusiastically assumed command of the Red River Campaign. Throughout his life, determination and hard work had sufficed, overcoming his deficiencies. As the invasion of Texas began, he had little doubt that the same formula would succeed--and the "Bobbin Boy" would bask in the appreciation of his nation.[13]

Banks' colleagues did not share his optimism. Sherman believed him incompetent to command a large-scale operation, noting that he was better at gala affairs or in political debates than at killing people. However, Sherman had little patience with citizen soldiers--especially those who commanded operations he desired to lead. Steele, who would show his disrespect for Banks during the campaign, though him excitable and unorganized. Only Grant had confidence in Banks because of his determination at Vicksburg; determination was an attribute that Grant admired.[14]

Unfortunately for Nathaniel Banks, numerous Confederates, whose determination had been grizzled and hardened by years of adversity, were

waiting for his invasion on the Red River. These were the men who would teach Banks another attribute--humility.[15]

Since the failure of the Federal flotilla at Sabine Pass, Confederate authorities in the Trans-Mississippi West had waited for another assault on Texas. This was the direct concern of three men: Lieutenant General Edmund Kirby-Smith, commander of the Department of the Trans-Mississippi headquartered at Shreveport; Major General Richard Taylor, commander of the District of Western Louisiana, also centered at Shreveport, and Major General John Bankhead Magruder, commander of the District of Texas, whose headquarters wandered around the state with the commander. Kirby-Smith and Taylor were convinced that the Federal invasion would come via the Red River; Magruder kept busy--and agitated--by the landing which Banks had ordered at the mouth of the Rio Grande, believing that the main Federal column would strike there.[16]

Through the winter of 1863-1864, Kirby-Smith and Taylor worried over the prospects of a Federal invasion, believing that the assault would come when the water level of the river rose to allow passage of gunboats and troop transports. Then news of Sherman's thrust into Mississippi arrived. The meaning of this appeared clear: the next major Federal operation would be east of the Mississippi. Officials in Mobile braced for an onslaught, and Kirby-Smith and Taylor relaxed--but only slightly. For his part, Magruder continued to eye the Federal troops at Brownsville.[17]

Despite the appearance of Federal intentions, the reality of Banks' presence in Louisiana bothered Taylor. Could Banks attack Texas without support from Sherman? he asked Kirby-Smith. The reply was equally

baffling; Kirby-Smith wrote, "I still think that the enemy cannot be so infatuated as to occupy a large force in this department when every man should be employed east of the river, where the result of the campaign this summer must be decisive of our future...."[18] Evidently Kirby-Smith agreed with Grant; Mobile seemed the logical target. However, Banks was not in Louisiana for nothing. Preparations had to be made for a Federal invasion. Taylor was ordered to gather his forces, and Magruder was asked to move his troops from Texas to the Red. The first order was executed; Taylor martialed his forces on the Red. However, Magruder was unable to comply with the command. Public officials in Texas considered "Prince John" an autocrat, and they opposed stripping Texas of its defenders. When Magruder attempted to march his force from Texas across the Sabine, a public outcry arose. Magruder was forced to remain in Texas with many of his troops. However, the aid Taylor received from Texas would prove decisive.[19]

To defend the Red River, Richard Taylor had less than fifteen thousand men. Banks had more than twenty-five thousand. The situation looked grim for the Confederates. However, the rebels held one advantage; they were commanded by an experienced and talented warrior--Richard Taylor, the son of former President Zachary Taylor.[20]

Richard Taylor had been born near Louisville, Kentucky, on his family's estate, "Springfields." His education had ranged from private tutoring to studying at Edinburgh, Harvard, and Yale. In 1845 he had graduated from Yale, and in 1848 he had established his own estate, "Fashion," in Saint Charles Parish, Louisiana. Because of the influence of his father, Taylor originally had been a Whit, but his political inclination had changed toward the Democratic party during the 1850s--

although he had opposed secession. In 1861 Taylor was elected a delegate to the secession convention, where he had been swayed by the emotions of the times and voted for secession. Appointed chairman for military and naval affairs at the convention, Taylor had argued that the South should prepare itself for war--which he believed was inevitable. In July of 1861 he had been appointed a colonel of the 9th Louisiana Infantry, and in October he had been made a brigadier-general. Serving under Stonewall Jackson, Taylor had seen duty in the Shenandoah Valley and in the Seven Days' battles, demonstrating his courage and skill. In July of 1862 he had been sent to his home state as commander of the District of Western Louisiana. There he enjoyed his command by constantly harrassing the Federals in New Orleans with raids on their outposts and by seizing gunboats that ventured too far upriver. Personally, "Dick" Taylor was easy to respect and hard to like. He was stubborn, quick-tempered, and quixotic, characteristics which, combined with boldness and skill, made him a valued commander; however, these same characteristics often earned him the spite and contempt of his fellow officers. Kirby-Smith, his immediate superior, found him difficult, argumentative, and, at times, antagonistic. For his part Taylor thought the commander of the Trans-Mississippi West was self-centered and bureaucratic, noting that "Hydrocephalus at Shreveport [Kirby-Smith's headquarters] produced atrophy elsewhere.[21] Despite these personal differences between the two men, Taylor's ability to fight was beyond question.

The invasion began on March 12 and it was a muddled affair from the start. Sherman had sent ten thousand troops from Mississippi by transports under command of Brigadier General Andrew J. Smith, and Admiral

Porter's flotilla entered the Red River carrying these men. Two divisions under Smith's command were landed at Simsport, a few miles up the Atchafalaya River. From Simsport, Smith marched his men to the northeast toward Fort De Russy, the first Confederate fortification on the Red. Meanwhile, Porter pushed his fleet upriver, coordinating his attack with Smith so that rebel positions could be assaulted from land and water. Porter's fleet numbered fifteen ironclads and four tinclads as well as several troop carriers. However, Banks and the bulk of the Union force remained in New Orleans, waiting for the inauguration of Governor Hahn.

Commanding the Confederates in the area between Simsport and Fort De Russy, Major John G. Walker received the distressing news that a massive Federal column had been embarked at Simsport, more than fifteen thousand Yankees said the reports. Walker, with less than four thousand effective soldiers, determined that the two-pronged Federal attack had made his position untenable. He must retreat. Although his estimate of the Federal force at Simsport was grossly inflated, Walker's position indeed was insecure. Smith's two divisions numbered almost ten thousand, more than twice as large as Walker's force. Also, to remain between De Russy and Simsport courted engulfment of the Confederate force. Should the Federal gunboats pound the fort into submission, Walker's line of retreat would be endangered, perhaps lost. Thus Walker retreated to Bayou Du Lac, twenty miles to the west of Fort De Russy and out of harm's way for the moment.[22]

Walker's retreat cleared the path to the back door of Fort De Russy for Smith's divisions. On March 13, scouts reported the retreat of the rebels to Smith, and the commander ordered his forces toward

Marksville, a small town five miles on the main road southwest of Fort De Russy. On the fifteenth these troops reached the Confederate position and began preparations for a siege.[23]

While Smith's soldiers had been enjoying a walk across the Louisiana countryside, Admiral Porter's naval expedition had been busy. To deter the Yankees, the Confederates had placed several barricades in the Red. Almost two days were spent in breaching these obstacles; however, on the fifteenth the ironclads Eastport and Neosho broke through the barriers and proceeded to the Confederate fort, arriving the same time as Smith's column.[24]

The battle was joined almost immediately. Smith's troops surrounded the fort, and Porter's gunboats shelled the rebels. Inside the fort three hundred Confederates waited for the inevitable. About six o'clock, two hours after the battle began, Brigadier-General Joseph Mower personally led the Third Division into the fort. The defenders, out-manned and shellshocked, surrendered. Union losses were thirty-eight dead and wounded.[25]

Hoping to catch the rebels at Alexandria, Porter sent his fastest gunboats ahead. However, they arrived in time to see the last Confederate steamer pass beyond the horizon. General Taylor had opposed Kirby-Smith's suggestion to construct Fort De Russy, and he had little faith that it would effectively block a Federal invasion. Realizing that an engagement with the invaders at Alexandria would amost surely end in defeat, Taylor had his munitions and material loaded on steamers and moved upriver to Natchitoches. The quickness of the invasion caught the Confederates before they had massed. Taylor's only choice was to retreat until he could unity his command and ready a concerted defense.[26]

To achieve this goal, Taylor moved to Bayou Bouef, twenty miles to the southwest of Alexandria. There he joined the commands of Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac, and Brigadier-General Alfred Mouton. Having collected almost seven thousand men, Taylor began his retreat toward Natchitoches, watching the Federals and waiting for the right moment and place to make his stand.[27]

While Taylor was making his orderly retreat, Porter moved part of his force from Fort De Russy to Alexandria to assume control of the abandoned town, seizing three cannon which the Confederates had inadvertently left behind. On March 20, Banks arrived. With him were the forward elements of his fifteen thousand troops. The remainder of his men was strung along the roads between New Orleans and Alexandria. The Confederate position appeared to be worsening. A concerted effort upriver by Banks' troops and Porter's gunboat would surely carry any Confederate defenders. However, several problems loomed in the background. General Grant, who had become commanding general of the army, was determined that the troops which Sherman had loaned to Banks should be returned as soon as possible. On March 26 he wrote to Banks that should it appear by mid-April that Shreveport could not be taken by the end of that month, Smith's two divisions should be returned by Sherman immediately. Grant still believed the war would be won in the East. In addition to Grant's deadline, Banks was troubled by incomplete knowledge of the area. Was there a road along the Red which would allow his troops to remain near Porter's fleet? What was the best line of advance? Banks, still confident of victory, pondered these problems at Alexandria.[28]

While Banks mulled over his problems on the river, Taylor was

finding his own situation unpleasant. One of his primary problems was the insufficient number of cavalry in his command. His only cavalry was that of Colonel William G. Vincent, numbering only two hundred and fifty men. On March 19, Taylor, attempting to obtain information concerning the movements of the Federals, sent Vincent's force toward Bayou Rapides, between Boeuf and Alexandria. After jousting with the forward portion of the Union force, Vincent on the twenty-first settled his men near a place called Henderson's Hill. Here the sleeping Confederates were surrounded and captured by a large force of Federals under the command of General Mower. Taylor suddenly had lost what little cavalry he had. He could only wait for more horsemen to arrive from Texas, if indeed any were coming.[29]

The matter of reinforcements from Texas was another problem that bothered Taylor. Brigadier-General Tom Green's force of Texans was supposed to be headed for Louisiana, but they had not arrived. Taylor badly needed them. If Banks decided to push up the river before these reinforcements arrived, Taylor might be forced to retreat into East Texas--or worse, be forced to fight the larger Union force without reinforcements.[30]

By March 25, the last portion of Banks' force slogged into Alexandria. Heavy rains and muddy roads had slowed the column and delayed its arrival. But finally the entire invasion force was ready for action. It was an impressive--almost overwhelming--collection of men and equipment. Banks had more than thirty thousand men, and Porter had twenty-one gunboats and more than forty troop transports. The combined number of cannon was three hundred: two hundred and ten were mounted on the boats, and ninety were the infantry. Little wonder that Banks

was confident.[31]

Banks at this point did not believe that Taylor would fight, asserting that the Confederates would retreat to Shreveport. Thus his decision as to which road his infantry and cavalry would take seemed insignificant. They were just going to walk and ride to Natchitoches and then to Shreveport. However, the matter of getting Porter's fleet past the rapids in the Red was another matter.[32]

Annually the Red rose in December or January, swollen by winter rains. However, in 1864 the rise was late, beginning in February, and it was small. Doubtless this was the result of insufficient rainfall on the upper watershed of the river; however, to the Union navy it must have seemed sheer orneriness. Since the gunboats had entered the mouth of the Red, snags, sand bars, and floating rafts of timber had hampered progress, and now the river refused to rise.[33]

Whether this condition was caused by atmospheric conditions or water demons, low water made the rapids a formidable barrier to Porter's ironclads. The admiral advised Banks that the big boats would have to be left behind at Alexandria; however, the lighter tinclad boats could navigate the rapids without difficulty. Banks replied that he needed all of Porter's fleet to insure the success of the mission, and would the admiral please get his boats upriver.[34]

Porter agreed, but remained uncertain of the advisability of taking his force above the rapids, wondering how he would get them down again if the water level did not rise. This question he later would have to answer in order to save his fleet. Nonetheless, Porter readied his boats for the dash over the rapids. However, he decided to send his largest and deepest boat, the Eastport, over the shallows first.

Evidently, Porter had decided that if the Eastport could navigate the rapids all of his fleet could do likewise, and if the boat ran aground the river would be blocked, preventing the passage of the rest of the fleet. Either way Porter would be satisfied.[35]

As expected the Eastport jammed in the rapids; however, the river finally rose enough for the great engine of war to pass. Porter then sent twelve more of his craft over the rapids. By April 3, the Eastport, Chillicothe, Carondelet, Louisville, Mound City, Pittsburg, Osage, Ozark, Neosho, Fort Hindman, Cricket, Juliet, and Lexington were above the falls.

Meanwhile, Banks' land force had departed for Natchitoches under the command of Major General William B. Franklin. Andrew J. Smith's men were transported upstream by boat.[36]

By April 3 all parties had reached Natchitoches, but the rebels again had retreated before the Union forces could make contact. While Porter's sailors seized tons of cotton as prizes of war, Banks sailed up the Red to Gran Ecore, four miles above Natchitoches. The time had come for him to decide which road his troops would take. There was a road which followed the west bank of the Red, but Banks evidently did not know of its existence. Apparently he believed his choice was between the road which led to Minden, a village some twenty-five miles east of Shreveport, or the road which formed a rough semi-circle between Gran Ecore and Shreveport, passing through Pleasant Hill and Mansfield. Banks, thinking that the route did not matter, chose the latter.[37]

His decision made, Banks returned to Natchitoches to review his troops. Surely a man such as Nathaniel Banks must have gloried in the knowledge that ancient heroes such as Louis Juchereau de St. Denis and

Athanase de Mezieres had been the masters of the town he now possessed.

On April 6 his troops began to depart from Gran Ecore, heading toward Pleasant Hill and their rendezvous with the enemy. Unknown to the troops or to Banks, the Confederates had arranged a welcome while the Federals were parading in Natchitoches. Taylor, fretting over the delay of aid from Texas, had retreated to Mansfield. There on April 5 he was gratified by the arrival of five thousand cavalrymen from Texas under the command of Fighting Tom Green, who recently had been recommended for promotion to major general. The arrival of Green, a veteran of the Texas Revolution and the Mexican War and a fearless and respected commander, eased Taylor's worries a little. Also, General Kirby-Smith ordered detachments from Major General Sterling Price's command in Arkansas to move south to aid in the conflict. With the addition of these men, Taylor had almost fifteen thousand troops.[38]

Although he was still outnumbered almost two to one, Taylor realized that the odds were not going to improve. Also, during the time he had spent with Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley, Taylor had learned the advantages of speed from the master of alacrity. Despite Kirby-Smith's vaccillation between the fight in Louisiana and a retreat into East Texas, Taylor decided to deploy his forces. Unless his commanding general ordered him out of Louisiana, he was through retreating. He had chafted during the early retreat before Banks' invading army, for he thought little of Yankees in general, and even less of Major General Nathaniel Banks.[39]

Luckily for the South, Kirby-Smith continued to be uncertain as to the correct course he should follow, and allowed Taylor to remain in Louisiana. Taylor would fight before the enemy reached Mansfield. He

knew that his force was outnumbered. Accordingly he knew that he had to select a location for battle that would allow him to concentrate his forces. The area between Pleasant Hill and Mansfield was excellent because the Federals would be confined to one road. Past Mansfield, three roads led to Shreveport, and Taylor could not concentrate his forces on all three. Thus he applied simple logic which Banks apparently missed. Taylor set about teaching the "Bobbin Boy" a lesson in military strategy.[40]

On April 8, Taylor began his preparations to defend Mansfield, ordering the infantry under Price from its camp at Keatchie to Mansfield. Also, the commands of Generals Mouton and Walker were ordered to position themselves south of the town. By the ninth Taylor had almost nine thousand men on the road leading to Mansfield. Banks, who expressed his worry that the enemy would never stop and fight, would have his battle.[41]

The forward elements of the Federal column reached Pleasant Hill on April 7, and that afternoon the mounted infantry of Brigadier General Albert Lee clashed with a detachment of Green's Texas, getting their first taste of combat--a decidedly unpleasant taste. Green's men, unlike the Confederates whom the Northern had met before during the campaign, did not fall back. Instead, the Texans performed their commander's favorite maneuver--a charge. Although the Texans were beaten back with the aid of reserves, the skirmish was a demonstration of what would follow.[42]

The next morning Lee's column pushed ahead, meeting resistance, but progressing. About noon the column reached a large clearing, extending almost a thousand yards before the advancing soldiers. In the midst of

the space was an abrupt rise. Atop it the Federals saw a line of Confederates. Although their position appeared strong, the rebels were driven back, the last retreat Southerners made during the campaign.[43]

After securing the rise, Lee sent skirmishes ahead. These found the bulk of the Confederate force--Walker's Division--ready for battle. Lee had seen enough; he had no desire to lead his men into a hornet's nest. After convincing Banks that he would be unwise to effect a charge into the bristling Confederate position, Lee stationed his men before the enemy and waited. It was four o'clock and the air was heavy with tension, excitement, and fear. The two armies waited, one sick of retreats and running, the other wondering what had happened to Banks' boast that he would be in Shreveport by April 10.[44]

Banks wanted to bring up more infantry. Evidently he realized that he had unwittingly allowed Taylor to concentrate his forces in front of the long stretch of Union soldiers. But there was little he could do. Behind Lee's mounted cavalry was the baggage train, consisting of hundreds of wagons and stretching for miles. Behind these wagons was Franklin's infantry. Banks had the superior force in the area, but he could not bring the full extent of his power into action. Wagons blocked the road, and it would take time to bring Franklin's infantry forward. Banks' only hope was that Taylor would not assume the offensive.[45]

Dick Taylor either realized Banks' predicament or else he simply ran out of patience and ordered General Mouton to attack. Obligingly, the Louisianan swept down on the right flank of the enemy.[46] For the North Brigadier General T. E. G. Ransom's flank repulsed the first charge, but the fighting continued. After Mouton's forces had engaged

the enemy, Walker's eager Texans were unleashed on the left flank of the Northerners. Like their fathers who fought at San Jacinto and in Mexico City, the Texans charged, screaming their demonic exhortations, spurring their compatriots to higher accomplishments and tingling the spines of many untested Yankees. Soon the left flank of the defenders collapsed. Whole regiments were annihilated or captured. General Ransom quickly ordered a retreat.[47]

Falling back, the Federals found some small amount of succor from a line of reinforcements that General Franklin hurriedly had formed near the edge of the clearing. Realizing the danger, Franklin had led a division of his infantry to the front, and for a time the line held. But the rebels kept coming, charging and shouting, shooting and stabbing. Minie balls sang their siren-song of death, luring some men to destruction and pushing others to cowardice. Friends and brothers were suddenly only cold and leaden memories lying on the ground--and still the wild men came. Suddenly, as if some long-angered god had passed among the men, whispering the prophecy of impending doom, panic quaked through the Union ranks. Men threw down their weapons and fled, burning with fear and hearing only the din of their own minds. No longer was there a battle, merely a rout, a debacle, a tragedy.[48]

Fortunately, Franklin not only brought reinforcements, he also saw that his position would not stand. Therefore he ordered Brigadier General William H. Emory to advance with a division of the Nineteenth Corps to a favorable location in the rear and form another line. Emory located his men near Pleasant Grove in a small stream bed and waited. The men of his division soon were greeted by the fleeing soldiers who warned that demons and devils were following. The Confederates soon

appeared.[49] Unfettered emotions seemed to be contagious. The fear that had broken and scattered Banks' army spread to Taylor's and was translated into elation. When the Federals had fled, the Confederates pursuited into disorganized bunches. Arriving at Emory's position, they attacked piecemeal, and were repulsed. Finally the defenders were driven from the stream, but the rebels could not break the resistance. Soon darkness ended the madness for a time. The sounds of the living then were replaced by the wails of men preparing to die. It had been a day that many men would remember with pride, while others would feel only shame, but it was a night that men on both sides would spend a lifetime trying to forget.[50]

More than two thousand Union soldiers were either dead, wounded, or missing. Thousands of small arms, eighteen cannon, and more than one hundred and fifty wagons and their teams had been lost to the rebels. Taylor had extracted a heavy fee from Banks for a lesson in logic. Less than one thousand Confederates were dead or wounded. Considering that Banks had deployed more than 12,000 men in the battle, whereas Taylor had possessed only 8,800 troops, the results were remarkable.[51]

Regardless of this one battle, Banks still was confident. Emory's line had held, and Banks was still going to Shreveport. For a time he considered bringing Smith's Sixteenth Corps to the line Emory had established; however, his subordinates convinced him the move would be unwise. The Thirteenth Corps, which had taken the brunt of the attack, was a shambles. No force on earth would convince the men who had fled in panic to stand and fight at Pleasant Grove. Finally, Banks decided to regroup his forces at Pleasant Hill, fifteen miles to the southeast

of Mansfield. There Smith's troops were deployed on the rise which gave the place its name. It was Taylor's move.[52]

Seeing that Banks had retreated to Pleasant Hill, Taylor led his force forward on the ninth. He had been joined by the forces sent from Price under command of Brigadier General Thomas J. Churchill. Surveying the situation, he devised his battle plan, a masterful but complex scheme. Churchill's force was to march to the road leading from the Sabine River toward Pleasant Hill, approaching the Federals from southeast. Hopefully, this force would crush the enemy's left flank. Meanwhile, Walker was to lead his Texans down the road from Mansfield, attacking the middle of the Federal position. When these forces had disorganized the defenders, Brigadier General Hamilton P. Bee would descend from Walker's left with his mounted Texans. Polignac, in command of the slain Mouton's division, was held in reserve on the road to Mansfield.[53]

At five o'clock the battle began. Churchill swept in from the defenders' left, and Walker pushed forward after hearing the sounds of battle. The fight went as planned. However, Tom Green, thinking that the Federals had been put to flight, ordered Bee to commence his assault. The Texans rode into a wicked cross-fire which repulsed their attack and caused them to take heavy losses. Meanwhile, Walker had received a similar greeting. However, Churchill's force was making headway, rolling up the left flank. Taylor, seeing that Bee and Walker had been stymied, ordered Polignac into the fray. The center of the Union line was carried, and the Confederates threatened to surround the right flank of the enemy commanded by Brigadier General William Dwight. The Union forces appeared in danger of suffering their second overwhelming

defeat in as many days.[54]

Just as the situation seemed hopeless, the Fifty-eighth Illinois, which had been held in reserve, attacked Churchill, stopping his progress. Andrew Smith, commanding on the left flank, ordered his troops to charge. The right flank of the Confederates was crushed. The attack had been repulsed. Taylor's only choice was to retreat. As the Confederates fell back, it was their turn to feel panic, and the battle ended.[55]

Banks thus had won a victory--and he still was determined to press his invasion to Shreveport. But his commanders knew better. The Union forces had been lucky not to have been overwhelmed. The men were tired and discouraged, and they had lost faith in Banks. Finally, the commander was convinced to withdraw and break off the invasion. Banks ordered his force to retreat to Gran Ecore where Porter's boats would transport them downriver.[56]

While Taylor's force was pushing the Federals back from Mansfield, Admiral Porter had steamed part of his force up the Red, reaching Springfield Landing, thirty miles from Shreveport. Banks had promised to meet him there to reunite the land and naval arms of the expedition for the final assault on Shreveport. Leaving Gran Ecore, Porter had been unable to take his entire fleet upriver. The Red had still not freshened, and the water level remained too low for some of his craft. Only six of the gunboats, the Cricket, the admiral's flag ship Osage, Neosho, Fort Hindman, Lexington and Chillicothe, were able to navigate the shallow waters above Gran Ecore. These were accompanied by twenty troop carriers. To protect the boats, part of the Sixteenth Corps under the command of Brigadier Thomas Kilby Smith had remained with the

fleet.[57]

The voyage upriver had been unevently except for frequent stops to free boats that had run aground. Reaching Springfield Landing on April 10, Porter found the channel blocked by the wreckage of the New Falls City, a larger steamer that the Confederates had scuttled to slow the Union fleet. Waiting at the rendezvous point, Porter was informed of the happening at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, and of the decision to retreat.[58]

Porter was in a dangerous position. The confidence of the invaders had led them to plunge headlong into the heart of enemy country. Porter like Banks, was brash and confident in the abilities of his fleet. Given to bold statements, he once had boasted that his boats could go anywhere "the sand was damp."[59] Such boldness and confidence had brought him to Springfield Landing.[60]

While Banks' troops had been near, available to help defend the fleet, there was little danger to the boats. The Confederate naval forces on the Red were nil, and with the infantry, cavalry, and artillery of Banks' force at hand the armada was truly invincible. However, Banks' decision to send his troops on the inland route through Mansfield had changed the situation drastically; and the defeat of the Federals and the subsequent withdrawal to Gran Ecore left Porter's fleet open to assault from land. If the Confederates made a concerted attack on the fleet, the results probably would be unfavorable for the Union. Indeed, the addition of several gunboats to the Confederate navy would change Union fortunes in the Mississippi and Gulf region. Therefore Porter ordered a hasty retreat downriver, having been advised that Banks would meet him at Gran Ecore.[61]

Regardless of Admiral Porter's wishes, the flotilla's speed was limited by shallow water. Boats continually ran aground, and the officers knew that a boat stuck on the mud too long was courting attack by Confederates. Captain Thomas Selfridge, commanding the Osage, found his craft unmanageable. Finally, on April 12 the transport Black Hawk was lashed to the starboard of the Osage to aid in navigation, but about two o'clock in the afternoon it ran hard aground near Blair's Landing, forty-five river miles above Gran Ecore.[62]

Meanwhile, many of Taylor's men had been recalled from the area to aid in repulsing a Union column approaching Shreveport from Arkansas under the command of General Steele. Tom Green's cavalry was left to watch the retreat of the Federals.[63]

On the day the Osage ran aground at Blair's Landing, Green was notified of the event, and immediately he led his men to the scene. Arriving to find the Osage had freed itself and had been joined by the gunboat Lexington, Green stationed his artillery near the banks of the river and prepared to attack. However, Captain Selfridge was informed if the presence of rebels and ordered the Lexington to open dire. Green's Texans replied with their muskets, leading Selfridge to note later that "Everything that was made of wood on the Osage and Black Hawk was pierced with bullets."[64] Green, relying on his standard tactic, ordered his forces to charge. The assault was repulsed by fire from the gunboats; Green, as usual in the midst of action, was struck in the forehead by a cannon shell from the Osage, dying instantly. Their commander dead and prospects of success few, the Confederates withdrew. Porter's fleet continued downriver to Gran Ecore, bouncing and scraping all the way. The arrival of the boats greatly relieved Banks and his

soldiers. Some had speculated that when the boats appeared they would be flying the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy. However, the joining of forces did not end the problems which faced Banks and Porter.[66]

At Gran Ecore, Banks received orders from Sherman, demanding the return of Smith's corps. This would, in Banks' estimation, leave the Union forces grossly undermanned; he believed that Taylor had at least twenty-five thousand troops. Thus Banks replied to Sherman that he could not comply. Smith's forces were needed on the Red. However, Banks realized that Sherman would ask again, probably with Grant's support. His time was running out, and Porter's difficulties with the river were creating dangerous delays.[67]

The Red was still playing havoc with the admiral's fleet. The chute at Gran Ecore effectively blocked the passage of several of the larger boats, and on April 14, the Eastport, having safely navigated the shallows, stuck a torpedo, sinking to the muddy bottom. The admiral needed time to get his fleet downriver; but time was a commodity that was dear to Banks.[68]

Not only was Sherman asking for his troops, but he felt Taylor doubtless was nearby arranging something unfriendly. Banks wanted to return to Alexandria as soon as possible. Porter feared that the army would depart, leaving his stranded boats at the mercy of the rebels. However, Banks promised to remain until the fleet was able to descend the river.[69]

Evidently Banks had learned from the lesson Taylor had taught him at Mansfield. Realizing that his foe probably would attempt to block his retreat, Banks on April 19 dispatched General Smith downriver to prevent such an occurrence. Smith departed on April 21, the same day

that Porter's boats were taken over the chute and the Eastport was raised from the bottom. The retreat from Gran Ecore began.[70]

By the morning of the twenty-third, the fleet and the army had evacuated Gran Ecore, leaving the town in flames. Moving to Natchitoches, the army then followed the course of the Cane River, an ancient bed of the Red that had long been forsaken by the waters of the river. Thirty miles downstream the Cane rejoined the Red, forming a great island in the area between the two rivers. However, Banks learned that Taylor's forces were headed for Monett's Ferry, the main crossing on the Cane which the Union army had to utilize. Attempting to avoid the trap, Banks pushed his army relentlessly.[71]

For his part Taylor was aching from the destruction which the Union army had brought to his state. Everywhere houses and barns had been burned, livestock killed and fields flattened. Taylor wanted revenge. Thus with only five thousand men he attempted to surround Banks' force of twenty thousand.[72]

Arriving at Monett's Ferry first, the Confederates deployed. Their plan was simple. Major General John A. Wharton, who recently had arrived from Texas with a small brigade of cavalry, was to harass the Federal column from the rear. Polignac's division was stationed near Cloutierville, a small town to the northwest of Monett's Ferry, and Hamilton Bee's force was placed at the crossing. He was ordered to hold his position at all costs because it was crucial in preventing the Federals from escaping.[73]

The plan was good, but after the Federal assault began on the twenty-third, Bee mistakenly thought the center of the Confederate position had been overwhelmed. In reality the Federal charge had been

repulsed, but Bee, assuming the battle was lost, withdrew, opening the road to Alexandria. Taylor was livid, removing Bee from his command. Nonetheless, the damage had been done. Banks was free to enter Alexandria.[74]

Admiral Porter was not fairing as well as Banks. On April 26 the Eastport ran hard aground near the small town of Montgomery. All efforts to free the craft failed, and Porter reluctantly ordered the boat destroyed. The descent then continued. Five miles above the mouth of the Cane, the fleet came under heavy fire from the Confederate artillery. Two transports, the Champion No. 3 and the Champion No. 5, were lost. Tragically, the former's boiler was struck by a shell and exploded, killing more than one hundred and fifty blacks who had been picked up by the Federals. Additionally, the ironclads Cricket, Juliet, and Fort Hindman were severely damaged, taking heavy losses among their crews.[75]

On April 28 all boats had been run past the Confederate gunners and were collected at Alexandria. However, matters were little better there. Commanding General Grant was making growling noises in Banks' direction about the prompt return of Sherman's troops. Grant wanted Smith's corps east of the Mississippi. Banks wanted to comply, but Porter's boats were in trouble again--serious trouble.[76]

The rapids at Alexandria, the same ones that had worried Porter a month before, had the fleet trapped. The Red still had not risen, and twelve gunboats were above the rapids. If Banks took his army downriver before the boats were rescued, the backbone of the fleet would be lost. The crafts would have to be scuttled to prevent their capture by Confederates. Porter's career was on the verge of ruin. Admirals, no

matter what their past accomplishments, did not lose twelve gunboats and retain Lincoln's favor. Porter, for once at a loss for an answer, or even a boast, asked for suggestions.[77]

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey, the chief engineer for the Nineteenth Corps, approached Porter, proposing a dam across the river below the rapids. This would raise the water level on the rapids and allow the boats to cross. Once the boats were over the rapids the dam could be removed and the fleet could continue. It was a good plan. The only question was the building of the dam. Below the rapids the river was almost three hundred feet wide, and the current was near ten miles an hour. Although Porter was unconvinced, the project was approved.[78]

The soldiers worked feverishly. Houses were demolished and their timbers used in the dam. Great trees were felled, and added to the project. Finally, only a twenty foot space separated the two wings of the dam. Two barges filled this hold. On May 8 the Neosho, Port Hindman, and Osage crossed the rapids; however, for reasons unknown, the rest of the fleet remained. The soldiers, who had constructed the dam while the navy watched, suggested that the pilots of the boats had gone to sleep. Perhaps they were right.[79]

Whatever the reasons, the boats remained above the rapids that day, and the on the morning the ninth they again were trapped. The pressure of the water on the barges in the middle of the dam carried them away during the night. Only the Lexington, which Porter ordered to shoot the rapids as the dams disintegrated, was rescued. Bouncing on the bottom the Lexington pushed over the rapids and through the hole in the dam before the water disappeared. Eight boats remained above the rapids.[80]

Banks, who had watched the fleet's activity with interest, growled

that he needed to get his army downriver. Grant was growing more adamant in his demands for the troops to be returned to Sherman, and the Confederates were still lurking in the woods. Bailey went back to work, building wing dams at the head of the rapids to concentrate the flow of the water. By the tenth the wing dams were completed, but the water was still too shallow. Another army engineer, Lieutenant Colonel U. B. Pearsall, suggested that a "bracket dam" would slow the current and back water sufficiently to allow the boats to pass. To Porter's relief this plan worked, and the boats were saved. The final obstacle overcome, Porter led his fleet to the Mississippi, and Banks followed suit. By May 15 the Federals had retreated below the Atchafalya. The Red River Campaign was over.

Banks and Porter had accomplished their retreat none too soon. Steele's invasion from Arkansas had been repulsed by the end of April, and during the first week in May Churchill's and Walker's forces were returned to Taylor. Fortunately for the Federals, just as Taylor reunited his forces and readied an assault, the invaders floated and marched down the Red.[81]

Several factors had combined to cause a failure of the Union invasion of Northwest Louisiana and East Texas. Taylor's talents and his troops' dedication had helped, as had the Red River's refusal to rise. However, Banks' own mistakes were at the base of the failure. Had he not sent his troops on the inland road to Mansfield, Taylor's talents would have been unexercised, or at least used to defend the streets of Shreveport.

Despite the low water, Porter's flotilla eventually reached Springfield Landing. Had Banks marched his force along the river near the

fleet, a combined water-and-land assault could have been launched, severely testing the defenders. Also, had the invaders approached Shreveport from Springfield Landing en masse, the Confederates would have been unable to mount a concerted defense against Steele's invasion from Arkansas. The problems were not the plan proposed by Halleck to ascend the Red to Shreveport, but rather the execution of the plan by Nathaniel Banks.

At New Orleans, Banks received his reward for the campaign. There he was informed on May 7 that Major General Edward R. S. Canby had been named commander of the Military District of West Mississippi. Canby was given control of all military operations in the Departments of the Gulf and Mississippi. Banks' political connections had prevented his complete removal from authority, for he remained at New Orleans. In name he still was commander of the Department of the Gulf; in reality he was only a figurehead. His military career was over, and his presidential aspirations were dead. He had found precious little glory on the Red River.[82]

FOOTNOTES

[1]For the background of the campaign, see: Ludwell H. Johnson, Red River Campaign: Politics and Cotton in the Civil War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), pp. 1-48; for the events in Texas and Louisiana prior to the attack up the Red River, see: Carl Newton Tyson, "Texas: Men for War; Cotton for Economy," Journal of the West, XIV, No. 1 (Jan., 1975), pp. 130-148 and Buford Satcher, "Louisiana: Six Hundred Engagements," ibid., pp. 149-166.

[2]Alwyn Barr, "Texas Coastal Defenses, 1861-1865," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXV, No. 1 (July, 1961), pp. 1-31; Tyson, "Texas," Journal of the West, pp. 138-139; Confederate Reported, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols., 128 books, Washington: G.P.O., 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XXVI, Pt. 2, pp. 309-312; hereafter cited as Official Records; Union Reports, United States Department of the Navy, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (30 vols., Washington: G.P.O., 1905), Ser. I, Vol. XX, pp. 517-561; hereafter cited as Official Records, Navy.

[3]Tyson, "Texas," Journal of the West, pp. 138-139; Nathaniel Banks to H. H. Bell, Nov. 3, 1863, and Nathaniel Banks to Francis J. Herron, December 25, 1863, Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. XXXVI, Pt. 1, pp. 785, 880-881; John Magruder to Edmund Kirby-Smith, December 24, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXV, Pt. 2, pp. 524-530.

[4]Henry W. Halleck to Nathaniel Banks, January 4, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, pp. 15, 42, 145.

[5]Ibid.; Henry W. Halleck to Nathaniel Banks, December 7, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXXI, Pt. 1, pp. 683, 807; Nathaniel Banks to William S. Halleck, December 23, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXVI, Pt. 1, pp. 871-873; Johnson, Red River Campaign, pp. 75-77.

[6]Nathaniel Banks to Henry W. Halleck, January 25, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, pp. 140-152; Henry W. Halleck to Nathaniel Banks, April 11, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, p. 293.

[7]For Sherman's estimate of Banks, see William T. Sherman, Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1892), I, pp. 425-426.

[8]Frederick Steele to Nathaniel Banks, February 18, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, pp. 249-321.

[9]U. S. Grant to Frederick Steele, March 15, ibid., Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, p. 616.

[10]David Porter to Nathaniel Banks, February 27, 1863, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, pp. 747-748.

[11]Johnson, Red River Campaign, p. 76; Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, 20 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), I, pp. 577-580.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]For an expression of the general estimation of Banks, see: Henry S. Halleck to William T. Sherman, April 8, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 3, pp. 285-290; Johnson, Red River Campaign, p. 85.

[15]Jefferson Davis Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941), pp. 20-25; Satcher, "Louisiana," Journal of the West, pp. 157-158.

[16]Tyson, "Texas," Journal of the West, pp. 138-139.

[17]Ibid.; Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, March 13, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, p. 489.

[18]Ibid.

[19]John Dimitry, "Louisiana," in Clement A. Evans, ed., Confederate Military History (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899), X, pp. 127-130.

[20]Ibid.; Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), pp. 154-155.

[21]Ibid., p. 153; Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, pp. 340-341.

[22]A. J. Smith to Nathaniel Banks, March 14, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. I, p. 305; J. G. Walker to Richard Taylor, March 20, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, p. 599.

[23]Evans, ed., Confederate Military History, X, pp. 129-130.

[24]A. J. Smith to Nathaniel Banks, March 15, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 305-347.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, March 16, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 1, pp. 506-520, 559-564.

[27]Ibid.

[28]U. S. Grant to Nathaniel Banks, March 24, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 2, pp. 610-615; for the problems concerning routes, see: Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, 38th Congress 2 Sess., Vol. II, "Red River Expedition," pp. 270-280. Hereafter cited as Com. Report, Red River.

[29]Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, March 16, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 463-464; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, pp. 154-157.

[30]Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, March 31, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 510-517.

[31]See: Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., 1956), IV, pp. 366-367. Herein are listed the forces under Banks' command.

[32]Com. Report, Red River, pp. 281-284; David Porter to Nathaniel Banks, March 26, 1864, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, pp. 50-52.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Com. Report, Red River, pp. 283-286.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Richard B. Irwin, "The Red River Campaign," in Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, p. 350.

[37]Com. Report, Red River, pp. 35-41, 282-286.

[38]Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, p. 368; Irwin, "Red River Campaign," ibid., IV, pp. 351-352; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, pp. 157-158.

[39]Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, March 31, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 511-519.

[40]Ibid.; Edmund Kirby-Smith to Richard Taylor, April 3, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 520-525.

[41]Ibid.

[42]See Com. Report, Red River, passim. There are several eyewitness accounts of the events at Pleasant Hill contained in the report; Union Reports, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 286-291.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., Com. Report, Red River, pp. 60-68; Irwin, "Red River

Campaign," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battle and Leaders, IV, pp. 353-355.

[45]Ibid., p. 354.

[46]Ibid., pp. 354-355; Richard Yalor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, April 10, 1864, Official Records, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 563-564; Com. Report, Red River, pp. 58-62; Irwin, "Red River Campaign," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, p. 353; Dimitry, "Louisiana," Evans, ed., Confederate Military History, XIV, pp. 142-143.

[47]Ibid., pp. 142-143.

[48]Ibid.; see: Frank Moore, ed., The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events (New York, 1862-1871), VIII, pp. 545-549.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., p. 452; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 164.

[52]Ibid., pp. 164-165; Com. Report, Red River, pp. 175-200; Confederate Reports, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 563-567.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Irwin, "Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, pp. 355-356; Edmund Kirby-Smith, "The Defense of the Red River," ibid., pp. 372-373.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Thomas O. Selfridge, "The Navy in the Red River," ibid., pp. 362-366; Com. Report, Red River, pp. 275-276; Union Reports, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 59-60, ibid., Vol. XVII, pp. 104-105; Bern Anderson, By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 256-262; Fletcher Pratt, Civil War on Western Waters (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1956), pp. 189-200; H. Allen Gosnell, Gun on the Western Waters: The Story of River Gunboats in the Civil War (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 246-266.

[58]Com. Report, Red River, p. 203; Union Reports, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p. 452; Nathaniel Banks to David Porter, April 9, ibid., Pt. 3, pp. 98-99.

[59]Com. Report, Red River, pp. 8-9.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Selfridge, "The Navy in the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, pp. 364-366; Kirby-Smith, "The Defense of the Red River," ibid., pp. 372-373; Union Reports, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, pp. 778-789.

[63]Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, pp. 180-182; Richard Taylor to Edmund Kirby-Smith, April 18, 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 3, pp. 193-211.

[64]Selfridge, "The Navy in the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IX, p. 363.

[65]Ibid., pp. 363-364; Kirby-Smith, "The Defense of the Red River," ibid., p. 373; Odie B. Faulk, A Fight'n Texan (Waco: Texian Press, 1964), pp. 86-87.

[66]Union Reports, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, p. 382.

[67]William T. Sherman to Nathaniel Banks, April 12, 1864, ibid., Ser. 1, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 3, p. 24; Nathaniel Banks to U. S. Grant, April 13, 1864, ibid., Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 187-188; Nathaniel Banks to William T. Sherman, April 14, 1864, ibid., Ser. 1, Pt. iii, pp. 265-266; David Porter to William T. Sherman, April 14, 1864, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, p. 56; Com. Report, Red River, p. 278.

[68]Union Reports, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, pp. 62-69.

[69]David Porter to William T. Sherman, April 14, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXVI, p. 56.

[70]Union Reports, ibid., Vol. XXV, pp. 72-79; Selfridge, "The Navy in the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, pp. 363-364.

[71]Bragg, Louisiana in the Confederacy, p. 171; Johnson, Red River Campaign, pp. 224-226; Richard Taylor to S. S. Anderson, April 24, 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 580-581; Richard Taylor to S. S. Anderson, April 25, ibid., p. 581.

[72]Ibid.; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 193.

[73]Kirby-Smith, "The Defense of the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IV, p. 373.

[74]Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 180; Richard Taylor to S. S. Anderson, April 24, 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 1, pp. 580-581.

[75]Union Reports, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, pp. 71-77.

[76]Union Reports, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. III, p. 317.

[77]Union Reports, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXXI, pp. 131-135.

[78]Ibid.; Selfridge, "The Navy in the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, IX, p. 358; Nathanial Banks to David Porter, May 9, 1864, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, p. 136; Nathaniel Banks to David Porter, May 9, 1864, ibid.

[79]Com. Reports, Red River, p. 82.

[80]Ibid.; Union Report, Official Records, Navy, Vol. XXVI, p. 131.

[81]Ibid., p. 132; Kirby-Smith, "The Defense of the Red River," Johnson and Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders, p. 373.

[82]Henry W. Halleck to U. S. Grant, April 30, 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. III, p. 357; Henry W. Halleck to Nathaniel Banks, April 30, 1864, ibid., p. 358.

CHAPTER IX

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

A year after Nathaniel Banks returned to New Orleans, the end came for the Confederate States of America. Gallant warriors such as Robert E. Lee, Joseph Eggleston Johnston, Nathan Bedfort Forrest, and Richard Taylor laid their burdens down, recognizing the inevitable. Their great cause was lost. In the Trans-Mississippi West Kirby-Smith and Magruder spoke empty phrases for a time of continuing the war, and then they slipped away to Mexico. Some, like Jo Shelby and his magnificent cavalrymen, mounted their horses and rode away, never acknowledging in defeat the mastery of those whom they had bested in war.

Soon Lincoln joined the hosts who had died during the tragedy, and something called "Radical Reconstruction" began. Slowly--sadly--the nation bound its wounds. As they had after the American Revolution, leaders, some good, some evil, set about forming a nation from the shambles. Rising phoenix-like from its own ashes, a new United States emerged. The nation was different, altered forever by the spasms of civil war. Some men hated it, others gloried in it, but most simply worked. The union had survived.

After the war ended, the country along the Red River was in ruins. Plantations and farms were gone, slaves were free, owners were dead. Cotton gins were charred flames, and steamboats were gutted hulls. But the people went to work, building and planting, mending and making. By

1870 the country was becoming productive again. Steamboats such as the Arrow Line, Belle Ida No. 2, Big Horn, Grand Era, Henry M. Shreve, W. F. Curtis, and Anne Everson were ascending the river to Shreveport and Jefferson to take on cotton. The cargo then was carried to New Orleans for sale. However, one problem remained: the raft.[1]

Work on the raft had ceased in the late 1850s because Congress refused to keep appropriating funds for what seemed a never-ending task. After the war ended, the issue was revived. In the winter of 1872, Lieutenant E. A. Woodruff of the Army Corps of Engineers was dispatched to Louisiana to survey the raft and estimate the cost of its removal. While in Louisiana, Woodruff received a letter from C. M. Hervey, a planter who owned a large tract of land on the Red near Washington, Arkansas. Hervey urged that work immediately be commenced to remove the raft, asserting that more than 200,000 acres of fertile bottom land thereby could be reclaimed and that $150,000 could be saved each year in shipping fees, cotton prices, and insurance rates. In 1870, he wrote, high water and growth of the raft had caused more than $400,000 to be wasted in routing shipments around the route. Finally, Hervey noted that merely removing the raft would not suffice, but that provisions had to be made to prevent a reoccurrence of the barrier.[2]

In his report Woodruff wrote, "That the removal of the raft and the prevention of its re-formation is desirable, hardly admits of discussion. The need of a cheap mode of transportation of the products of the upper river, the relief of valuable plantations made worthless by overflow, and the prevention of the ruin of more valuable plantations above, are sufficient reasons to warrant extensive appropriations for these ends...."[3] He estimated the total cost of removing the raft in

in one year to be $116,000, with an additional cost of $98,000 to acquire the needed equipment. He suggested that annual appropriations ranging from ten to twenty-five thousand dollars would be needed to prevent a reforming of the raft.[4]

Congress was in a mood to comply, for the nation demanded raw products to feed the industrial centers of the North. On June 10, 1872, it appropriated $150,000 to remove the raft. Little work was done in 1872. However, considerable progress was made in 1873. In addition to using snag boats and whences to pull sections of the raft asunder, a new tool was utilized: nitroglycerine. The explosive was used to break up large sections of timbers that had become tightly packed. Such sections, called rafts by the workmen, had posed serious problems during previous attempts to free the Red because equipment was frequently damaged while attempting to pry the logs apart. Also the "nitro" was useful in breaking large timbers into small pieces which would float downriver. Writing in 1874, Captain C. W. Howell, the engineer in charge of the project, noted:

> In breaking the jams and cutting off snags, nitro-glycerine had been found indispensible, from 60 to 75 pounds being used in a day, generally in from 2 to 5 pound charges. For instance, the 31st [of October] was almost entirely spent in an unsuccessful attempt to remove a snag under water, which stopped all drift pulled [from floating downstream]; the last attempt for the day was made with a 7½-inch premium line led to the large steam-capstan of the Aid [one of the snag boats]. The capstan was 'stalled.' The next morning a 5-pound charge of nitro-glycerine removed the obstruction.[5]

In his report Howell also described the first application of the explosive in removing the raft:

> Cans, containing from 10 to 20 pounds of nitro-glycerine, were sunk as near the bottom of the river as possible and exploded, with the effect of breaking the

> long logs and a general loosening of the mass in the immediate proximity. Small charges were also used in cutting long logs and stumps too far beneath the surface of the water to be operated on by other means.[6]

Although the work of removing the raft was slowed by low water, progress was made. Saw boats designed, as the name implied, to cut timbers and brush, worked constantly, removing obstacles above the surface, and snag boats opened a channel through the raft, pulling stumps and timbers. In November of 1873, the channel finally was clear. Howell wrote:

> Operations...were continued until the evening of the 26th. The river at that time was rising rapidly, and at daylight on the 27th the remaining portion of the raft obstructing the channel went out, and Red River was relieved of a serious obstruction to its navigation. The most important of the work having been accomplished, preparation was at once made to return to the foot of the raft and improve the channel existing through the raft.[7]

The Red River raft had finally been conquered, but the job was not finished. The raft had to be prevented from reforming. Dams had to be built across bayous to prevent run off from the main channel, and small rafts had to be removed. In 1875 the rapids at Alexandria were deepened, removing another serious obstacle to navigation. The next year the mouth of the river was deepened and widened. Work on the Red River by the Corps of Engineers continued until 1900, with improvements in the river made yearly. The channel was straightened at several bends of the river, and numerous "chutes," or shallows, were removed. In all, congressional appropriations for the improvement of the Red River, including the removal of the raft, from 1872 to 1900 amounted to $1,397,000. Total appropriations for improving the river, including surveys, were $2,403,377.50. Additionally, Congress appropriated $45,000 during the period from 1886 to 1896 to improve Cypress Bayou.[8]

The effects of the raft's removal were as expected. Large amounts of land were reclaimed after the water drained downriver, costs of shipping products from the upper Red River valley were vastly reduced, and Shreveport became a busy port. Steamboats began ascending the river to Fulton, Arkansas, and then beyond the great bend. One negative result of the raft's removal, however, was the demise of Jefferson, Texas, as a river port. Steamboats had been able to ascend Cypress Bayou from the Red to Jefferson prior to the removal of the raft because the backwater had raised the water level of the bayou and of Caddo Lake. When the raft was removed the water level dropped, leaving Jefferson beyond the reach of steamers. Although work on Cypress Bayou by the Corps of Engineers between 1886 and 1896 revived the trade between Jefferson and the Red River, the town never attained its previous status as the second largest port in Texas. Instead, Jefferson, which also was bypassed by the railroads, became a small country town. Only the great ante-bellum plantation homes remained to remind Jefferson of its past glories.[9]

Despite Jefferson's plight, other ports on the Red River were aided immeasurably by the removal of the raft. Despite competition from railroads, which entered the area along the Red River during the 1870s, traffic on the river increased. In 1875 there were fourteen steamers plying its course, making regular runs upriver. By 1881 there were twenty steamers running regularly between Shreveport, the principal port on the Red, and New Orleans. The total carrying capacity of these boats was 64,630 tons. During the period from September 1, 1880, to May 31, 1881, these boats carried such varied items downriver to New Orleans as beeswax, tallow, cotton, cotton seed, cotton oil, grain, hay, wool, and hides.

During this period 86,646 bales of cotton were carried to New Orleans from ports on the Red River. Because steamboat operators charged lower rates, the cargoes on boats out of Shreveport were increasing while the railroads' tonnage was decreasing. For the period mentioned, 21,193 bales of cotton were shipped by rail from Shreveport, whereas the previous year 58,243 bales had been shipped. Also, during the same period 37,474 bales of cotton were shipped from Shreveport by boat, whereas the previous year only 14, 181 bales had been carried downriver.[10]

During the next fiscal year, ending in June of 1882, almost 90,000 bales of cotton were delivered at New Orleans from ports on the Red, of which 55,000 bales were shipped from Shreveport. Also, 45,000 sacks of cottonseed were shipped to New Orleans.[11]

While Shreveport was the center for trade on the Red, steamers were pushing farther upriver, reaching Fulton, Arkansas, and the mouth of Kiamichi River. During the years 1880-1881, more than 14,000 bales of cotton were shipped to New Orleans from points above Shreveport.[12]

The following year traffic on the Red peaked. Twenty steamers were running from Shreveport to New Orleans, carrying 108,000 bales of cotton, 270,000 pounds of hides, 87,000 pounds of wool, 20,630 pounds of cotton seed cakes, 5,500 pounds of beeswax, and 18,000 pounds of tallow. In addition, 35,000,000 feet of lumber were shipped downriver from Shreveport. For the entire river, more than 160,000 bales of cotton were carried downstream. Partially as a result of this trade, Shreveport had grown from a town of less than 5,000 people in 1850 to 12,000 by 1884.[13]

During the fiscal year ending in June of 1886, shipping on the

river decreased from the figures for fiscal year 1884. However, the traffic remained steady. Thirteen boats were engaged in the trade on the river, four on the upper Red above Shreveport, and nine on the lower river. The boats on the upper river ranged in size from one hundred to four hundred tons, whereas the boats which traded below Shreveport ranged between two hundred and eight hundred tons. During this year the river was navigable to Kiamatia, Texas (near the Kiamichi River), for two months; to Fulton, Arkansas, for four months; and to Garland City, Arkansas (near the Louisiana-Arkansas border), for the entire year. During this period 11,000 bales of cotton and more than 48,000 sacks of cottonseed were shipped from the area above Shreveport. These figures demonstrate the effectiveness of the Corps of Engineers' work on the river.[14]

For this same period, more than 70,000 bales of cotton were shipped from Shreveport, as well as 125,000 pounds of hides and 120,000 barrel staves. The steamers made 108 trips between New Orleans and Shreveport, bringing an estimated $2,500,000 worth of goods upriver.[15]

By 1890 competition from railroads had cut into the riverboat traffic severely. Only eight boats were working between Shreveport and New Orleans, while two were engaged in the trade between Shreveport and Alexandria.[16] The Corps of Engineers reported:

> Red River is crossed by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway at Fulton, Ark., and by the St. Louis, Arkansas, and Texas Railway (Cotton Belt Route) at Garland, Ark., and by the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Pacific Railroad and a branch of the "Cotton Belt Route" at Shreveport. Two companies have applied for charters for bridges at Alexandria. The Texas, Pacific Railway, running nearly parallel to the river touches at Alexandria, Shreveport, and other points, and the Morgan's Louisiana, and Texas Railroad (Southern Pacific) has a branch running to Alexandria. All these lines divert a large percentage of the commerce.[17]

The figures for fiscal years 1888-1889 and 1889-1890 support this assertion. Whereas the trade in cotton by water for the former year had been 12,368 bales, it decreased in the latter to 8,897.[18]

Despite this decline in trade, the work of the Corps revived trade between Jefferson and Shreveport. During the year ending in June of 1890, two boats, the New Haven and Friendly, made thirty-three tound trips between these ports, carrying a total value of $304,325. However, the railroads, which originally missed Jefferson because of the town's failure to grant the roads large land concessions, realized the value of building feeder lines into the area. By 1890 a branch of the Texas and Pacific had reached Jefferson, as had a branch of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad. These served to decrease the public demand for steamboat traffic to the town.[19]

By 1894 only seven steamers were trading regularly between Shreveport and New Orleans, although the river was open to navigation that entire year. Several small boats were engaged in local trade on the river, and five boats were trading between several ports on the lower river, such as Index and Panola, and New Orleans. Only one steamer, the Rose Bland, was trading between Shreveport and Jefferson, although the route between the ports was open for seven months.[20]

Although shipments from Shreveport jumped in 1890 to 19,218 bales of cotton, they declined afterward. Shipments for the following years: 10,567 bales for fiscal year 1891-1892; 14,751 for 1892-1893; and 9,246 for 1893-1894. Conversely, shipments via rail were markedly greater. For the four railroads carrying goods from Shreveport--the Texas and Pacific; Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Pacific; Houston and Shreveport; and St. Louis, Southwestern--the total number of cotton bales were

99,436 in fiscal year 1891-1892, 58,220 in 1892-1893, and 66,811 in 1893-1894.[21]

The impact of the railroads was also felt on the upper river. Although the river was open to navigation from July to August and from November to May, only three steamers, the C. R. Cummings, Gamma, and Florence, were engaged in trade on the river in 1897. These carried 38,826 tons of goods on the river. The work of the Corps of Engineers had extended highwater navigation to Denison, Texas; however, the river was paralleled by a branch of the Texas and Pacific Railway from Fulton, Arkansas, to the mouth of the Kiamichi River. Also, a branch of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway crosses the river at Arthur, north of Paris, Texas, and a branch of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Soutern Railway crossed at Fulton, Arkansas. Thus competition for trade in the area was fierce.[22]

By 1900 only six steamers, the Sunrise, Valley Queen, Electra, W. T. Scovell, Hallette, and Gem, were trading between Shreveport and New Orleans. Although the total amount of goods shipped from Shreveport increased slightly between the years 1895 and 1900, the era of steamboating on the Red River obviously was ending.[23]

The report of the Chief of Engineers for 1909 noted the declining trade on the Red River:

> Notwithstanding the facilities for quick transportation afforded by railways, the commerce of Red River until recent years has consisted of large shipments of cotton, cotton seed and its products, lumber, staves, timber, etc., with heavy return freights of general merchandise and plantation supplies.
>
> The commerce and navigation reported for eighteen years showed great variations, due to changing crop conditions, occasional periods of extraordinary low water during the busy season, and other causes, ranging

> in quantity from 66,376 to 279,946 tons per annum, with estimated values of from $1,506,500 to $9,185,000. The average for the eighteen years was 123,244 tons, valued at $4,359,900....
>
> In 1908, however, there was a marked decline of navigation above the mouth of Black River and the commerce reported in that stretch only amounted to 36,288 tons, valued at $198,240.[24]

Although steamers occasionally ascended the Red River to take cargos of cotton, the days of black smoke, waiting on the levee, and steam whistles were soon gone forever, replaced by the chugging and wheezing of iron-horses. Soon the murky, changeable waters of the Red as a highway for commerce were replaced by gleaming, enduring rivers of steel.

FOOTNOTES

[1]N. Philip Norman, "The Red River of the South," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXV, No. 2 (April, 1942), pp. 397-535.

[2]Report of the Chief Engineer, Corps of Engineers, 1870 (Washington: G.P.O., 1871), pp. 664, 665. Hereafter Reports of the Chief Engineer will be cited as C. E. Report followed by date.

[3]Ibid., p. 648.

[4]Ibid.

[5]C. E. Report, 1873, pp. 64, 613-618.

[6]Ibid., p. 615.

[7]Ibid., p. 616.

[8]Ibid., p. 618; C. E. Report, 1905, pp. 1011-1020.

[9]C. E. Report, 1873, pp. 618, 628-630, 706-708; C. E. Report, 1874, pp. 72, 703-705; C. E. Report, 1875, pp. 523-529.

[10]Ibid., p. 528; C. E. Report, 1881, pp. 1405-1407.

[11]C. E. Report, 1883, pp. 1138-1140.

[12]Ibid.

[13]C. E. Report, 1884, pp. 1321-1330; C. E. Report, 1885, pp. 1471-1483.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]C. E. Report, 1890, pp. 1828-1833.

[17]Ibid., p. 1831.

[18]C. E. Report, 1891, pp. 1963-1969.

[19]Ibid.

[20]C. E. Report, 1895, pp. 1848-1856.

[21]Ibid.

[22]C. E. Report, 1898, pp. 1575-1591.

[23]C. E. Report, 1900, pp. 2491-3002.

[24]C. E. Report, 1909, p. 1319.

CHAPTER X

BORDER WAR IN THE COURTS

From the mouth of the Kiamichi River to its confluence with the Mississippi, the Red River had been surveyed, widened, deepened, navigated by boats, changed--"improved" said the Corps of Engineers. Until 1860, geographic knowledge of the river west of the ninety-eighth meridian had been small. Randolph Marcy's expedition in 1852 had discovered that the river rose in two forks rather than one, and a survey in 1857 by Majors A. H. Jones and H. M. C. Brown to determine the extent of the lands of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians had established the point where the 100th meridian crossed the South (or Prairie Dog Town) Fork of the Red. However, the exact limits of the State of Texas and the Indian Territory had yet to be determined.[1]

The northern boundary of Texas, as stated in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, was a line following "the course of the Rio-Roxo [Red River] Westward to the degree of Longitude, 100 West from London and we from Washington...as laid down in Melishe's Map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the first of January 1818."[2] Problems over this boundary arose because the Melish map showed only one fork of the Red River. The existence of two forks of the river, discovered by Marcy, opened the question of which fork the Melish map had indicated. Inasmuch as the area between the confluence of the two forks and the 100th meridian consisted of more than 50,000 acres of

land, the designation of the proper fork to be the boundary was significant.

Jones' and Brown's designation of the South Fork of the river as the boundary of the Indian Territory might have settled the dispute, giving the area to the United States. However, by the agreement which brought Texas into the Union in 1845, the state was granted the right to participate in the settlement of its boundaries. Exercising this right, Texas opposed the designation of the South Fork as the principal branch of the Red.[3]

In 1860 a joint commission, containing members appointed by the United States and Texas, was formed to settle the problem. Governor Sam Houston of Texas was informed that the head of the delegation from the United States, John C. Clark, intended to use the boundary designated by Jones and Brown as a starting point for the survey. Houston protested that surely the North Fork was the one indicated by the Melish map, for Marcy had marked the headwaters of the North Fork with a bottle which seemed to indicate that Marcy believed it to be the main channel. Also, the Melish map indicated that the Rio-Roxo flowed near a range of mountains. Houston noted that the North Fork passed near the Wichita Mountains, while the South Fork did not flow near any mountain range. Therefore Houston asserted that the boundary should follow the North Fork.[4]

The work of the joint commissions proved futile. The Texas leader, William H. Russell, considered the two delegations separate entities, demonstrating considerable hostility toward the members of the American commission. Therefore little progress was made, and the boundary survey ended without agreement on which fork of the Red was the main

branch.[5]

While the boundary commissions were feuding, officials in Texas on February 8, 1860, decided to take the initiative, designating the disputed territory Greer County, Texas. The coming of the Civil War delayed the actual organization of this county until 1868 when it was attached to nearby Montague County for administrative purposes. In 1879 the United States Congress created the Northern Judicial District of Texas, placing Greer County under the jurisdiction of the courts of Texas. Believing that Texas would eventually win the dispute of the area, officials of the state assumed ownership of the public lands in the region, and in 1881 allotments of land in the county were given to veterans of the Texas Revolution.[6]

Also in 1881, Congressman Olin Welborn of Texas introduced a bill in the House of Representatives which designated the North Fork of the Red River as the boundary of Texas. Although this bill died in committee, Senator Samuel B. Maxey of Texas the next year introduced a bill calling for the creation of a joint boundary commission to settle the dispute and, hopefully, to award the territory to his state. However, this bill also died. The majority of the legislators believed that the information obtained by the survey made by Jones and Brown in 1857 was sufficient.[7]

Since the joint commission of 1860, the United States had made no effort to maintain its claim to the disputed area, nor had it attempted to counteract the actions of Texas. However, in 1884 soldiers from Fort Sill in the Indian Territory were dispatched to eject any settlers from the disputed area. Finding several families and more than fifty thousand head of cattle from Texas in the area, the commander of the

force, Lieutenant C. J. Crane, issued a warning that the settlers must leave or be ejected.[8]

A month after Crane's warning, President Chester Arthur on July 1, 1884, issued a similar statement. The dispute which had been ignored by the United States for almost twenty-five years, suddenly had become important. To settle the dispute, Congress in January of 1885 created another joint commission.[9]

The commission met in Galveston, Texas, in February of 1886. The delegation from Texas was led by John T. Brackenridge, while the American party was chaired by Major Samuel N. Mansfield. Other members of the commission from Texas were William S. Herndon, G. R. Freeman, and William H. Burgess. Members from the United States were A. R. Livermore, Thomas Casey, and Lansing Beach. All commissioners appointed by the United States were members of the Army, whereas the members from Texas were a conglomerate of politicians, businessmen and governmental officials.[10]

The primary purposes of this commission were to determine where the 100th meridian crossed the Red River and which fork of the Red River was the main branch referred to by the Melish map. To attain these goals, the commissioners collected twenty-three maps, various reports from explorers, and called several witnesses, including Randolph Marcy, the man who had created the controversy by discovering the two forks of the Red in 1852.[11]

Seventy-four years old and a retired general, Randolph Marcy was the first witness to testify. On February 26 he appeared before the commission begging the commissioners' forgiveness for his lapses of memory. He referred them to his report of the exploration; as to the

relationship between his knowledge of the area and the Melish map. He noted that "I have this morning for the first time, seen a copy...."[12] However, after studying the map he made extensive comments:

> Upon this map only one large fork of the Red fork of Red River is delineated, with one more northerly small affluent, which is not named, but may have been intended for the Washita River or Cache Creek. But none of the important southern tributaries, such as the Big Witchita [sic], Pease River, and the Prairie Dog Town River are delineated thereon, unless the stream marked as the 'Rio San Saba,' is designated for the Prairie Dog Town branch, and as the real Rio San Saba of Texas is 500 miles or thereabouts distant from this locality, it does seem improbable that if the maker of the map had any vague conception of the existence of such a stream as the Prairie Dog Town River, he might have intended this as such. It certainly runs as far as the section of the map shows it nearly in the direction of that branch of the Red River, and is put down as rising near the eastern border of the Staked Plain, but the small section of the map does not show where it runs.[13]

After establishing the vaious faults of the map, Marcy stated his opinion as to the main branch of the river:

> I regarded the Prairie Dog Town branch as the main Red River, for the reason that its bed was much wider than that of the North Fork. Although the water only covered a small portion of its bed, and as the sandy earth absorbed a good deal of the water it debouched from the canon through which it flows, it may not contribute any more water to the lower river than the North Fork. The Prairie Dog Town branch and the North Fork of Red River from their confluence to their sources are of about equal length, the former being 180 miles and the latter 177 miles in length.[14]

Despite his statement that he had "regarded the Prairie Dog Town branch as the main Red River," Marcy continued that on seeing the Melish map he had concluded that the North Fork "was what is designated upon Melish's map as 'Rio Roxo.' I doubt if the Prairie Dog Town River was ever known to civilized men prior to my exploration in 1852, and if it was ever mapped before than I am not aware of it."[15]

After his somewhat confused beginning, Marcy listed his reasons for

assuming that the North Fork was the branch referred to in the Melish map. He noted that the country along the South or Prairie Dog Town Fork was harsh and forbidding. Remembering his days of thirst and hardship there, he noted that the waters of the South Fork were "so bitter and unpalatable that many of my men became sick from drinking it."[16] Thus he was not surprised "that little if anything should have been known of this repulsive region" before his exploration. Furthermore, the name of the river itself indicated to Marcy that the South Fork had not been explored or mapped previous to his journey. He stated:

> It is very certain that the Prairie Dog Town River, was never delineated upon any of our maps or designated by any Spanish, French, or English name, as were most of the other streams in that country, and it was only known to the Indians, and possibly to some Mexican traders, as the 'Keche-ah-qui-ho-no,' a Comanche appelation, the significance of which the Delawares informed me....[17]

Marcy also noted that Mexican traders probably did not travel across the area "with their carts in their trading expeditions from Santa Fe to Nacogdoches, especially when there was so good a route a little further north possessing all the requisites for prairie traveling."[18] Marcy's final reasons for considering the North Fork the branch indicated on the Melish map were:

> The Rio Rojo or Roxo upon Melish's map is almost entirely south and west of the Witchetaw [sic] Mountains but in close proximity to them, which is in accord with my determination of the position of the North Fork, while there are no mountains upon the Prairie Dog Town Branch.
>
> The head of the Rio Roxo upon Melish's map is put down as in about latitude 37 while upon my map the true latitude is 25½; while the Prairie Dog Town River rises in about latitutde 34½°; so that if his Rio Roxo was intended to represent the 'Prairie Dog Town River,' it would be 2½° of latitude too far north.[19]

After hearing Marcy's comments the commission adjourned until March 3.[20] At the next meeting of the commission, which was delayed

until March 4 by illness in the family of one of the members from Texas, the American delegation issued a statement declaring that the South Fork of the Red was the main fork and should be designated as the branch referred to by the Melish map, noting that the surveys made in 1857 and in 1860 had accepted this conclusion. The Texans responded by denying this supposition, and on March 11 suggested that the tools needed to determine the meaning of the Melish map were not available to the commissioners.[21]

After this exchange the meetings of the commission were spent reviewing historical documents, such as correspondence between John Quincy Adams and Luís de Onís, the reports of Zebulon Pike and Stephen H. Long, and the writings of George Bancroft and Alexander von Humbolt. Several more witnesses, such as Hamilton P. Bee and John S. "Rip" Ford, were heard. Finally, the commissioners agreed to disagree, the American delegation issuing a statement on July 14 which concluded:

> It is maintained by the Commission on the part of Texas that the North Fork is the main Red River of the treaty, because this stream was at that time well known to the farmers thereof, while the Prairie Dog Town Fork was wholly unknown. We [the commissioners from the United States], on the contrary, have shown that nothing was known of either of these streams at the time alluded to, and that for this reason the physical features of the question must be our only criterion in a true interpretation of the treaty.
>
> Hence...we are of the opinion that this [the South Fork] should be considered as the true Red River of the treaty.[22]

The commissioners from Texas responded that the evidence offered in support of the North Fork had not been refuted, but still the Americans persisted in designating the South Fork as the boundary. Therefore a conclusion could not be reached. On July 16, 1886, the commission adjourned, noting that the problem would have to be passed to some other

tribunal.[23]

The commission had met for five months, heard numerous witnesses, and reviewed hundreds of historical documents, but it could not reach a decision. At the root of the problem were the interests of each party. Texans wanted Greer County, and the United States wanted Greer County. Neither was willing to yield the disputed area on such flimsy evidence as sworn testimony or historical fact. Another method of settling the case was necessary, a judgment by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By an act of Congress in May, 1890, the newly opened Territory of Oklahoma was organized. Included in the bill were provisions for the judicial settlement of the Greer County dispute. On October 27, 1890, Attorney General W. H. Miller filed suit in the Supreme Court against the State of Texas, asking that Greer County be judged part of the United States and that the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River be named the main branch of the river.[24]

Counsels for the State of Texas, Augustus Garland, Charles A. Culberson, John Hancock, George Clark, and H. J. May, responded that the Supreme Court had no authority to accept the case because it was political in nature. The case involved settlement of a boundary dispute which had arisen from the Treaty of 1819. They argued that such matters were the province of the executive and legislative branches; constitutionally, the courts had no control over foreign relations of the United States, nor its boundary disputes. Furthermore, they said, the Supreme Court did not have jurisdiction in cases between the United States and individual states, noting that the constitution did not specifically grant this power to the court.[25]

The court disagreed with all the Texans' assertions, noting that it inherently had jurisdiction over cases involving individual states. The fact that the case had arisen from an international agreement did not alter the nature of jurisdiction in the case. Finally, the Court rules in accepting the case brought by the United States that if it did not have jurisdiction of the case there were only three alternatives: mutual agreement, which had already failed; war, which was unacceptable to either side; or trial in a state court, which would abridge the sovereignty of the United States by placing it at the mercy of some state court.[26]

The case of United States of America versus the State of Texas began on October 23, 1895 and ended on March 16 the following year. The court heard arguments, testimony, and statements, and it reviewed documents, maps, and reports, obtaining the same information which had been presented to the Boundary Commission of 1886. Representing the United States were Judson Harmon, Attorney General, Holmes Conrad, Solicitor General, and Edgar Allan, counsel for the plaintiff. For Texas, counsels were George Clark, M. M. Crane, A. H. Garland, J. H. May, Charles A. Culberson, and George Freeman.[27]

Counsel for both parties argued the merits of each fork of the river before the court, beginning on October 23 and concluding on October 25. In giving the decision of the court on February 29, 1896, Associate Justice John M. Harlan reviewed the historical background of the dispute, concluding:

> ...it is ordered, adjudged, and decreed that the territory east of the 100th meridian of longitude, west and south of the river now known as the north fork of Red river, and north of a line following westward, as prescribed by the treaty of 1819 between the United States and Spain, the

> course, and along the south bank, both of Red River and of the river now known as the Prairie Dog Town fork or south fork of Red River until such line meets the 100th meridian of longitude,--which territory is sometimes called Greer County,--constitutes no part of the territory properly included within or rightfully belonging to Texas at the time of the admission of that state into the Union, and is not within the limits nor under the jurisdiction of that state, but is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States of America.[28]

It appeared to the court that the intent of the Treaty of 1819 was most clearly fulfilled by designating the south fork as the main branch of the Red River. All subsequent actions, such as the organization of the county by Texas, the placing of the county under the jurisdiction of the courts of Texas, and claims to ownership of lands in the county by individuals, did not alter the facts of the original case. Thus the court found for the plaintiff, the United States; Texas, having for many years believed it was the rightful owner of the area, was deprived of the region north of the south fork and east of the 100th meridian. Undoubtedly, had Luís de Onís been alive in 1896 he would have been both pleased and amused by the confusion and difficulty, which the treaty he so unwillingly had made, had caused the pushy and disrespectful Americans.[29]

All that remained to settle the long-standing dispute was the designation of the point where the 100th meridian crossed the Prairie Dog Town Fork--now the main fork--of the Red River. On January 15, 1901, Congress directed the Secretary of Interior, E. A. Hitchcock, to cause "to be established and fixed the intersection of the true meridian with Red River, or what...was known as the South Fork of Red River ...."[30] To fulfill this directive, Secretary Hitchcock dispatched Arthur D. Kidder, Examiner of Surveys, to locate the point in question.[31]

Several attempts had been made previously to locate the 100th

meridian, including those of Jones and Brown in 1857, John H. Clark in 1858, C. L. Du Bois in 1873, O. T. Morrill also in 1873, H. C. F. Hackbusch in 1875, and Ehud N. Darling also in 1875; however, the accuracy of all these was suspect. Thus Kidder set out in 1903, after studying the findings of the previous surveys, to locate the exact point of intersection. Also, he was to determine the boundary of Texas with New Mexico and Oklahoma from the Red River to the Rio Grande. In 1904 he reported that his work was concluded, noting that the previous survey of the 100th meridian's intersection with the Red had been less accurate than his because of recent improvements in astronomical instruments. Also, he noted that the Red River was subject to meandering which made exact surveys of its course difficult. Thus the Greer County dispute ended, not with gunfire and sword, but with a court decision and a surveyor's report.[32]

However, the end of the Greer County affair did not terminate the controversy over the Red River. While the Supreme Court had ruled that the boundary ran along the South Fork, the exact location of the boundary of the two states along the Red River had never been determined. Surely it followed the Red; but it was one thing to draw lines on paper and another to draw lines across the face of the earth, especially along a river that shifted and meandered like the Red.[33]

Yet there seemed no urgent need to clarify the boundary, at least at that time. Then in 1918 the situation changed drastically. Oil was discovered in Oklahoma, and large deposits were located under the bed of the Red River. Both states wanted some of it--or all of it. Immediately after the discovery of this black gold, the State of Oklahoma, which asserted ownership to the entire bed of the Red because of

the Supreme Court's judgment of 1896 that the boundary followed the South Fork of the river, began to lease portions of the river bed. However, Texas, which had not overtly disputed this assertion until the discovery of oil contended that the boundary followed the middle of the river, and that the southern half of the river bed, along with the oil under it, belonged to Texas. Also complicating the issue was a claim by the Comanche tribe that the northern half of the river rightfully was theirs because the treaty of 1867 had granted the tribe territory extending to the middle of the river. And some citizens claimed that the river bed was open to placer mining because the area had become Federal land after the opening of the Big Pasture Indian Reservation in 1906, asserting that the Indians had forfeited all rights to the river bed by accepting the reservation. Also, land owners along the river claimed ownership of the river bed adjacent to their property.[34]

The legislature of Texas moved to end the dispute by passing an act providing for a suit to be brought against Oklahoma. This was to be done in the Supreme Court or in any court legal officials of the state determined suitable. Quickly the matter deteriorated into a farce. The courts of both states assumed jurisdiction, and the national guards of both states eventually were called out, not to keep the peace but to support the claims of their respective states.[35]

In 1919 Oklahoma moved to clarify--and hopefully end--the disagreement by filing suit in the Supreme Court, asking that the court state that the boundary followed the south bank of the river. The court immediately appointed a receiver to maintain oil and gas wells already in operation until the dispute was settled. Also, to protect the rights of Indian climants as well as its own interests, the United

States entered the case by permission of the court.[36]

In December of 1920 the case, State of Oklahoma versus State of Texas, United States of America, intervener, opened before the Supreme Court. Arguments were heard on the 14th and 15th of that month. Representing the various claimants were S. P. Freeling, Attorney General of the State of Oklahoma; C. M. Cureton, Attorney General of the State of Texas; Garnett, Assistant Attorney General of the United States; and Joseph W. Bailey and A. H. Carrigan, attorneys for landowners.[37]

Oklahoma's legal representative contended that the boundary had been determined by judgment in the case concerning Greer County in 1896 when the court had ruled that the boundary followed the course of the Red River "along the south bank...."[38] However, the attorneys for Texas argued that the judgment had not been final because it had applied only to Greer County, and that the Treaty of 1819, which was the basis for the ruling, had been misconstrued. This contention arose from the vague wording of the treaty. The Third Article of the Treaty of 1819 read in part:

> The Boundary line between the two Countries, West of the Mississippi, shall begin on the Gulph [sic] of Mexico, at the mouth of the River Sabine in the Sea, continuing North, along the Western Bank of that River, to the 32d degree of Latitude, where it strikes the Rio Roxo of Natchitoches, or Red-River, then following the course of the Rio-Roxo Westward to the degree of Longitude, 100 West from London and 23 from Washington, then crossing the said Red-River, and running thence by a Line due North to the River Arkansas, thence, following the Course of the Southern bank of the Arkansas to its source in Latitude, 42. North, and thence by that parallel of Latitude to the South Sea...all the islands in the Sabine and the said Red and Arkansas Rivers, throughout the course thus described, to belong to the United States....[39]

According to this treaty, the boundary did indeed follow the west bank of the Sabine and the south bank of the Arkansas, but no such designation was made regarding the Red. The statement that all islands in the Red belonged to the United States implied that the entire bed of the river had been ceded to the Americans. Nonetheless, Texas contended that the wording of the treaty left the matter open to dispute.[40]

The Court issued its opinion on April 11, 1921. The ruling noted that the Court was faced with two questions: was the ruling of 1896 valid for the entire course of the river between Oklahoma and Texas, and did the treaty of 1819 intend the line to follow the south bank or the middle of the Red River. If the answer to the first question was positive, the second was moot. The findings of the court, in part, were:

> ...that, in elucidation of the matter, the treaty, and much historical evidence of the negotiations that led up to it, were introduced, discussed by counsil in argument, and referred to in the opinion of the court [in 1896]; and that the point was directly determined by the court and the determination made part of its final decree. By every test that properly can be applied, the matter is res judicata [determined by legal precedent].[41]

Therefore the State of Texas had no claim to any part of the river bed.

However, the matter still was not settled. The United States contested the claim of Oklahoma to the entire bed of the river, claiming ownership of the southern half for itself and partial ownership of the northern half for itself and for members of the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache tribes. Also, the question of determining the meaning of the word "bank" regarding the Red River was unanswered. Was the bank the high water mark? the low water mark? What of the meanderings of the river? When the river formed a cut-off, moving the channel north or south, did the boundary follow the river?[42]

The claims of placer mines were discounted on May 1, 1922. The

court held that the portion of the river in question had never been subject to mining claims because of its ownership by the Indian tribes under the Treaty of 1867.[43]

The State of Oklahoma argued that its ownership of the river bed arose from two factors: riparian right of the state as the owner of public lands along the river granted to the state on its entrance into the Union, and retention of ownership of the river bed because the Red was a navigable stream. Counsel for Oklahoma argued that several acts by the Federal government, such as authorizing bridges to be built on the Red River, appropriation of funds to improve the river, and surveys of the river, as well as the assumption by Adams and Onis in making the Treaty of 1819 that the Red River was navigable, demonstrated a previous acceptance of the navigability of the stream. Also, documents relating the frequent navigation of the river during the nineteenth century was offered as evidence of the historical navigability of the Red.[44]

Oklahoma's evidence for the navigability of the Red was impressive. However, the court rule that, while the government had attempted to improve the navigability of the Red above Fulton, Arkansas, and that while for a time the traffic on the river had been heavy, the situation had changed by 1920. The Corps of Engineers had ceased work on the river and commerce was negligible. Therefore the Red no longer was a navigable waterway. The United States owned the lower half of the river bed. However, the court did allow the claim of the state to ownership of certain parts of the northern half of the river bed because of riparian right. Additionally, the court recognized the rights of various individuals to riparian ownership of lands obtained from former Indian grants.[45]

The only matter left before the court was the settlement of the definition of "banks." The United States and the State of Oklahoma contended that the intention of the treaty-makers was the high water mark of the river. Texas, however, claimed that the bank was the low water mark, contending that the high water mark would give the United States and Oklahoma almost one half million acres of Texas soil, soil that had been cultivated and kept by Texans without dispute until the discovery of oil.[46]

Referring to the Treaty of 1819 once more, the Court rules that the drafters had specifically noted the boundary as running on the "respective Banks" of the rivers involved; thus the boundary followed the most easily recognizable bank of the Red River. This was, in the opinion of the court, the "cut-bank" where the water had eroded the earth. This was the high water mark. These banks confined the waters of the river except during floods. As for changes in the course of the river, the boundary followed the river. For instance, when the river divided its waters, forming an island, the boundary ran along the northern edge of the island.[47]

Arthur D. Kidder and Arthur A. Stiles were appointed by the court to survey the "south bank" of the Red, marking the boundary as it was in 1921. The survey was to begin at the "Big Bend" of the river and progress westward, ending at the 100th meridian.[48]

A supplement to this ruling was allowed by the court on March 12, 1923, providing for protection of the riparian right of landowners to the middle of the river unless specifically limited by the court. Also, owners whose rights had been non-riparian when the survey was made by Kidder and Stiles, and which since had become riparian, were granted

ownership to the middle of the river. Finally, the receiver was ordered to surrender all patents and allotted tracts as quickly as possible.

In June of 1924 the court ordered the received to audit his accounts and to pay the necessary taxes on the profits earned. A year later, on June 1, 1925, the receivership ended, and all tracts were returned to their rightful owners.[49]

The only matter still undecided was the final marking of the boundary by Stiles and Kidder. Working from late 1923 until the summer of 1926, these men marked the designated boundary, and in April of 1927 the court approved the report.[50]

Thus the dispute over ownership of the Red River finally ended after approximately one hundred years. For more than two centuries nations and states had argued over the boundary of the Red. First it had been France and Spain, then Spain and the United States, later the United States and Texas, and finally Texas and Oklahoma, and the settlements of the boundary had ranged from pragmatic agreements, such as those made by St. Denis and Aguayo in 1719 and Wilkinson and Herrera in 1806, to judicial decrees such as those by the Supreme Court in 1896 and 1921. Two hundred years had altered the method of settling disputes about the Red River, but not its nature; however, by the time the court approved the final boundary, Congress was devising plans to tame the river.

FOOTNOTES

[1]House Executive Doc., Doc. No. 635, Fifty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. CCII, pp. 12-14.

[2]D. Hunter Miller, Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, 5 vols. (Washington: G.P.O., 1931-1936), III, p. 304; Annals of Congress, Vol. XVI, 1820, pp. 1501-1504; Text of the treaty is also printed in, Philip C. Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), pp. 205-214.

[3]John and Henry Sayles, editors, Early Laws of Texas, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Gilbert Book Company, 1891), I, pp. 568-569.

[4]Governor Sam Houston to William H. Russell, April 30, 1860, Exec. Record Book, Houston, 1859-1861, Archives, Texas State Library.

[5]Senate Doc., Doc. No. 70, Forty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. III.

[6]Sayles, Laws of Texas, II, pp. 2886-2887; House Doc., Doc. No. 1595, Fifty-eighth Congress, 2 Sess., Vol. V; H. P. N. Gammel, Laws of Texas, 10 vols. (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1930), IX, pp. 127-128.

[7]Journal of the House, Forty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess., p. 20; House Doc., Doc. No. 1282, Forty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. V; Senate Doc., Doc. No. 314, Forty-seventh Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. I.

[8]See, "The United States Complainent Versus the State of Texas in Equity," Record of the Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1891, Vol. I, p. 25; Grant Foreman, "The Red River and the Spanish Boundary," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, No. 3 (January, 1925), pp. 38-47.

[9]House Doc., Doc. No. 99, Forty-eighth Congress, 2 Sess., Vol. V.

[10]House Exec. Doc., Doc. No. 21, Fiftieth Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. XVIII, p. 5.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 9.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 10.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., pp. 9-23.

[22]Ibid., p. 163.

[23]Ibid., p. 164.

[24]House Exec. Doc., Doc. No. 404, Fifty-first Congress, 1 Sess., Vol. XXXVII.

[25]"The United States Complainent Versus the State of Texas in Equity," United States Report, Vol. CLXII, p. 102; Vol. CXLIII, pp. 143, 625.

[26]Ibid., pp. 630-648.

[27]Ibid., pp. 20-90.

[28]Ibid., p. 90.

[29]See Claude A. Welborn, The Red River Controversy (Wichita Falls, Texas: Nortex Co., 1973), passim; Webb L. Moore, The Greer County Question (N.p., 1939), passim.

[30]House Doc., Doc. No. 38, Fifty-ninth Congress, 1 Sess.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Dale McKinney, "A Century of Dissention at the Red River Boundary," (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Oklahoma A. and M. College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1941), pp. 34-47; James A. Barnett, "The Empire of Greer," (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Oklahoma A. and M. College, 1938), pp. 55-61; U.S., Law. ed., Vol. 39, pp. 876-899.

[33]McKinney, "Red Rivery Boundary," pp. 51-52.

[34]258 U.S., Law. ed., Vol. 64, p. 779; Isaiah Bowman, "An American Boundary Dispute," The Geographical Review, XIII (1923), pp. 163-65.

[35]Ibid.; Original Supreme Court Transcript, Vol. XX, pp. 2644-2649.

[36]Earnest Knaebel, Reporter, Cases Adjusted in the Supreme Court, 50 vols. (Washington: G.P.O., 1922-1935), CCLVIII, p. 582; McKinney, "Red River Boundary," p. 62.

[37]United States Report, Vol. CCLII, p. 372; "The State of Oklahoma Complainent versus the State of Texas, Defendant, United States of America Intervener," Record of the Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1920, No. 23 Original, p. 85.

[38]Ibid., p. 90.

[39]Ibid., p. 92.

[40]U. S. Reports, Vol. CCLVIII, p. 280.

[41]"Oklahoma versus Texas, United States, Intervener," U.S. Reports, Vol. CCLVI, p. 70; 258 U. S., Law. ed., Vol. 65, p. 772; Knaebel, Reporter, Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court October Term 1922, Vol. CCLVIII, p. 582.

[42]McKinney, "Red River Boundary," pp. 66-71; Leonidas Glenn, "Geology and Physiography of the Red River Boundary Between Texas and Oklahoma," The Pan American Geologist, XLIII, No. 2 (Spring, 1925), pp. 365-368; E. H. Sellards, "The Oklahoma-Texas Boundary Suit," Science, LXII, No. 1 (March, 1923), pp. 340-352.

[43]258 U. S., Law. ed., Vol. 65, p. 772.

[44]Ibid., pp. 770-772; McKinney, "Red Rivery Boundary," pp. 63-68.

[45]Ibid., 258 U. S. Law. ed., Vol. 65, p. 772.

[46]McKinney, "Red River Boundary," pp. 71-72; Sellards, "Oklahoma-Texas Boundary Suit," Science, p. 347.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]U. S. Reports, Vol. CCLVIII, p. 574; ibid., Vol. CCLXI, pp. 340-350.

[50]Sellards, "Oklahoma-Texas Boundary Suit," Science, p. 348.

CHAPTER XI

THE TAMING OF THE RIVER

For countless centuries the Red River had swelled with rain water, rising each spring and falling each autumn. Occasionally this gentle pattern of nature was disruped by particularly heavy or light rainfall causing the river either to flood or remain too low for commercial use. Sometimes there was just enough water, frequently there was too little, and sporatically there was too much. Man was the seemingly helpless victim of nature's moods. However, in the latter part of the second decade of the twentieth century Congress acted to relieve the plight of people in the Red River valley.

The River and Harbor Act of 1927 provided for a study of the advisability of improving the various rivers of the United States for purposes of navigation. In 1928 the Flood Control Act ordered studies to be made regarding the construction of flood control activities. The Red River was specifically mentioned in both bills. Additionally, prospects for power generation facilities were to be studied.[1]

There were three major areas involving the Red where flood control projects were needed: the low lands surrounding the mouth of the river, which frequently were flooded by backwaters from the Mississippi; the area near the mouth of the Ouachita River, which flooded when the Red and Ouachita crested; and low lying regions along the Red which flooded during periods of high water. In 1934, as a result of these

acts of Congress requesting information and recommendations concerning flood control in the United States, the President's Committee on Water Flow responded regarding the Red by suggesting a series of dams and locks on the river at fifty-two locations on the river. These projects, the committee asserted, effectively would control flooding on the Red River below Denison, Texas. However, the committee also noted that the total cost of the projects would be prohibitive at that time. Therefore, the opinion of the committee was that only two projects should be considered immediately: dams at Columbia and Jonesville, Louisiana. The estimated cost of these projects was $395,000 and $443,000 respectively. For the region near the mouth of the Red, projects were to be delayed until work on the Mississippi River had been completed. As for projects on the upper Red, the committee found that cost made them "not appear to be justified at this time." Despite the committee's suggestion, Congress failed to approve any projects until the late 1930s.

In compliance with these acts the Army Corps of Engineers reported to the Congress in January of 1936. The report of the Engineers dealt extensively with the physical make-up of the Red River, and included recommendations concerning hydrology, navigation, flood control, irrigation, possibilities for power development, and estimated costs. By the time of the report the need for work on the Red River had been demonstrated by the destruction of thousands of dollars worth of property by floods in 1908, 1927, and 1930. Also, commerce on the river had been restricted to the portion below Alexandria because of insufficient water. With passage of time the size of boats had outgrown the shallow waters of the Red.[2]

After 1909 work on the Red by the Corps of Engineers had been limited to maintaining a six food channel below Alexandria; in the report of 1936 the Corps advised the Congress that the cost of extending this channel beyond Alexandria would be prohibitive, asserting that: "The maximum value of a 6-foot project to Shreveport would not exceed $5,400,000. The lowest cost of such a project would be $40,000,000 or 26 times the value."[3] In light of this information the Corps concluded that further work at that time was unadvisable. Especially because there was little demand for water borne transportation in the area along the Red.[4]

Regarding flood control projects, the Corps' suggestions were similar. Floods were a constant problem; however, the cost of providing adequate flood control facilities for the area on the Red River were far more than the maximum value that would be realized in savings. For example, the Corps estimated that "no project is justified unless the cost per acre providing flood protection is somewhat less than approximately $25...."[5] In the area of the Rapides Islandes near Alexandria the cost per acre was $40.10. No area along the Red River was suitably situated or contained property sufficiently valued to indicate the construction of flood control facilities. Flood control on the Red River would be delegates to the states.[6]

Recommendations concerning water power and irrigation projects were similarly negative. Of the former, the Corps noted that "The development of hydroelectric power in the basic would cost more than development of equivalent power from steam plants."[7] Again the cost-profit ratio was prohibitive. The average cost of constructing water-power facilities on the Red were 8.10 mills per kilowatt-hour. In that time

of plentiful and relatively inexpensive fuels for steam plants, the Corps concluded that the development of hydroelectric power was non-essential. As for irrigation, the Corps noted, "The present value of agricultural land does not justify such irrigation developments as are physically feasible."[8]

As a result of these reports, no new work on the Red River by the Corps of Engineers was approved in 1936. However, because of increased public pressure and increased demand for power, the Flood Control Act of 1938 was approved, authorizing the Corps to construct a dam on the Red near the city of Denison, Texas to aid in controlling floods on the Red and Washita rivers. Work began on the project early in 1939 and was concluded in 1944. The dam, measuring 15,200 feet in length and 165 feet in height, was located five miles above Denison just below the mouth of the Washita River. A year after the dam was finished, creating Lake Texoma, the first hydroelectric turbine was fitted into the structure, and four years later another generator was installed, bringing the total output of the unit to seventy thousand kilowatts per hour. The total cost of the project was almost $80,000,000.[9]

Meanwhile Congress had acted again. During the period from 1938 to 1944, the national legislature approved several acts requesting the Corps of Engineers to reevaluate the potential for further flood control and hydroelectric facilities on the Red River. Also, the Corps was directed to study the feasibility of opening a waterway from Jefferson, Texas, to Shreveport, Louisiana, as well as the advisability of improving the navigability of the Red to Denison, Texas.[10] In 1946 the Corps responded to these requests with two reports, one concerning navigability and the other regarding flood control and hydroelectric

facilities. The latter suggested the construction of a series of dams on the Red and several of its tributaries, costing in excess of $70,000,000. The former proposed radical modifications in existing plans for improving the navigability of the Red River:

> ...modification of the existing project...to provide for a channel 9 feet deep and 100 feet wide, extending from the Mississippi through...Red River, thence by a lateral canal leaving Red River through its right bank, at or near mile 31, and extending through land cuts and existing waterways, across the Mississippi-Red River backwater area and along the south bank of the Red River flood plain to Shreveport, by the construction of locks and dams and channel excavation....[11]

The total cost of this project was estimated at $42,000,000 for the initial construction, and $600,000 annually for maintenance.[12]

Congress reacted favorably to the proposal for construction of flood control and hydroelectric dams on the Red. However, action concerning the proposed waterway to Shreveport was delayed. The amount of commerce in the area along the Red did not, in the view of a majority of national legislators, warrant the expenditure of $40,000,000, at least not at that time. However, $77,500,000 was appropriated for construction of the proposed dams in the Flood Control Act of 1946. Additionally, more than $100,000,000 was appropriated for flood control and river improvement below Shreveport by the Mississippi River Commission. This appropriation resulted in the continued construction of jetties, dams, and levies on the lower river to prevent erosion of soil and to prevent destruction of property by backwater from the Mississippi.[13]

The Flood Control of 1946 was the beginning of serious efforts by the Federal Government to chain the forces of nature in the Red River Valley, to prevent the destruction of property by the whims of the

river, and to harness the seemingly limitless power of the river. Yet it was only a first step. In 1950 Congress approved an additional flood control act similar to the previous bill but larger in scope, asking for individual studies of the rivers of the nation and providing for individual appropriations.[14]

After passage of the Flood Control Act of 1950, which in reality was a comprehensive act providing for studies and projects in a wide area of improvements, including hydroelectric, irrigation, navigation, water quality, and flood control, the work of the Corps of Engineers on the Red River was constant and extensive, with more than one hundred and fifty large projects proposed, in progress, or completed by 1957.

Above Denison Dam the projects of the Corps were designed mainly for four purposes: irrigation, municipal water supply, hydroelectric production. Such dams were constructed on the Washita, Pease and Wichita rivers. Additionally, smaller dams and other water-flow retardation devices, such as spillways and jetties, were placed in areas where soil erosion was excessive. By 1957 almost five hundred such projects either were proposed or in progress.[15]

Below Denison Dam the majority of the Corps' work was to effect flood control and water storage, with irrigation and prevention of soil erosion as adjuncts to these larger projects. Also, in the early 1950s the Corps revived the proposed canalings of the Red River below Shreveport to reopen navigation on the river to that city. This project was approved in 1965 by Congress. However, actual construction of the facility was delayed indefinitely. Nonetheless the Corps proposed in 1957 an enlargement of the project, extending the canal and lock system to Jefferson, Texas, Lone Star, Texas, and Texarkana, Texas. Proposed

as a long range project, one that would not be instituted until conditions such as population, industrial growth, and commercial activity in the affected areas warranted extensive outlays of money, the plan was devised to utilize related projects to hold costs to a minimum. The extension of the canal would be made via Twelve Mile, Black, and Kelly bayous, Caddo Lake, and Cypress Creek to reach Jefferson and Lone Star, an industrial center in East Texas. The connection to Texarkana would be made via the Sulphur construct. The problem of maintaining a constant water level in the canal system was to be solved by utilizing proposed reservoirs as water storage facilities. Regarding the channel to Jefferson and Lone Star, a proposed project, called Ferrell's Bridge Reservoir (later known as the Lake O'Pines), was to be used "for storing water to maintain pool levels...." Regarding the channel to Texarkana, Texoma and Texarkana lakes would be used to regulate water flow.[16]

During the 1950s and 1960s Congress continually approved appropriations for construction of dams and reservoirs on the Red River and its tributaries. Additions to the Flood Control Act were made both specifically, as in the case when the act in July of 1955 was modified to include the Ferrell's Bridge Reservoir project, and generally, as Rivers and Harbors Acts of 1958 and 1962.[17] The former, passed in July of 1958, provided, "The general plan for flood control on Red River...as authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1946, is now modified and expanded, at an estimated cost in addition to that now authorized of $53,235,000...."[18] Including minor additions between 1946 and 1958, this appropriation raised the total amount of funds authorized by the Congress for improvements on the Red River to almost $150,000,000. Four years later, in October of 1962, Congress approved an additional

appropriation of $76,058,000 to be used to improve flood control capabilities of the Corps on ten tributaries of the Red River in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Also included in this act was an appropriation of $300,000 to construct two experimental water-quality study projects in the Red River Basin.[19]

By 1970 several of the Corps major projects, such as Broken Bow and Farrell's Bridge reservoirs, had been completed; others, such as Hugh and Boswell reservoirs, were under construction; yet others, such as the proposed navigation channel to Shreveport, remained idle.[20]

One of the most successful Corps' projects was Lake Texoma, created by Denison Dam. This reservoir was designed to hold 5,382,000 acre-feet of water, including more than two million acre-feet of storage space for flood waters. In 1970 the Corps of Engineers estimated that the total savings gained from flood prevention since the dams had been completed in 1944 was $28,979,000. In addition, the two turbines at these facilities had produced 162,000,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity during fiscal year 1970, supplying power to a majority of surrounding towns. Also, the reservoir supplies water to the city of Denison, the Texas Power and Light Company, Texaco Incorporated, the Red River Authority of Texas, and the Atlantic Richfield Company.[21]

The Denison Dam-Lake Texoma project was also an example of another function of the Corps' work on the Red River to provide recreation facilities. In 1955 more than five million people visited the area, and in 1970 the lake attracted 9,700,000 visitors as well as more than ten thousand pleasure boats.[22] Additionally, hundreds of thousands of water fowl have used the waters of Lake Texoma.

From 1930 to 1970 millions of dollars were spent for improvement

of the Red River and its tributaries. The result was a sharp decrease in the loss of property due to floods, plentiful water supplies, adequate supplies of electricity, and countless hours of recreation. The Red River valley would never again be the same.

FOOTNOTES

[1]House Doc., Doc. No. 308, Sixty-ninth Congress, 1 Sess.; House Doc., Doc. No. 378, Seventy-fourth Congress, 2 Sess.

[2]Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[3]Ibid., p. 129.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., pp. 385, 393-394.

[6]Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[7]Ibid., p. 130.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Arkansas and Red River Basins, Corps of Engineers Pamphlet (Tulsa District), pp. 39-45.

[10]Public Law 409, Seventy-fourth Congress; Public Law 293, Seventy-fifth Congress; Public Law 685, Seventy-fifth Congress.

[11]House Doc., Doc. No. 320, Eightieth Congress, 1 Sess., p. 2. See also ibid., pp. 17-18.

[12]Ibid.; see also ibid., p. 10.

[13]Public Law 534, Seventy-eighth Congress; Public Law 526, Seventy-ninth Congress; House Doc., Doc. No. 320, Eightieth Congress, 1 Sess.

[14]Public Law 516, Eighty-first Congress.

[15]Senate Doc., Doc. No. 13, Eighty-fifth Congress, 1 Sess.

[16]Ibid., pp. 954-955.

[17]Public Law 160, Eighty-fourth Congress; Public Law 500, Eighty-fifth Congress; House Doc., Doc. No. 170, Eighty-fifth Congress, 2 Sess.; Senate Doc., Doc. No. 132, Eighty-seventh Congress, 2 Sess.; Senate Doc., Doc. No. 144, Eighty-seventh Congress, 2 Sess.; Senate Doc., Doc. No. 145, Eighty-seventh Congress, 2 Sess.

[18]Public Law 500, Eighty-fifth Congress.

[19]Public Law 874, Eighty-seventh Congress.

[20]Arkansas and Red River Basins, Corps of Engineers Pamphlet (Tulsa District), pp. 39-45.

[21]Ibid., p. 39.

[22]Senate Doc., Doc. No. 13, Eighty-fifth Congress., 1 Sess., p. 791; Arkansas and Red River Basins, p. 39.

CHAPTER XII

TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Today small children play beside the Red River, sailing toy boats and searching for lunkers. Looking across its waters they see powerful boats made of plastic and steel skimming over the surface. The river is a plaything to be enjoyed. But if they listen to the sounds of the river, they may still hear the echo of some long-dead Frenchman singing of far-off places, or along the banks they may find a long-forgotten rut made where an Indian canoe came ashore. And if the river could speak, what a wonderous tale it would tell--a tale of wars and friendships, of floods and droughts, of brave men and cowards, of life and death. When man first crept from the darkness of caves, daring for the first time to see the light, the Red River was old--"as old as the wind," said the Caddo.

The Red River, at some places beautiful and sparkling, luring to the body and soul, and at other turbid and unhandsome, uninviting to the eye or palate, was a highway of commerce for more centuries than man can remember. Men--red and white, great and small, good and evil--have plied the waters of this river, carrying goods to be traded. And when waves of Europeans swept across the continent, many pioneers traveled the Red River.

Settlement and civilization have brought a taming of the Red. Large cities now are found where once the lodges of Indians stood.

Where St. Denis found a small gathering of Caddo in 1714 now stands Natchitoches, Louisiana, a town of more than twenty thousand people. Where once the land was open and teeming with wildlife now stands Shreveport, a modern and bustling city. Where once the buffalo searched for grass now stands Wichita Falls, Texas. Where once the Red River mated with the Washita to flow unfettered to the Mississippi now lies Lake Texoma.

The Red River today bears little resemblance to the untamed and quarrelsome stream that delayed Luís de Moscoso's journey to Mexico more than four centuries ago. Dozens of bridges span its waters, great turbines harness its power to make electricity, and computers gauge its flow. Dams and jetties deter and restrict its wanderings; no longer can it change its channel. Huge reservoirs hold its waters, keeping it from its rendezvous with the Mississippi. But in the fullness of time, the river continues, pulled ever downward by the determined, relentless power of gravity. After uncountable millennia, after thousands of man-made changes, the river still flows. It is a successful river--still fulfilling its function of carrying water to the sea.

Despite the changes which have taken place on and along the Red River, despite the passage of time and the death of men, the river remains constant. Its waters are used by men to ease the burdens of life. Whether used to transport furs or to light the streets of some city, the waters of the river endure, permanence in a changing world.

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