EARLY FILIBUSTERING IN SONORA AND BAJA CALIFORNIA, 1848-1854

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PREFACE

This study concentrates on the activities of Joseph C. Morehead and William Walker, the first Anglo-American filibusters to invade northwestern Mexico. Although many conflicts of interest occurred between Mexico and the United States in the years intervening between the Treaty of Guadalupe and the Gadsden Purchase, little attention has been devoted by historians to filibustering activity during this period. In this study a narrative of the expeditions will be given, but the major concern will be the reasons Walker and Morehead raided Sonora and Baja California and the effect that their intrusions had upon the American and Mexican governments. Were Morehead and Walker patriots, or pirates?

I must express my appreciation to all the people who contributed to the research and writing of this thesis. Many staff members of the Oklahoma State University Library were very helpful in obtaining materials on microfilm. However, I must personally thank Dr. Odie B. Faulk of the Oklahoma State University history department for his encouragement, understanding and constructive criticism, as well as Dr. Homer L. Knight, head of the department.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, it appeared to many citizens that the United States had stopped growing physically. Since the formation of the Republic, the expansion of America had been so sweeping and so rapid that many refused to believe that the "era of progress" was at an end and that a permanent international boundary had been agreed upon between the United States and Mexico. To some visionary statesmen and journalists, the extension of American institutions and the annexation of more land was "manifest destiny," and any action committed in its name justified the cause. To them it was "the fate of America ever to go ahead. She is like the rod of Aaron that became a serpent and swallowed up the other rods. So will America conquer or annex all lands. That is her "manifest destiny".[1] To these individuals, Americans had proven themselves the most progressive of the world. The recent treaty with Mexico was regarded only as a temporary stumbling bloc. They would find a new course on which to travel, and new territory in which to settle would soon be taken.

But to others, "manifest destiny" was only an excuse. Adventure and intrigue was their game; private fortune was their reward. They

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[1]Frank Soule, John H. Gihon, James Nisbet, The Annals of San Francisco, comp. by Dorothy H. Huggins (Palo Alto: Lewis Osborne, 1966), p. 470.

took international law into their own hands and called upon others to share the profits of their glory. They were "filibusters," and only their success or failure determined whether or not they were exponents of "manifest destiny". Such was the case with Joseph Morehead and William Walker, the first Anglo-American filibusters to raid northern Mexico.[2]

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had left Mexicans with a profound suspicion of the United States. The events that took place along the new international border between 1848 and 1854 only deepened that distrust. Also, the Mexican government believed that the United States was not fulfilling its obligations under the treaty. Article XI had specifically stated that the United States was bound to restrain the Indians within the newly acquired territory and to maintain the security of the Mexican frontier.[3] Secretary of State James Buchanan informed the Mexican foreign minister that the United States government possessed "both the ability and the will to restrain the Indians within the extended limits of the United States from making incursions into the Mexican territories, as well as to execute all the other stipulations of the 11th article."[4] With the Gadsden Purchase the United States was

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[2]The Spanish equivalent is "filibustero" meaning "freebooter." In this paper the word is used in reference to those who engaged in outfitting and conducting through their own private initiative, an armed expedition from the United States in an attempt to seize territory from Mexico by force and intrigue.

[3]William M. Malloy, comp., Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776-1909 (2 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), I, pp. 1112-1113.

[4]Congressional Globe, 30th Congress, 2nd session, (1848-1849), Vol. XIX, p. 495.

released from the obligations of Article XI. Until then, however, it appeared to the Mexican government that there was a lack of good faith on the part of the United States to enforce that "will" or "ability."[5]

Prior to the treaty of 1848, bands of Apaches continually had made devastating raids into Sonora. From 1832 to 1849, over two hundred residents were murdered inside Fort Fronteras. Because of this killing and robbing, the northern portion of the state was gradually depopulated, missions and settlements disappeared, and mines were abandoned.[6] As late as the summer of 1852 it was reported that areas "once inhabited by a peaceful and happy population are now deserted and the fertile valleys they tilled are reverting to the condition of a wilderness."[7] Now that a treaty existed, Mexico naturally expected these depredations to cease.

To the United States Congress, however, Article XI entailed more than just securing the frontier from Indian raids into Mexico. Since Spanish times the Comanches, Apaches, Utahs, Navajos, Kiowas, and Yumas

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[5]J. Fred Rippy, "The Indians of the Southwest in the Diplomacy of the United States and Mexico, 1848-1853," Hispanic American Historical Review, II (1919), pp. 394-396.

[6]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the North Mexican States and Texas (2 vols.; San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1884-1889), II, p. 653; Robert C. Stevens, "The Apache Menace in Sonora, 1831-1849," Arizona and the West, VI (Autumn, 1964), pp. 211-222; John C. Cremony, Life Among the Apaches (San Francisco: A. Roman and Company, 1868), pp. 35-46. Reprinted in 1969 by The Rio Grande Press, Inc. Cremony was the interpreter for John R. Bartlett, commissioner for the boundary survey from 1849 to 1851. He gives an excellent description of the fear that the Mexicans on the Sonoran frontier had of the Apaches.

[7]John Russell Bartlett, Personal Narratives of Exploration and Incidents... (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854), II, p. 385. Reprinted in 1965 by the Rio Grande Press.

had been terrorizing the northern frontier. Now approximately 120,000 of these Indians resided in the newly acquired territory, and the United States government was confronted with a three-fold task. Not only must it keep the border Indians from raiding settlements in Mexico; it also had to keep the tribes at peace with one another, as well as protect United States citizens from the hostile Indians.[8] Furthermore, while attempting to fulfill these obligations, the government also wanted to reduce military expenditures. While Congressmen debated the merits and shortcomings of a reasonable solution, the Apache raids into Sonora continued.[9]

On the other hand, United States officials were not hesitant to inform Mexico that it too had responsibilities in protecting its borderlands. In his annual message to Congress in December, 1851, President Millard Fillmore pointed out that the United States was trying to enforce the treaty stipulations, but since American troops could not be stationed on Mexican soil, there was no way that a co-operative effort could be executed.[10] Secretary of War C. M. Conrad was extremely critical of Mexican attempts to control the Sonoran frontier. To him, the weakness of the Mexican federal government and the constant civil strife that existed throughout the republic severely impaired its influence over the Navajos and Apaches "who know no right but power and

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[8]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888, (San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1889), p. 459; Rippy, "The Indians of the Southwest," p. 366.

[9]Rippy, "The Indians of the Southwest," p. 370.

[10]President Millard Fillmore's Annual Message to both Houses of Congress, December 2, 1851, House Executive Document 2, 32d Congress, 1st session, Vol. II, pt. 1, pp. 18-19.

no motive but the fear of its exercise."[11]

In many instances, when the military force of either nation did take punitive action against the marauding Indians, it only intensified the distress caused to Sonorans. These Indians frequently dealt with Mexican and American traders on both sides of the border who supplied them with guns and ammunitions in exchange for stolen articles, such as livestock, as well as women and children taken from Sonoran towns. As the United States troops could not cross over to Mexican territory, the Indians only advanced deeper into Sonoran territory.[12]

Mexico did, however, make several attempts between 1848 and 1854 to secure its northern frontier. Less than six months after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had been signed, Jose Joaquin de Herrera, President of Mexico, recognized the necessity of defending the frontier states and signed into law a decree providing for the establishment of eighteen military colonies along Mexico's northern boundary. The colonies were to serve a dual purpose. One was to establish them as centers of defense to deter the Indian incursions in the region. The second was to use each one as a nucleus for a civilian population, who, hopefully would prevent the aggressive Americans from taking more territory from Mexico.[13]

The colonies were divided into three divisions, called the Frontier of the East, the Frontier of Chihuahua, and the Frontier of

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[11]Report of the Secretary of War, House Executive Document 2, 32d Congress, 1st session, Vol. II, pt. 1, p. 107.

[12]Ibid.; Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico, p. 459.

[13]Odie B. Faulk, trans., "Projected Mexican Military Colonies for the Borderlands, 1848," Journal of Arizona History, IX (Spring, 1968), p. 39.

the West. Enlistment was voluntary, and recruits were to be attracted through advanced pay and supplies, generous land grants, bounties, tax exemptions, and a guarantee of armed assistance.[14]

On the Frontier of the West five colonies were to be alloted to Sonora at Altar, Tucson, Babispe, Santa Cruz, and Fronteras. Due to the turmoil in the supreme government, however, only one colony, Fronteras, had been properly planted by 1850. Santa Cruz had been established, but was struggling for survival. The other three had not been located.[15]

Baja California was the other state on the Frontier of the West and was granted one colony, to be established at Rosario. Colonel Rafael Espinosa, the military commander of the peninsula, was to be the inspector of the projected settlement, while Captain Manuel Castro was designated to initiate the undertaking. By the end of 1850 the colony had made so little progress that it was moved to Santo Tomas. Here, despite insufficient supplies, lack of funds and competent military protection, the population of the settlement had reached nearly two hundred by June, 1851.[16]

During the same year, however, Lieutenant-Colonel Francisco Castillo Negrete was appointed as Captain Castro's superior. But as soon as he arrived to assume his duties, Lieutenant Chaves, Castro's aide, promptly arrested Negrete and sent him back to La Paz. Military command then degenerated into chaos, and civil strife broke out as rival

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[14]Ibid., pp. 41-43.

[15]Bancroft, History of North Mexican States, II, p. 671.

[16]Ibid., pp. 720-721.

leaders began striving for supremacy. Before the year ended, disorder and disertion was the rule of the day, and the colony wasted away.[17]

Although the national government did nothing to remedy these anarchic conditions, it was obvious that the settlement was not fulfilling the two major goals of the colonization plan. The population was never large enough effectively to combat the Indians, and the location was too far inland to prevent the landing by sea of American interlopers and adventurers. By 1850, not only were Mexicans failing to respond to the supreme government's appeal to join the military colonies, but also the border states were losing many of their native inhabitants to a more attractive venture. Gold had been discovered in American California, and the Mexican frontier population was anxious to share in the new wealth.

Between October, 1848, and March, 1849, more than five thousand people departed Sonora for the gold fields, and during the first four months of 1850 another six thousand left.[18] The gold discoveries lured away not only citizens, but also army troops and even heads of departments. To one army captain, it appeared as if the whole state of Sonora was on the move.[19] In April, 1851, the San Francisco Daily Alta reported that more than ten thousand Mexicans had arrived in the Mariposa and Tuolumne region, most of them from Sonora and Lower Cali-

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ralph J. Roske, "The World Impact of the California Gold Rush, 1849-1857," Arizona and the West, V (Autumn, 1963), p. 198.

[19] Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California (6 vols.; San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1884-1889), VI, p. 113.

fornia.[20] By 1850, the Mexican migration had reached a peak. So many had left areas in Sonora that hardly enough food was raised for the consumption of the people. Indian incursions increased, and those who had remained were practically defenseless.[21]

At first the Mexicans were welcomed in California because of their knowledge in mining techniques. But as their numbers increased, reaction and discrimination set in. The Mexican government protested, but to no avail. Many of the Mexicans then began returning home, while others stayed to become laborers in the quartz mines.[22] The effect of the gold rush on Sonora and Baja California was manifested both directly and indirectly. One result was the depopulation of the frontier which Mexico was venturing to colonize. The other provided an excuse for those Anglo-Americans who failed to "strike it rich" in California.

Even after the conclusion of the Mexican War, many Americans continued to demand the fulfillment of "manifest destiny" to acquire all the "territory lying between the Sierra Madre and the Rio Grande, Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa and Lower California and the reserved right to take more by purchase or force whenever it may be wanted."[23] It is always difficult to prove the emotional temperament of a people, and

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[20] Daily Alta California (San Francisco), April 21, 1851. Hereafter cited as D.A.C.

[21] Bartlett, Personal Narratives, I, pp. 283-284.

[22] Rodman W. Paul, California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), p. 26; Roske "The World Impact of the California Gold Rush," p. 199; Ralph P. Bieber, "California Gold Mania," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXV (June, 1948), pp. 12-13.

[23] D.A.C., September 8, 1853.

such is the case in analyzing the "spirit of manifest destiny". Regardless of the moral aspect of the term, many Americans were eager to add more lands to the fast growing nation. When James K. Polk submitted the negotiated projet for the treaty with Mexico to his cabinet, Secretary of State Buchanan protested vigorously that it did not include Mexican territory to the Sierra Madre line. Polk preferred more territory, but because of his fears of Mexican objections and Whig opposition, he was willing to settle for less than he had wanted.[24]

To American expansionists, the boundary line fixed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was only a temporary barrier to the southward progress of American democracy and rule. In his Memoir of a Tour, an American physician attached to Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan's expedition expressed the expansionist attitude toward Mexico. He thought the northern half of Mexico could be utilized by "a great commercial nation like the United States, with new states springing up on the Pacific because of the new connections that it would open with the Pacific, for the great mineral resources of the country, and for its peculiar adaptation for stock raising." The harbor of Guaymas could be connected by railroad with the Rio Grande and "give a new thoroughfare from the Atlantic to the Pacific, for commerce as well as for the emigration to California and Oregon. Policy, as well as humanity demands such an extension of the area of freedom for mankind."[25]

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[24]Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1963), p. 186.

[25]Adolphus Wislizenus, Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Senate Miscellaneous Document 26, 30th Congress, 1st session, p. 85.

This was the type of attitude that seriously worried Mexican officials, especially as their colonization plan was proving such a dismal failure. Because of its proximity and its unusually rich mineral resources, Sonora became the natural objective of the adventurous and discontented Forty-Niners. In January, 1850, Jose de Aguilar, Governor of Sonora, complained to the Mexican national government of frequent incursions by Americans on their way to California, and told of rumors that Americans were planning to establish colonies along the right bank of the Gila. In the spring, Don Luis de la Rosa, the Mexican minister in Washington, notified Secretary of State John M. Clayton that armed parties of Americans, some claiming to be emissaries of the United States government, had entered Sonoran territory and provided the Apaches with guns and ammunition. The Americans in turn purchased the goods that the Indians had taken from the helpless frontier population.[26]

Failing to impress upon the United States government the fear and apprehension that Mexico was suffering from Anglo-American aggression, De la Rosa decided to remind the United States of its treaty obligations, hoping indirectly to call attention to the violation of Mexican territorial integrity of Mexico by American citizens. On March 20, 1850, he complained to Clayton that American military might had not been effective in repressing Indian incursions. He felt these incidents prevented "the establishment and increase of those relations of amity and commerce between the people of the frontiers of Mexico

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[26]Rufus Kay Wyllys, The French in Sonora, 1850-1854 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), pp. 50-51.

and of the United States which would be so advantageous to both republics."[27] But raids continued, and in December he pointed out to the new Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, that it was "daily becoming more and more indispensible that the government of the United States should adopt the promptest and most active measures in order to prevent...the incursions of the Indian savages of the United States upon the population of the Mexican frontier."[28]

Tired of waiting for either of the countries national governments to take action, the Sonoran legislature on May 6, 1850, passed its own colonization plan. This provided for liberal land grants, advanced supplies and aid, and even went so far as to establish a civil and political program for the colonists and empresarios. But before the program could be implemented it was declared unconstitutional by the supreme government.[29]

Not all Mexican statesmen were willing to sit idly by while the American imminence lingered and the savages continued to plunder the frontier. To Mariano Paredes, a representative of Sonora in the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City, the success of Americans in the Mexican War, plus their discovery of gold in California, would always pose a serious threat to the territorial integrity of Sonora and Lower California. When he addressed the Chamber of Deputies on August 16,

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[27] Senate Executive Document 44, 31st Congress, 1st session, Vol. X p. 2.

[28] House Executive Document 4, 31st Congress 2nd session, Vol. II, p. 1.

[29] Patricia R. Herring, "A Plan for the Colonization of Sonora's Northern Frontier: The Paredes Proyectos of 1850," Journal of Arizona History, X (Summer, 1969), p. 106.

1850, he stated that Americans would continue to settle their borderlands, and eventually would expand into Sonora to acquire new wealth from its vast gold and silver deposits unless Mexico took appropriate measures to secure its frontier and successfully colonize the area.[30] He went on to explain:

> Sonora in its present state of abandonment, of misery, of insecurity, of lack of protection and guarantees of liberty, is exasperated and has lost all hope of survival; and it would not be impossible that the madness of its sufferings would cause it to throw itself into the hands of a neighbor that offers help, protection, and in fine, an enchanting and improved way of life..... The strip of land on the opposite side will soon be populated. Meanwhile, on our side, years will pass without the same thing happening because of laws enacted but impossible to execute.[31]

Paredes proposed a plan which would enable either Mexican or European colonization. Like the plan of 1848, many inducements were offered to attract colonists; for the first twenty-five years exemptions from extraordinary state taxes, national taxes and tariffs were promised. Land grants were pledged to both farmers and ranchers. Stipulations for the governing of each colony were outlined, and guarantees against military occupation were drafted.[32]

Paredes hoped it would be individual Mexicans who would avail themselves of the colonization scheme, but conditions were also made for the empresario, be he Mexican or European. For each one hundred male colonists over twenty-five years of age an empresario might bring,

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[30] Odie B. Faulk, Too Far North....Too Far South (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1967), pp. 109-110.

[31] Odie B. Faulk, trans., "A Colonization Plan for Northern Sonora, 1850," New Mexico Historical Review, XLIV (October, 1969), pp. 298-299.

[32] Ibid., pp. 305-307.

he would be granted extra town land for houses, irrigable as well as non irrigable farm land, and specific sites for stock raising.[33]

The second part of Paredes' plan was to encourage the development of commerce by declaring Guaymas a duty-free port for twenty-five years. He felt this would enable men with capital to develop business and industry. By making Guaymas not only a major center of economic activity, but also one of population, the city would serve to curb American ambitions in Baja California across the narrow gulf. Paredes was afraid that unless Sonora and Baja California had a stable, economically independent population, the United States would be able to lure the residents of both states away from their loyalty to the Mexican government and incite them to revolt.[34]

Unfortunately, Paredes' proposal was never acted upon by the Chamber of Deputies. Had his program been adopted and put into effect, it probably would have expanded the populating of Sonora and Baja California to such an extent that the Indian raids could have been halted and the Yankee threat diminished. But as it was rejected, the Mexican government was forced to consider another colonization plan two years later, which also failed and thus paved the way for foreign military colonists to undertake the protection of the frontier.

Meanwhile, the Indian depredations continued, and American exponents of manifest destiny continued to clamor for the Sierra Madre line. Also, adventurers from every corner of the earth had arrived in California by the early 1850's. Disappointed in finding reality below their expectations, many turned their eyes toward the mountains

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., pp. 303-304.

of Sonora and the precious metals of the Gila Valley. This group of fortune hunters, who dreamed only of sudden and easy acquisitions, found the unpopulated and scantily populated areas of northern Sonora and Baja California a likely spot to fulfill their ambitions.

Following the cession of Alta California to the United States in February, 1848, some observers described its political status as part military, part civil, and part "no government at all." In localities unaffected by the influx of gold seekers, Mexican laws and institutions continued to function. Later, mining communities set up their own rules and regulations along democratic principles, and newly created cities found workable forms of government to meet their needs.[35]

Such a situation could not last, and by the spring of 1849, Bennett Riley, military governor of the territory, issued a proclamation for a general election to a state constitutional convention. By October the convention had completed its deliberations and adjourned; a month later the constitution for a state government was ratified by residents of the area. The Congressional struggle over the admission of California as a state, however, was wrapped up in the historic Compromise of 1850 for another year. Finally, on September 9, 1850, President Fillmore signed into law the measure admitting California to the Union.[36]

Even after statehood, California was still a land full of adventurers thirsting for gold and excitement. For those who failed

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[35]Robert G. Cleland, From Wilderness to Empire: A History of California (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1944), p. 121.

[36]Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1968), pp. 125-135.

to share in the initial wealth, hard work in the mines was no substitute for the gambling spirit of acquiring wealth and fame in Mexico, the mother country of California. To these men, the spirit of manifest destiny served as a rationale for their aspirations and kept their dreams of ambition alive. Mexico's weakness had been revealed during the recent war with the United States. Sam Houston and John Charles Fremont had showed them the way, and Mexico's inability to handle its frontier problem gave them an excuse.

CHAPTER II

JOSEPH C. MOREHEAD

On April 30, 1851, a well organized party of men were making arrangements in Los Angeles to march by land to Sonora. They were only a portion of three hundred men who claimed they were setting out for a prospecting tour of the Gila. To the inhabitants of Los Angeles, however, it was understood from their preparations that they were planning to make a forcible seizure of Sonora.[1]

Earlier in February, General Manuel Robles, Mexican Minister of War, had received information from J. M. Carrasco, commandante-general of Sonora, regarding a movement to make Sonora independent. Carrasco thought the plan had originated during the winter of 1850 and considered Deputy Paredes partially responsible because of his intimation that Sonorans might turn to the United States in an hour of need. The movement supposedly had contacts in California, and may well have been responsible for the first American filibustering expedition from California to Mexico.[2]

Two months later Governor John McDougal of California asked the state legislature to provide by law for the apprehension of Joseph C. Morehead, Quartermaster General of California. The Governor had re-

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[1] D.A.C., April 5, 1851.

[2] Wyllys, French in Sonora, p. 52.

ceived information on April 24, that Morehead had left San Francisco with nearly all the arms stored in the state arsenal. His destination was unknown, but as later events proved, Morehead was heading for Mexico.[3]

Morehead had come into notoriety the preceding year as a result of his expedition to the Colorado River to punish the Yuma Indians for their murder of eleven Americans.[4] During the winter of 1849, John Glanton and a company of American outlaws established a ferry near the mouth of the Gila in order to exploit the heavy traffic crossing the river on the way to the gold fields. When the Yuma Indians decided to cash in on the profitable business by operating their own ferry, Glanton and his men destroyed their boat and killed the Irishman the Indians had employed to help operate the ferry. After Glanton refused to consult with the Yuma chief about the incident, the Indians in retaliation ambushed and killed Glanton and his cutthroats.[5]

Fearful that the Indians would harm Americans descending the Gila

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[3] D.A.C., April 28, 1851.

[4] Morehead was a native of Kentucky and had served as a Lieutenant in Colonel Stevenson's Regiment of New York Volunteers during the Mexican War. In 1849 he served in the California legislature, representing one of the mining districts and was believed to have been the law partner of the Attorney General of the state. D.A.C., January 14, 1851; It is stated in the Daily Alta on December 8, 1853, that during the Mexican War, La Paz was occupied by a portion of the New York Regiment. This could very well have been the beginning of Morehead's first thoughts of filibustering.

[5] D.A.C., January 8, 1851; Glanton had fled from Chihuahua after Governor Trias had put an $8,000 reward on his own head for cashing in Mexican scalps for Indian scalps. He then transferred his operations to Sonora and then on to the Yuma crossing. Ralph A. Smith, "The Scalp Hunters in the Borderlands, 1835-1850," Arizona and the West, VI (Spring, 1964), pp. 21-22.

and crossing the Colorado, Governor Peter Burnett directed the sheriffs of Los Angeles and San Diego counties to enlist sixty men to punish the Yumas. These men were to be commanded by General Joshua Bean of San Diego, who was to use his discretion in operating the expedition. He in turn commanded Morehead to direct the campaign and to defray the expenses by using drafts in Bean's name, but drawn on the treasury of the state of California. Morehead, consequently, informed the rancheros in the countryside that these drafts would be reimbursed by the state and the scrip could even be used to pay their taxes. Convinced, however, that the drafts had an inherent power of authority, Morehead did not hesitate to requisition and even confiscate cattle, horses, and property from the rancheros, even if they objected to the "Morehead scrip."[6]

The expedition finally reached the river, and Morehead and his company took possession of the Yuma crossing. After failing to make a treaty with the Yumas, fighting erupted and the Indians were forced to retreat up river. Morehead then laid waste their crops and possessions, leaving the area in a complete state of destruction and chaos. Not content with the destruction he had caused the Yumas, Morehead then turned his men upon parties of Mexicans returning from the mines. Claiming that the Yumas would take their arms from them and use them on his men, he took more than a thousand guns, pistols and weaponry and threw them into the Colorado River.[7] It is uncertain when the expedi-

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[6] D.A.C., January 14, 1851; Thomas W. Sweeney, Journal, 1849-1853, ed. by Arthur Woodward (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1956), p. 225.

[7] Sweeney, Journal, p. 231; D.A.C., January 20, 1851.

tion disbanded, but it made no one happy. In January, 1851, Governor McDougal transmitted to the state Senate a detailed report concerning the operation.[8]

Possibly during the Yuma campaign Morehead began laying plans for his filibustering expedition into Mexico. Less than a month after the governor reported the Yuma journey to the legislature, Morehead showed up in San Francisco attempting to locate a building for a state arsenal in which to store five hundred stands of arms.[9] Apparently, he obtained some of his weapons from these and used them to outfit his expedition, since the editors of the Daily Alta observed the weaponry a month later and counted only 120 stands.[10] Furthermore, the Governor on April 27 transmitted information to the legislature that Morehead also had sold a portion of 400 muskets and 90,000 cartridges without government authority. He also said he had not authorized Morehead to rent a building in San Francisco for a state arsenal.[11]

Morehead already had left San Francisco, and by now the Governor was aware that he was, supposedly, on his way to Mazatlán. In an effort to thwart this plan, the governor asked the legislature to provide a reward for the apprehension of Morehead before he had a chance to reach Mexican territory.[12] The legislature, however, seemed little concerned about the affair. A resolution was made, authorizing the

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[8] D.A.C., January 26, 1851.

[9] D.A.C., February 21, 1851.

[10] Ibid.; March 21, 1851.

[11] D.A.C., April 27, May 2, 3, 1851.

[12] D.A.C., April 27, 1851.

Governor to offer a $1,500 reward for Morehead's arrest, but the motion was soon postponed indefinitely. Meanwhile, Morehead had taken the money from the illegally sold arms and had outfitted his filibustering expedition for Mexico.[13]

On April 20, Morehead and some forty passengers loaded nearly all of the state arms on board the barque Josephine and quietly slipped out of San Francisco harbor.[14] Although it was reported that Morehead was headed for Mazatlán, it is possible that he was planning on joining several other expeditions either in Sonora or Lower California, for in March and April it had been reported in Los Angeles that several parties of men numbering from twenty-five to one hundred had left the area for Sonora. At the same time that Morehead was outfitting his own filibusters, two other divisions were preparing to leave Los Angeles for parts of Mexico. One was to march by land to Sonora while the other was to sail for La Paz.[15]

Several days after Morehead's party left San Francisco, they arrived in San Diego with the intention of picking up more supplies and men. They had planned to sack the city and then continue on to Lower California. But after seeing the poverty in the area, a number of the men felt the expedition could not be properly provisioned and returned to San Francisco.[16]

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[13]H. Bret Melendy and Benjamin F. Gilbert, The Governors of California: Peter H. Burnett to Edmund G. Brown (Georgetown, California: The Talisman Press, 1965), p. 43.

[14]D.A.C., April 26-28, 1851.

[15]J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926), p. 87, citing Los Angeles Star, May 26, 1851.

[16]D.A.C., May 17, 1851.

Shortly after their arrival, news of a reward reached the city and the mayor posted a guard for Morehead's arrest, forcing him to cross the border into Baja California for two days. Meanwhile, the collector of the port searched the Josephine, but found its papers in proper order and was unable to locate any arms on board. Consequently, without the presence of Morehead and no sign of contraband arms, the collector found no reason to seize the vessel.[17]

When Morehead returned to town, he found that the remaining party of this men had made a general nuisance of themselves by engaging in several drunken brawls. Not wanting to antagonize the city officials more, since his presence had already been called to the attention of the port authorities, he recruited a party of forty-five men and on May 11 left San Diego. Shortly before he departed, the port collector instituted another thorough search of the Josephine, but still discovered nothing to justify its seizure.[18] Morehead had informed his men, however, that a vessel had already left the port loaded with firearms and supplies.[19]

The governor of Lower California, Don Manuel Castro, was in San Diego at the same time that Morehead was attempting to refit his expedition. At first he was quite apprehensive about the possible invasion of his country; but after seeing the character of the filibusters and their severe need for provisions and money, he soon "felt

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] D.A.C., June 5, 1851

the country is safe."[20] This indicates that either Morehead or some of his men had led the residents of the area to believe their destination was Lower California.

The two other divisions which had left Los Angeles for Sonora and Baja California were still following through with their scheme. The company that departed by sea, at the same time that Morehead was sailing from San Francisco, reached La Paz on July 21. There it apparently vanished. It is possible the men slipped away under the guise of disappointed miners, for the Mexican central government had ordered troops and artillery to the territory the previous May.[21] If Morehead really had planned on landing at La Paz, as Castro's response seems to indicate, this show of force by the Mexican government could have prompted him to sail on to a more hospitable state. The other group of men which had gone by land reached Sonora sometime in July also. The men then scattered in several groups, going to San Javier, Arispe, and San Ignacio. Apparently they caused little trouble and were not expelled until November.[22]

On May 26, several men who had been connected with Morehead's party passed through Los Angeles on their way back to San Francisco. Although they reported that the expedition was bound for Sonora to revolutionize the state, it is doubtful that Morehead went to either Sonora or Baja California. Sometime during the latter part of May, the barque Josephine and the "notorious Morehead expedition" sailed into

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[20] D.A.C., May 17, 1851.

[21] Rippy, United States and Mexico, pp. 87-88; Bancroft, History of California, p. 584.

[22] Bancroft, History of California, p. 584.

port at Mazatlán.[23] What then happened to the filibusters remains a mystery.[24]

The failure of Morehead's expedition did not dampen the spirits of Californians wanting to fulfill their own destiny and glory. Morehead had set an example; more planning was needed, and the support of the Mexican citizenry would be essential if one was successfully to colonize or revolutionize Sonora or Lower California. No sooner had the rumors of Morehead's expeditions faded than a Frenchman, the Marquis Charles de Pindray crossed the border into Sonora, soon to be followed by another French nobleman, the Count Gaston Raoul de Raousset Boulbon.

These men, like so many of their compatriots who failed to reap the rich profits of the gold rush, refused United States citizenship and turned their eyes southward. Unlike Morehead, however, they were invited to Mexico by officials who were still aware of the need to establish frontier colonies; the French settlements would serve as a buffer between the more inhabitable regions of the northern tier of states and the troublesome Apaches and aggressive Americans.

When William Schleider, the Mexican vice-consul at San Francisco, extended Pindray an invitation to come to Sonora, the Frenchman quickly established a headquarters and raised sufficient funds to provide a ship for his volunteers. He then tried to enlist the support of Raousset, but the Count refused him assistance; the Count was in the

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[23] D.A.C., June 13, 1851.

[24] Morehead showed up in Sacramento in May, 1852, trying to outfit another expedition for Sonora. It was reported he was last seen sailing down the Sacramento River with a band of followers. D.A.C., May 7, 1852.

midst of planning his own scheme for colonization. Undaunted by this refusal, Pindray and eighty-eight adventurers set sail from San Francisco on November 21, 1851.[25]

On December 26, the Sonorans joyously received them at Guaymas. Mexican merchants were eager to make them welcome, and the authorities fulfilled their promises of horses, mules, provisions, and munitions of war. By the beginning of 1852 the French colonists were ready to start for the Cocospera valley near the northern frontier, and in March they reached their destination. Although the mines of the northern area was the ultimate objective, Pindray decided to establish an agricultural colony there and to spend some time putting the Apaches on the defensive. After a few months, however, it became apparent that the Sonoran government was unwilling to continue the promised aid. The Apaches were continually harassing the settlement, but no assistance seemed to be forthcoming. Meanwhile, in March 1852, Miguel Blanco, the commandante-general and inspector of colonies, had brought sufficient resources to place 1,500 men under arms. A few weeks later he openly displayed his distrust of the colonists.[26]

Finally, out of desperation, Pindray and several of his followers travelled to Ures to secure the promised supplies. While there,

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[25]Wyllys, French in Sonora, p. 58; William Oscar Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers: The Story of William Walker and His Associates (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), pp. 21-22.

[26]Bancroft, North Mexican States, pp. 673, 676; In April, 1852, as a result of the refusal by the French minister to Mexico to assume any responsibility for Pindray and his men, Manuel Robles, the Mexican Minister of War, informed Blanco to keep a close watch on the colony. If any "suspicious" activity erupted from Pindray's presence, Blanco was to imprison him at once. By this time the French colony had grown to about 150 men. Wyllys, French in Sonora, pp. 60-62.

Pindray's truculent attitude offended the state authorities and confirmed their distrust of the colony. Ill feeling between the Frenchmen and the Mexicans continued to grow, and Pindray was ordered to leave the state. While encamped on their way back home, the French found Pindray shot in his tent. Whether he shot himself out of desperation or whether he was assassinated is uncertain. Following his death, despite Apache raids, numerous desertions, and privation, the colony continued to struggle along throughout the summer. By autumn the remaining colonists decided to abandon their settlement and join the ambitious project of Raosset Boulbon.[27]

During January, 1852, while Sonorans were vigorously applauding Pindray for his anticipated success in colonizing the frontier, Juan Nepomuceno Almonte was making an appeal to the Mexican Senate to institute a national project to populate the borderlands. The plan of 1848 had failed miserably, and Paredes' proposals of 1850 were not accepted. Still, the Indian raids continued, and, as Morehead's expedition proved, many Americans were still looking toward northern Mexico as if the borderlands were only for their taking.

Almonte's proposals differed from those of his predecessors, however. His foremost concern was to contain the Indian menace. In describing the plight of the frontier population, he spoke of how "daily their inhabitants are murdered, their houses sacked and their fields burned by the various tribes of barbarians that ceaselessly

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[27]Wyllys, French in Sonora, pp. 61-64.

invade their lands."[28] He also considered the Indian problem a potential danger to the Republic's interior if allowed to go unchecked. Almonte proposed to remedy the situation by inducing Europeans, native Mexicans, and residents of Hispanic-American republics to take up lands on the frontier and within the interior wastelands. He even suggested that agents be sent to Europe to encourage emigration and to use Mexico's consular offices in America to urge foreigners to take advantage of the colonization program.[29]

The potential threat of the United States was never mentioned in either his introductory remarks or his text. Yet, Almonte must have reasoned that American expansionism would be seriously hampered if a stable, economically independent frontier population could be established by immigrants who would become excellent Mexican citizens. Nevertheless, like those proposals of Paredes' two years earlier, Almonte's suggestions were never enacted into law.

Almonte's thoughts must have made an impact upon several government officials, however, for in the spring of 1852 a French expedition under the guidance of Raousset Boulbon arrived in Sonora to clear the region of Indians. The Count, like Pindray, had been attracted to Mexico by stories of rich Sonoran mines. He was also a member of the disenchanted French in California, and knew that if given the opportunity he could come to terms with the Mexican government; he would be able to satisfy their desire to colonize the frontier and his to

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[28] Odie B. Faulk, trans., "Projected Mexican Colonies in the Borderlands, 1852," Journal of Arizona History, X (Summer, 1969), p. 120.

[29] Ibid., pp. 120-128.

reap the profits from placer mines in Sonora. At the insistence of M. Patrice Dillon, the French consul at San Francisco, to secure aid from the Mexican government before departing for Sonora, he travelled to Mexico City and presented to President Manuel Arista his mining and colonization scheme.

Convinced that his plan would work, both the French minister to Mexico, Andrew Levasseur, and several government officials gave their approval. Since President Arista, Jose Calvo, the French consul at Guaymas, Jose Aguillar, governor, and Cubillas, provisional governor of Sonora, agreed to be the principal directors, Raousset received financial support of the French banking house of Jecker, Torre, and Company to underwrite his organization called La Restauradora.[30] In return for the Mexican concession of land, mines, and placers, Raousset was to take 150 fully armed Frenchmen to Sonora in order to discover and hold possession of the mines and to withstand the Apache menace. In this way both mining and agricultural colonies could be established.[31]

Raousset returned to San Francisco, opened a recruiting office, and quickly enlisted the help of 270 compatriots. On May 19, 1852, they sailed out of San Francisco. When they landed in Guaymas on June 1, the welcome accorded them by the residents was as jubilant as that given Pindray. But the official response had changed tempo over

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[30]Thomas Robinson Warren, Dust and Foam, or, Three Oceans and Two Continents (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858), p. 203; The Mexican banking house put $35,000 at his immediate disposal for supplies and promised him another $25,000. Bancroft, North Mexican States, pp. 676-677.

[31]Bancroft, North Mexican States, p. 677.

the past few months. While Raousset had been recruiting, one of the largest concerns in Mexico, the House of Barron, Forbes and Company, had formed another league in order to reap the benefits of the rich Sonoran mines. Finding that this new company had more means and influence than the Restauradora, the two contending governors of Sonora, Aguilar and Cubillas, and the French consul at Guaymas joined the new enterprise and deserted Raousset.[32]

The most influential individual that had been won over to the rival company was General Miguel Blanco. In May he issued his own decree to promote colonization. His plan, however, contained several stipulations obviously designed to hinder the French operation. The measure offered several inducements to foreigners but added that they must become Mexican citizens, renounce their allegiance to their former government, obey all authorities, enlist in the militia, and give a portion of all income to the church, schools and public works. Naturally these requirements had not been outlined to Raousset during the negotiations in Mexico City.[33]

After remaining in Guaymas for a month, Raousset realized that Blanco was deliberately impeding his march to the interior. Disgusted with the delay and weary of Blanco's intrigues, he finally received permission to depart, but only by a route which was twice as long and much more difficult than the one he had originally intended to use. Ignoring the general's orders, the expedition set out by the shortest route and in August reached the pueblo of Santa Anna, only a few days

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[32]Ibid.; Robinson, Dust and Foam, p. 204.

[33]Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, pp. 26-27.

journey from their mining claim. Blanco, fearful of the success of the French, issued an ultimatum allowing them only one recourse for their disobedience. They could renounce their nationality and become Mexican soldiers, or they might continue to explore the region but not take possession of any mines. Third, the Count was given the opportunity to reduce his company to fifty men and become laborers in the service of the Restauradora.[34]

Raousset denounced the ultimatum as a breach of faith and gave his men the choice of leaving, accepting the terms, or joining him in an attack on Hermosillo, the capital and General Blanco's headquarters. He then appealed to the people, posing as a champion of Sonoran independence, and on September 21 raised the banner of a free Sonora. Confident that his cause was just, he sent agents to San Francisco and Mazatlán for reinforcements.[35]

On October 14, he declared "that within two hours I shall make myself master of it if opposition is shown."[36] Although Blanco had stationed over 1,200 men in the city, Raousset made his word good. But the 12,000 inhabitants had no desire to render allegiance to a foreign master. Manuel Maria Gandara, the new governor of Sonora, and other prominent authorities also refused to give any aid to the betrayed French. Afraid to remain in the interior, the Count then executed a march to Guaymas. By now he and several of his officers were extremely ill and after reaching the city Raousset allowed himself

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Bancroft, North Mexican States, p. 678.

[36]Ibid.

to be taken inside the city for treatment. The rest of his men, surrounded by nationalists and cut off from supplies, entered into armistice negotiations with Blanco. On November 4, they agreed to surrender their arms and accepted an indemnity of $11,000. By December most of them had departed.[37]

Raousset refused to sign the agreement and went to Mazatlán to recuperate. Finally, he was summoned to San Francisco by Dillon. Upon returning, he found that the sentiment of Californians was one of great excitement and admiration for his heroic exploits. After learning that a revolution had brought Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna to the Mexican presidency, and that Sonora had been lowered to a subordinate department, the ambitious Frenchman resumed his plans for the occupation of Sonora. When Andrew Levasseur notified Dillon that Santa Anna had urged him to invite Raousset to Mexico, the Count made a second trip to the capital city in June, 1853.[38]

At first Santa Anna was anxious for the French to colonize the frontier and made Raousset a liberal concession and stipulated a monthly pay for five hundred Frenchmen to serve as a garrison on the frontier. But after four months of negotations, Santa Anna changed his mind and suggested that the Count become a Mexican citizen and accept a colonelcy in his army. After he indignantly refused the president's offer, Raosset was proclaimed an outlaw and forced to flee for his

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[37]Warren, Dust and Foam, pp. 206-207; Bancroft, North Mexican States, p. 680; Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, p. 28.

[38]Bancroft, North Mexican States, pp. 682-683.

life. Upon his return to San Francisco, however, he found that those who had suggested they would join his second company were busily making preparations to join a new American expedition. Public interest was now centered on William Walker, prince of the filibusters.[39]

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[39]Ibid.; Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, pp. 29-30; Rippy, United States and Mexico, p. 97.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM WALKER

William Walker was only twenty-six when he arrived in San Francisco in June 1850. His past was a record of achievement for such a young man, but also one of restlessness and discontentment. He was born on May 8, 1824, in Nashville, Tennessee, the eldest of four children. At the age of fourteen he graduated from the University of Nashville, and he received his M. D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania at nineteen. He then went to Paris to study medicine for another year, and then stayed yet an extra year visiting the cities of Europe.

When he returned to Nashville in 1845, although declared the most accomplished surgeon that ever visited the city, he found the study of law was more to his liking. He studied briefly in Nashville before moving to New Orleans, where he was admitted to the bar. His law career was brief, for he soon turned to journalism. In the winter of 1848 he became part owner of the conservative New Orleans Crescent. Ironically, while serving as one of the editors, his editorials severely criticized and ridiculed the filibustering designs on Cuba.

While at New Orleans, Walker made two acquaintances who would have an influential impact on his life. The first was Edmund Randolph, clerk of the United States Circuit Court, whom he would meet again in San Francisco. The other was Helen Martin, with whom he fell in love

and decided to marry. During their courtship, however, she died of yellow fever. Following her death, a noticeable change came over the studious Walker; his quiet, very silent manner changed to one of daring ambition.

Feeling that nothing was now worthwhile in New Orleans, he joined the rush to California. After arriving in San Francisco, he again turned to journalism and became one of the editors of the Daily Herald, where he incurred the wrath of District Judge Levi Parsons for attacking his negligence in regard to the crime and lawlessness of San Francisco. After Judge Parsons haled him before the court, adjudged him guilty of contempt, and fined him $500, Walker promptly denied the judge's authority and went to jail for refusing to pay the fine. With the support of the press, a mass meeting was called on March 9, 1851, and resolutions were made supporting Walker and calling for the resignation of Parsons. Habeas corpus proceedings were then held by a superior court, Parson's decision was reversed, and Walker was set free. He then memorialized the legislature for the resignation of Parsons. Although the memorial was to no avail, Walker had become a popular hero. Had he been politically ambitious, he could have capitalized on the incident. Instead he left San Francisco and went to practice law with Henry P. Watkins in Marysville during 1851 and 1852. While there he learned of the Morehead and French expeditions. Again he became restless, and the highly skilled lawyer-doctor-journalist began dreaming of a new pursuit and decided to try his talent in another field.[1]

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[1]All information on Walker's past prior to his arrival in California was taken from Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, pp. 9-18.

According to Walker the idea of planting a military colony on the frontier of Sonora first entered his mind early in 1852 while he was at Auburn, California. He and a number of persons in Placer County supplied the funds and sent Frederic Emory and a companion to Guaymas to contact Mexican officials. They were to inform them that a party of Americans would be willing to protect the frontier from Apache raids if the Sonoran government would grant them land near the old town of Arispe. But the two agents arrived too late, for Raousset Boulbon had already received a favorable acceptance of his plan, and city authorities refused to confer with the Americans.[2]

Walker then decided to abandon his scheme, but after hearing that Raousset had been expelled from Sonora, he determined to revive the Auburn plan. In June 1853, Walker and his law partner, Watkins, sailed for Guaymas with the intention of convincing Manuel Gandara, Governor of Sonora, that a group of Americans would be willing to protect the frontier for a reasonable offer of territory along the border. Before leaving San Francisco, they secured their passports from the Mexican consul there. What Walker did not know, however, was that as soon as he received his passport, the consul immediately dispatched the information to Guaymas, informing the Prefect of the port of his suspicions about Walker's intentions. When Walker reached Guaymas, the Prefect refused to countersign their passports, thus forbidding travel to Ures to consult with Gandara.[3]

Walker then sought the aid of the American consul, Juan A.

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[2]William Walker, The War in Nicaragua (Mobile: S. H. Goetzel and Company, 1860), pp. 19-20.

[3]Ibid.; Robinson, Dust and Foam, p. 211.

Robinson, who exchanged correspondences with the authorities in Guaymas but to no avail. Finally, after realizing that the Mexicans had no intention of permitting him travel to the interior, Walker decided to return to San Francisco. Before he left, however Walker claimed he had seen and heard enough at Guaymas to convince him that a small body of Americans could gain a foothold on the Sonora frontier under the auspices of protecting frontier settlements.[4]

Also while at Guaymas, he must have made a strong impression on its inhabitants. T. Robinson Warren, an American traveller who was temporarily residing in Guaymas during the summer of 1853 gave a vivid description of Walker:

> His appearance was that of anything else than a military chieftain. Below the medium height, and very slim, I should hardly imagine him to weigh over a hundred pounds. His hair light and towy, while his almost white eyebrows and lashes concealed a seemingly pupilless, grey, cold eye, and his face was a mass of yellow freckles, the whole expression very heavy. His dress was scarcely less remarkable than his person. His head was surmounted by a huge white fur hat, whose long knap waved with the breeze, which, together with a very ill-made short-waisted blue coat, with gilt buttons, and a pair of grey, strapless pantaloons, made up the ensemble of as unprepossessing-looking a person as one would meet in a day's walk. I will leave you to imagine the figure he cut in Guaymas with the thermometer at 100° when everyone else was arrayed in white. Indeed half the dread which the Mexicans had of filibusters vanished when they saw this their Grand Sachem,---such an insignificant-looking specimen. But any one who estimated Mr. Walker by his personal appearance, made a great mistake. Extremely taciturn, he would sit for an hour in company without opening his lips; but once interested, he arrested your attention with the first word he uttered, and as he proceeded, you felt convinced that he was no ordinary person. To a few confidential friends he was most enthusiastic upon the subject of his darling project, but outside of those

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[4]Robinson, Dust and Foam, p. 211.

immediately interested, he never mentioned the topic.[5]

Walker's aspirations were not that confidential, however. Several weeks before he and Watkins had departed for Sonora, he had clearly revealed his intentions when bonds for the "Republic of Sonora" were offered for sale in San Francisco. They were to be redeemed with the first proceeds of the new government.[6] Had the Mexican consul heard of this bold design, Walker would probably have been prevented from stepping foot on Mexican soil.

After returning to San Francisco, Walker let it be known throughout the city that he had every intention of revolutionizing Sonora. In an attempt to rally support for this cause, he told the residents that the Sonoran government considered him such a threat that it had offered a reward for his head.[7] Posing as a champion of humanity and justice, he claimed that while in Guaymas the Apache menace was so great that "several women of the place" had urged him to return to California immediately and bring back enough Americans to protect their families from the Indians.[8]

His agents continued to float rumors about the wealth of the region and how the "state of this region furnished the best defense

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[5]Ibid., pp. 212-213.

[6]Copy of a Bond issued in D.A.C., May 1, 1853.

$500 Independence Loan $500

The Independence Loan Fund has received of _____ the sum of $500, and the Republic of Sonora will issue him or his assigns a land warrant for one square league of land, to be located on the public domain of said Republic.

Signed this first day of May

Wm. Walker Colonel of the Independence Regiment

[7]D.A.C., September 12, 1853.

[8]Walker, War in Nicaragua, p. 21.

for any American aiming to settle there without the formal consent of Mexico." Even the relatively conservative Daily Alta stated of Sonorans that "their only hope is a war and the occupation of their territory by United States troops."[9]

Walker's scheme was changed, however, from what he had initially planned. Following Count Raousset's return to San Francisco, Walker and Watkins had contacted Raousset in the hope that he would co-operate with their project. But Raousset refused for fear that it would lessen his own chances of securing a Sonoran grant, since he knew the Americans were so thoroughly feared and disliked in Mexico.[10] Walker and Watkins had also told General Don Jose Castro[11] about the first of September that an expedition of two thousand men were preparing to invade Sonora. Some of the men were to go by sea, the others by land, and all to rendezvous at a location someplace between the mouth of the Colorado River and Guaymas. They promised him aid in money and large concessions of land in return for his support, which they hoped to use in order to rally aid from the Mexican inhabitants. Once the revolution was completed, they promised him that all of the land in Sonora would be divided among its inhabitants. They would then declare it an independent province and ask for admission to the United States. Castro refused their offer, but swore that he would not reveal the

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[9]Ibid., pp. 21-22; D.A.C., September 11, 1853.

[10]Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, p. 29.

[11]This appears to be Don Jose Castro. He left Sinaloa in 1848 and moved to Upper California where he lived as a private citizen until 1853 at Monterrey and San Juan. He then went back to Mexico. In 1856 he was made sub-jefe politico and military commander of Baja California. Bancroft, History of California, II, pp. 751-752.

scheme.[12]

Watkins proposed a similar plan to one of his old friends, Charles Pancoast. After dinner one night, Watkins told Pancoast that he and Walker already had over 1,500 men on their enlistment roll and that he would guarantee Pancoast a commission as a lieutenant in the Independent Army. Their bold design was to take possession of both Baja California and Sonora, as the Mexicans did not have enough soldiers there to prevent their success. Their intention was to proclaim an independent government and then seek recognition from the United States, thus, securing a more liberal government for the Mexican inhabitants. Individual and property rights were to be guaranteed, although all public lands and property were to be confiscated. But like Castro, Pancoast refused to be a part of Walker's grand scheme.[13]

Despite these exaggerations of his plans, Walker's recruiting, which had begun in May, continued throughout the summer. By September 30, 1853, Walker was ready to set sail. On that day, however, Captain E. D. Keyes, acting under the orders of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, commander of the Pacific Division of the United States Army, seized the Arrow, the chartered brig which contained the supplies of guns, food, and ammunition.[14]

Hitchcock had heard rumors of the planned expedition in early

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[12]A. P. Nasatir, trans., "The Second Incumbency of Jacques A. Moerenhout," California Historical Society Quarterly, XXVII (June, 1948), p. 146.

[13]Anna Paschall Hannam, ed., A Quaker Forty-Niner: The Adventures of Charles Edward Pancoast on the American Frontier (Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Press, 1930), pp. 372-373.

[14]D.A.C., October 2, 1853.

July and had decided then to uphold President Fillmore's proclamation against filibustering.[15] On September 22, Hitchcock informed the port collector at San Francisco of Walker's rumored expedition and told the collector to contact him about any suspicious movements. When the collector reported to Hitchcock the questionable cargo on board the Arrow, and upon the advice of the district attorney, Hitchcock promptly ordered the brig seized and turned it over to the United States marshall. Walker was undaunted, however; the next day he took out a writ of replevin, claiming the right of possession of both the vessel and cargo.[16]

Before the case could be settled, Walker became impatient with this interference and decided to leave the port, despite the delaying action of the American authorities. Instead of waiting for the state courts to act, he chartered another brig, the Caroline, and purchased the supplies he thought necessary to support his expedition until reinforcements could arrive after he reached Sonora. Even this action was hampered, when on October 16, port officials seized a full lot of ammunition which was to be stored on the Caroline. Rather than risk a seizure of the ship, he hurriedly loaded forty-five men on board and at one o'clock on the morning of October 17, slipped out of the San Francisco harbor and set sail for Sonora.[17]

This hasty departure undoubtedly crippled Walker's entire expedi-

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[15] Senate Executive Document 1, 32d Congress, 1st session, Vol. I, p. 83.

[16] W. A. Croffut, ed., Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 400.

[17] D.A.C., October 18, 19, 1853.

tion. The Arrow had been loaded with provisions and ammunition to support at least two hundred men who had been enlisted to begin the voyage. But with its seizure and then the confiscation of the ammunition intended for the Caroline crew, he was forced to start out with only a fourth of his men, leaving the others behind to come later.[18]

The 1,500 mile journey to Guaymas, the most important port of Sonora, would have taken about fifteen days to reach had Walker decided to follow through with his original design. But because of the size of his force, Walker knew that he had little chance of gaining Guaymas and was "thus forced to make Lower California a field of operations until they might gather strength for entering Sonora."[19]

On October 28 the crew landed at Cape San Lucas, stayed a few days to requisition supplies and then proceeded to La Paz.[20] There they landed November 3, sailing in under the Mexican flag. In less than two hours Walker and his men had taken possession of the town and captured the governor, Colonel Rafael Espionosa. The Mexican flag was quickly hauled down, and the red and white barred flag of the "New Republic" was hoisted. Walker then presumptuously declared himself President and proclaimed that "The Republic of Lower California is hereby Declared Free, Sovereign, and Independent, and all Allgegiance to the Republic of Mexico is forever renounced."[21] Confident that his "New Republic" was an established fact, Walker took great care in

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[18] Ibid.; Croffut, Fifty Years in Camp and Field, p. 400.

[19] Walker, War in Nicaragua, p. 19.

[20] D.A.C., December 21, 1853.

[21] D.A.C., December 8, 1853.

organizing his government. Frederic Emory was made Secretary of State, John M. Jernagin Secretary of War, Howard H. Snow Secretary of Navy, and officers for the "Independence Battalion" were appointed. Then, with one sweep of the pen, he issued decrees abolishing all tariffs and proclaimed that "the Civil Code and Code of Practice of the State of Louisiana shall be the rule of decision and the Law of the Land...."[22]

Walker soon decided that La Paz was not suitable for his government, and on November 6 set sail for San Lucas, taking with him governor Espinosa and all public documents. Just as they were leaving the harbor, a Mexican vessel transporting Colonel Juan C. Rebolledo, who had been sent to replace Espinosa, entered the harbor. Rather than permit him to land and take the chance of the new governor raising troops for the defense of Lower California, Walker seized the ship and took Rebolledo hostage. At the same time, Walker and his men engaged in their first battle of the expedition when six men of the crew had been fired upon after being sent ashore to obtain firewood. Walker responded by ordering the bombardment of La Paz and landed a force of about thirty men. The battle was relatively insignificant, but when the news reached California it was described as a great victory "releasing Lower California from the tyrannous yoke of declining Mexico and establishing a new republic."[23]

The Caroline now sailed on for San Lucas, but owing to the threat of a Mexican cutter which was cruising off the Cape, Walker decided to

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.; The Mexicans, likewise, claimed a great victory. D.A.C., January 3, 1854.

stay only one day and then embarked for Ensenada. There he would attempt to make his republic a reality.[24] They reached Ensenada on November 29, at which time Walker again used his pen to proclaim his authority and power. In his address "To the People of the United States," he attempted to give reasons and justification for his venture in Lower California, stating that "the geographical position of the province is such as to make it entirely separate and distinct in its interests from the other portions of the Mexican Republic. But the moral and social ties which bound it to Mexico, have been even weaker and more dissoluble than the physical. Hence to develop the resources of California and effect a proper social organization therein, it was necessary to make it independent."[25]

To show that he was equally maganimous to the native inhabitants, he then issued his "Proclamation To the People of Lower California" stating that he had not come to conquer but "to establish order and quiet where before all has been anarchy and confusion." He then called upon all the good citizens to assist him "in carrying out the principles we recognize, as the foundation of all our rights, and our success."[26]

Walker sent these addresses with Frederic Emory to Upper California in an effort to secure support for his undertaking and to demonstrate to the people that his enterprise was one of beneficence and good faith. Many individuals, however, had already demonstrated their

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[24] D.A.C., December 8, 1853.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

desire to take part in this filibustering endeavor. As soon as news of the battle of La Paz reached San Francisco, the excitement was so great that a flag of the new republic was raised at the corner of Kearney and Sacramento streets, and an office was opened for the purpose of enlisting recruits. Fifty volunteers quickly signed the rolls, and arms and ammunition were promised to them. Soon more than two hundred recruits were registered and making preparations to leave for the Independent Republic.[27]

While waiting for these reinforcements, the filibusters meanwhile engaged in several skirmishes with the military colonists of Santo Tomas. For several days the Americans were besieged in their adobe headquarters. Finally, on December 14, Walker realized his ammunition was running low and all would soon be forced to surrender unless his men could force the Mexicans to retreat. After learning that Walker was planning on leading the charge, a young Irishman, Timothy Crocker, volunteered to head the mission. With twenty men he charged into the Mexican force and was able to make them retire from the area. Besides the loss of two privates and Lieutenant John P. McKibben, one of Walker's most trustworthy officers, the victory was dampened by the escape of the Caroline. When a group of the filibusters went to get more supplies from the vessel, it was seen leaving the beach. While the filibusters were busy fighting the Mexicans, Espinosa and Reboll-edo convinced the mate of the Caroline that the invaders would all be killed. Rather than be taken captive, the governors talked him into setting sail, taking the ship back to Guaymas, dropping off the

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[27] D.A.C., December 9, 10, 12, 1853.

governor and ex-governor at Cape San Lucas on the way.[28]

Finally, on December 28, the barque Anita arrived with 230 recruits. But as they had only heard of Walker's great success, they brought only guns and ammunition. Realizing that the food supply would soon be exhausted, Walker dispatched sixty-five men to capture Santo Tomas only thirty miles away. They were able to take the town with little difficulty and did seize several head of cattle, horses, and sheep. But the president's real troubles were only beginning. Several of the new arrivals had their own ideas of how to establish an independent republic successfully. To them a steady diet of beef and corn should be supplemented by plunder and pillage. As discipline began to break, dissension and desertions increased.[29]

Walker was still determined to turn his dream into reality. Watkins had returned immediately to Alta California for more recruits and supplies. Walker knew that because his force now had almost reached three hundred, more discipline was needed, not more troops. He reorganized his government and held regular military drills. He knew that the longer he stayed in Lower California, the smaller would be his chance of reaching Sonora. Lower California was a barren, almost uninhabited country, and Walker was aware that his men thought there was little to be gained there; the longer they stayed, the more dissension there would be. They must either cross to Sonora or abandon their mission.[30]

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[28] D.A.C., February 5, 1854.

[29] D.A.C., January 10, March 22, 1854.

[30] D.A.C., January 10, 30, 1854.

By January 18, 1854, Walker realized that his possibility of success was somewhat less than he had anticipated. Still he was unwilling to abandon his task and issued four quixotic decrees in an effort to disguise the state of affairs. He now proclaimed the "Republic of Sonora," divided his new nation into the State of Sonora and the State of Lower California, and carefully outlined the boundaries of each. But this performance failed to produce the new hope he needed. Never had suitable action followed his sweeping proclamations, and the editors of the Daily Alta seemed to express the viewpoint of many: they ridiculed the action of Walker and stated that "Santa Anna must feel obliged to the new President that he has not annexed any more of his territory than Sonora. It would have been just as cheap and easy to have annexed the whole of Mexico at once, and would have saved the trouble of making future proclamations."[31]

Dissatisfaction with inactivity and poor food continued to prevail in the President's camp. For a while new recruits from San Diego and San Francisco tended to offset the desertions; but Walker knew he had to have action to maintain his decreasing force. Thus he began making preparations for a march to Sonora by way of the Colorado River.[32]

Afraid that his force would desert him once the journey began, Walker decided to insure the loyalty of his men. In his "Address to the Army," he spoke of the "glorious enterprise" they were about to undertake and called upon his men "to wrest Sonora from the rule of

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[31] Ibid.

[32] D.A.C., January 25, 27, 1854.

the Apache and make it the abode of order and civilization," claiming that "in such a cause failure is impossible and triumph certain."[33] Forty-five men, however, quickly decided that triumph was impossible and failure certain, refused to sign the loyalty oath, and departed for San Diego. The departure proved contagious, and before Walker could leave for Sonora many more refused to abide by his decisions.[34]

During the first week of February, a Mexican brig of war arrived at Ensenada and blockaded the harbor. A few days later, on February 11, the United States ship of war, Portsmouth appeared. Although the meeting between Walker and officers of the ship was said to have been friendly, Walker must have been informed that his adventure was not looked upon with favor by the United States. The next day, Walker and 120 followers made a hasty departure from their headquarters, leaving behind the sick and wounded to be picked up by the Portsmouth. The long fateful march to Sonora was underway.[35]

The filibusters reached Santo Tomas on February 16, and then proceeded on to San Vicente. Until this moment Walker had never attempted to gain actual political control over the natives other than through his meaningless decrees. On the 21st, however, he ordered the inhabitants of San Vicente to meet for a "convention," and if any should fail to do so, they would be "severely punished."[36]

On March 1, the true nature of the convention was revealed. On

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[33] D.A.C., February 4, 1854.

[34] Ibid.; D.A.C., February 16, 1854.

[35] D.A.C., February 19, 1854.

[36] D.A.C., March 15, 1854.

that day ten delegates, on behalf of the sixty-two members attending the convention, signed a declaration stating that "yesterday, in your camp, we solemly renounced all allegiance to every other flag or government which was not that of the Republic of Sonora, then represented before us, and voluntarily taking the oath of allegiance to the New Republic, we passed beneath the two banners in token of submission and here offer to serve you faithfully until death."[37]

Although Walker needed the political support of the inhabitants, the emergency at the time was obviously revealed in the last paragraph of the delcaration in which the Mexicans swore that "the provisions we have on hand, and may receive in the future, be subject to your commisary; which requisitions will always be cheerfully complied with, confident that we will be fully reimbursed hereafter." With equal magnanimity Walker replied that he believed "the State of Lower California will prosper and improve under the Republic of Sonora, and prove more fruitful of resource than under the misgovernment of Mexico."[38]

Through the "voluntary" efforts of the Mexicans, Walker was able to requisition what he thought to be enough supplies to last on his journey to the Colorado. On March 20, leaving twenty men behind to hold San Vicente, Walker started his two hundred mile trek to Sonora with a drove of cattle and one hundred.[39]

It took them almost two weeks to reach the Colorado, but the

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] D.A.C., April 26, 1854.

journey had been costly. En route, they were attacked by a band of Cocopa Indians, who killed several men and stole about twenty cattle. More cattle were lost crossing the rugged mountains, and the force was soon reduced to a meager diet of beef. They eventually reached the Colorado at a point about six miles above its mouth; but the river was so wide at this point that the men had to cross over on rafts. The cattle had to swim, and most of them drowned.[40]

They had finally reached Sonora, but the conquerors were in no condition to claim victory over their new lands and remained only three days. The men were in a miserable and destitute condition, and dissension again broke out. They were in a barren country without food or clothing for survival or guns for adequate protection. Rather than risk starvation, more than fifty men immediately deserted in the direction of Fort Yuma. Finding his numbers thus reduced, Walker resolved to retrace his steps to San Vicente. Thus with thirty-three men and only a few head of cattle, Walker abandoned his mission and on April 6, headed for San Vicente. They arrived there on April 17, surviving the continual harassment given by Guadalupe Melendrez, the notorious Mexican outlaw. But after reaching the village they found that the men they had left to garrison the city were gone. Some had deserted; the others had either been killed or put to flight by Melendrez and his eighty followers.[41] Walker now had no choice but to retreat northward. On February 26, Melendrez sent him a note offering him freedom to leave

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[40]Ibid.; San Diego Herald, May 5, 1854, as quoted in Rufus K, Wyllys, "William Walker's Invasion of Sonora, 1854," Arizona Historical Review, VI (October, 1935), pp. 63-64.

[41]San Diego Herald, May 5, 1854, as quoted in Wyllys, "Walker's Invasion of Sonora," pp. 63-64; D.A.C., May 16, 1854.

the country if he and his troops would surrender their arms. Walker, however, was fully aware of what would happen if they turned themselves over to the band of cutthroats and expelled the messenger from his quarters.[42]

Melendrez and his party continued to circle and harass the struggling force as they marched northward. On the 29th they reached Santo Tomas, and the next day continued on until they reached Ensenada on May 1. Fully aware that Melendrez's company greatly outnumbered his men, Walker continued the flight until they reached the Tia Juana Ranch, only a short distance from the border. On the afternoon of March 8, Melendrez sent word to Walker that he would not permit him to cross the border until he surrendered his arms. Still convinced that the outlaw would only betray his filibusters, Walker replied that "If Melendrez wants our arms, he can come and take them; we will not run but it will be at his peril." Melendrez stationed his men between the filibusters and the border, but nothing could stop the weary force now. Walker gave the advance charge and within fifteen minutes they had broken the Mexican line and crossed over the border.[43]

Once in the United States they surrendered to a detachment of United States troops under the command of Major Justus McKinstry and Captain H. S. Burton. After months of hardship, toil, privation, and suffering, Walker and thirty-three men, only a remnant of the "Republic's Army," agreed to a parole of honor to go to San Francisco and report to General John E. Wool. There they would be charged and

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[42] San Diego Herald, May 13, 1854, as quoted in Wyllys, "Walker's Invasion of Sonora," p. 6.

[43] D.A.C., May 16, 1854.

tried for violation of the neutrality laws. A week later they were in San Francisco awaiting the action of the federal authorities.[44]

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[44]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although it ended the bitter Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 between the United States and the Republic of Mexico did not end all difficulties between the two nations. As a result of that agreement, men like Joseph Morehead and William Walker were quite willing to take advantage of the chaotic conditions along the new international boundary. Had the Gadsden Treaty not been proclaimed by the United States on June 30, 1854, the filibustering activities of Morehead and Walker might be given more attention than they are today. Although ardent expansionists were still not satisfied, the abrogation of Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the settlement of the boundary dispute, and the addition of thirty thousand square miles for the development of a transcontinental railroad seemed temporarily to appease the advocates of "manifest destiny" and eliminated the controversial issues that had brought the countries close to another confrontation.[1]

In Article VIII of the original negotations, Manuel Diez de Bonilla and James Gadsden promised a co-operative effort on the part

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[1]For a complete discussion of the Gadsden Purchase see: Paul Neff Garber, The Gadsden Treaty (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1959); J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico, Chapters VII, VIII; J. M. Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), Chapter VII.

of both nations to use their naval and military forces to suppress the filibustering expeditions. Yet when President Pierce sent the treaty to the Senate on February 10 for advice as to its ratification, he recommended that the article be changed "to a general stipulation that the United States would cheerfully co-operate with Mexico in the suppression of all unlawful invasions on both sides of the boundary."[2] The treaty in its final form, however, contains no reference to filibustering.[3] Consequently, the filibustering activity in Sonora and Baja California between 1848 and 1854 must be termed as attempts by adventurous, ambitious individuals who saw a chance to secure personal wealth, fame, and glory by taking advantage of a weakened neighbor under the pretext of "manifest destiny."

The United States was definitely not fulfilling the stipulations of Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Washington's threefold task that evolved from that article only increased the difficulty of controlling the frontier, for neither country was willing to consider it a sole responsibility; because of the restrictions within the article, neither nation could agree upon a co-operative plan. The United States was trying to reduce military expenditures following the Mexican War, while the national government in Mexico was on the verge of bankruptcy and in a state of constant civil and military strife.

President Arista, however, with his plan of 1848 recognized the Indian menace on the frontier and the American threat of expansionism.

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[2]Garber, Gadsden Treaty, pp. 103-104, 116. Garber also points out on page 125 that Senator William M. Gwin of California was the one who made the motion to delete Article VIII from the treaty.

[3]Malloy, Treaties, I, pp. 1121-1125.

In order to deter both, the military colonization plan was put into effect. By 1851, however, it was evident that the colonization scheme was not achieving the anticipated results. The Indians continued to plunder the frontier villages, while many Americans were still clamoring for the Sierra Madre line. Also by this time, Sonora and Baja California were losing many of their native residents to a much more attractive offer: potential wealth from the California gold mines.

The discovery of gold in California only added additional fears to the already worried Mexican officials. Paredes pointed out what the gold rush exemplified; Americans would continue to colonize its territory north of the boundary line, and that unless Mexico established permanent settlements along its frontier the logical outcome would be an overflow of American citizens into the frontier states. Had his plan of 1850 been adhered to, it could possibly have created a stable population which would have halted the Apache raids and dampened the ambition of American filibusters. Nevertheless, nothing was done.

On the other hand, even if the plan of 1848 or that of 1850 had been successful, it is uncertain if it would have prevented Morehead from launching the first American filibustering expedition against northern Mexico. The gold rush had brought an adventurous group of individuals to California, many of whom did not share in the fabulous wealth. Since talk of "manifest destiny" was still popular conversation in all types of circles, the next logical step was to look southward. The supreme government of Mexico failed to institute a national colonization plan; the Sonoran government's attempt to protect its own

frontier had been declared unconstitutional, and Paredes warning went unheeded. The United States military was unable to enforce Article VIII of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and the Apache raids continued to plague a frightened frontier population. With tales of the rich placer mines in Sonora and Lower California to make the risk worthwhile, adventurers used conditions on the frontier as an excuse for filibustering.

Thus with an ill clad, disorganized band of followers, Joseph C. Morehead launched his futile attempt to gain control of Sonora and Lower California. However, as no apparent military activity took place as a result of the Morehead expedition, its significance lies primarily in its effect upon the attitude of the Mexican citizenry and its inspiration to other ambitious men with designs on the northern Mexican states.

Although Don Manuel Castro, the Governor of Lower California, had expressed little fear of the possible invasion of his state, such was not the case with his countrymen at Mazatlán. To them, the scarcity of troops surrounding their city and the limited population of the area opened the frontiers to the mercy of anyone bent on their destruction. They had heard that three hundred Americans were about to depart from Upper California bound for either Sonora or Mazatlán. As soon as the Josephine sailed into harbor, it was quickly rumored that another five ships were on their way to join the filibusters.[4] The residents believed there were "no patriots willing to sacrifice themselves uselessly in the midst of the apathy and indolence of government officials. Either the Yankees or Comanches and Apaches conquer us."[5] Yet

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[4] D.A.C., June 13, 1851.

[5] D.A.C., May 24, 1851, quoting the "Noticiosa de Mazatlan."

governmental officials at Guaymas and Mazatlán were not as apathetic as the residents might think. In May, after hearing of the departure of three expeditions from California, the authorities promptly put Mazatlán in a state of defense. As soon as the Josephine arrived, the Mazatlán port authorities searched the vessel and found neither the men nor any munitions of war reportedly on board.[6] It was evident, however, to the American consul in Mazatlán that a strong prejudice against Americans was developing because of the rumors of California filibusters on their way to invade Lower California.[7]

The Trait d' Union, a French paper published in Mexico City, expressed the fears of many in that city after hearing of the Morehead expedition when it stated that "Sonora and Lower California, unexpectedly invaded will become a new Texas and the American element will become so dominant that Mexico will soon lose its rights."[8] By the time the information reached the east coast, it was reported that, although the Morehead expedition had been a failure, it was believed by many that within a short time, Lower California, Sonora, and even Tamulipas would "soon be wrested from Mexico and be asking for admission into the Confederacy." It even went so far as to state that the "admission of these territories will form a prominent issue in the Presidential elections of 1852."[9]

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[6]Wyllys, French in Sonora, pp. 52-55.

[7]R. R. Gatton to Daniel Webster, Mazatlán, July 8, 1851, Department of State, Despatches from United States Consuls in Mazatlán, Mexico, 1826-1906, RG 59, National Archives (Microfilm copy in the Oklahoma State University Library).

[8]D.A.C., July 8, 1851, quoting Trait d' Union.

[9]D.A.C., August 20, 1851, quoting New York correspondence.

On July 9, 1851, the Mexico City El Universal cited an article that had been published in the New York Sun on June 9. The item remarked that Mexico could only enjoy peace and prosperity after it had been annexed by the United States; only then could it truly have republican institutions. The Ures La Voz de Pueblo expressed the fear that six hundred Americans were on their way to join the Morehead expedition.[10]

The attitude of the government in Washington, however, was not faborable toward the filibusters. In August of 1849, President Zachary Taylor had issued a proclamation against filibustering expeditions, and had warned all citizens that participants in such an enterprise could not expect the interference of the United States government on their behalf should Mexican authorities apprehend them.[11] Following the Morehead expedition, President Fillmore likewise issued a proclamation against filibusters stating that "if they should be captured within the jurisdiction of the Mexican authorities they must expect to be tried and punished according to the laws of Mexico and will have no right to claim the interposition of this Government in their behalf." He went on to "call upon every officer of this Government, civil or military, to be vigilant in arresting for trial and punishment every such offender."[12]

Although many Californians were still expounding the merits of

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[10] Rippy, United States and Mexico, pp. 102-103.

[11] Senate Executive Document 1, 31st Congress, 1st session, Vol. I, p. 17.

[12] Senate Executive Document 1, 32d Congress, 1st session, Vol. I, pp. 82-83.

"manifest destiny," most intimated at this time that purchase, rather than seizure, would be a better method of acquiring more Mexican territory.[13] The editors of the Daily Alta stated that filibustering was hardly the proper way and "that a band of adventurers, professing to be Americans, should unite and take forcible possession of the domains of another nation, with whom, after a bloody and expensive war, we are on terms of amity and friendship, is abominable."[14] When Morehead sailed from San Diego, it was reported that a schooner "was to be in hot pursuit" of the Josephine.[15] On the other hand, when Governor McDougal asked the legislature to provide $1,500 for Morehead's arrest, the senate seemed unconcerned and made little effort to act on the subject at all.[16]

Nevertheless, Morehead's expedition again aroused the fears of those who thought that Americans were preparing to take another slice of Mexican territory. Rather than take a chance on another American expedition, the Mexican vice-consul at San Francisco extended an invitation to Charles de Pindray in the hope that a French settlement would not only protect the frontier population from Indian attacks but also halt the tide of American expansion. The settlement was denied the promised Mexican aid, however, Pindray was found shot in his tent, and the colony wasted away.

Still, Mexican statesmen were intent on colonizing the frontier.

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[13] D.A.C., February 8, 21, March 20, April 27, June 28, August 20, September 26, October 13, 1851. Many more examples can be located.

[14] D.A.C., April 27, 1851.

[15] D.A.C., May 17, 1851.

[16] D.A.C., April 30, 1851.

Solely upon the basis of containing Indian incursions into northern Mexico, Juan Almonte presented his colonization plan to the Mexican Senate in January of 1852. He was certain that European settlers would populate the frontier and interior wastelands if given proper inducements. If successful, the Indian problem would be solved, and a loyal, financially stable Mexican citizenry would evolve. As with the proposals of Paredes in 1850, however, Almonte's plan failed to be enacted.

Again Mexican authorities turned to the disenchanted French of California. With the official backing of leading politicians and one of the most influential banking firms in Mexico, Raousset Boulbon accepted an invitation to lead armed Frenchmen into Sonora to withstand the Apaches. In exchange, he was to be allowed to discover and take possession of rich placer mines. Raousset should have remembered the fate of his compatriot, however, for he too was denied the fulfillment of Mexican pledges, betrayed by the generals, and forced out of the country. But after learning of the excitement his expedition had aroused in San Francisco, he decided to appeal to Santa Anna, the new Mexican president. This time, however, his plans were rejected, and he was declared an outlaw. By the time he returned to San Francisco, public attention was now centered around the "grey-eyed man of destiny," William Walker.

Walker learned of the Morehead and Pindray expeditions while practicing law in Marysville. Before he and Watkins decided to send Emory to Guaymas in the summer of 1852, he no doubt intended to capitalize on the turmoil of the frontier and the mistakes made by both men. It was obvious that Morehead's attempt had been poorly

organized and had failed to incite the frontier population to revolt and seek annexation to the United States. Although the Sonoran citizenry had lauded the arrival of Pindray and Raousset, the betrayal of Mexican officials made the success of their ventures impossible.

After the same authorities made it clear to Walker in the summer of 1853 that Mexico had no intention of allowing Americans to settle their frontiers, it was then he decided that under the pretext of protecting the inhabitants of Sonora from Indian outrages, he would make himself President of an independent republic.

Walker had hoped to get the support both of the Mexican population and of the military personnel. It was obvious, however, that he misjudged the temperament of both. Otherwise he would never have presumptuously offered for sale bonds for the "Republic of Sonora" six months before his expedition sailed from San Francisco. He had every intention of establishing his personal rule over Sonora and Baja California. Yet at the same time he realized that his adventure could not succeed without the popular support of the Mexican people. This he never received.

Due to the harassment by American authorities in San Francisco, he was unable to initiate his original plan of landing at Sonora. With only forty-five men, he knew he could not forcibly take Guaymas, so he landed at La Paz instead. After failing to get the reinforcements he expected, he retreated northward and set up headquarters at Ensenada, a location close enough to make a quick return to the United States should the Mexican government tire of his quixotic adventure.

Despite the fact that the Apache raids had given the frontier inhabitants plenty of reason to complain, Walker's many decrees pro-

claiming protection to the citizenry was not the solution they wanted; the intent of the convention at San Vincente was obvious.

Insufficient supplies always plagued his expedition; thus reinforcements only added to Walker's plight. By the time he set foot in Sonora, his filibuster was already defeated and his "Republic of Sonora" meaningless. His followers, disallusioned with their failure to acquire immediate wealth, were unwilling to serve a president who could only provide them with beef and corn instead of gold and silver.

Walker's filibuster had a variety of effects upon both Mexicans and Americans. The Annals of San Francisco reflected the attitude of most Californians, both prior to and after the expedition; "Had Walker's party succeeded in reaching Sonora and been able to stand their own for a time or perhaps signally to defeat the Mexicans in a pitched battle, ten thousand of our mixed Californians would have hastened to their triple-striped two star standard. Against such a force, not all the power of Mexico would have been sufficient to dislodge the invaders from Sonora. Other tens of thousands would have been thoroughly Americanized." But after evidence of Walker's failure began arriving, "the San Franciscan journals had now little mercy on the expedition and all connected with it. It was a farce they said; and its end was just what they had expected."[17]

Many government officials in Mexico, Washington, and California had little sympathy with Walker. While Watkins was actively seeking reinforcements, James Gadsden was negotiating a new treaty with Mexico. One California legislator aptly stated the real fear of

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[17]Soule, Annals of San Francisco, pp. 480-481.

Walker's expedition when he introduced a resolution in the legislature condemning the venture as unworthy of American citizens "and calculated to retard the amicable acquisitions of the States of Chihuahua, Sonora and Lower California which our Government is at present desirous of effecting."[18]

Gadsden was extremely disgusted with Walker. On August 20, 1853, Bonilla informed Gadsden of Walker's visit to Guaymas during the summer and claimed that his intentions were "against the tranquility and peace of the Territory of Mexico."[19] On November 15, Bonilla again notified Gadsden that he had received reports about the departure of Walker's expedition and questioned him as to why federal authorities in California had not suppressed "those expeditions against a neighboring nation."[20] Gadsden immediately replied that government authorities had seized arms and ammunition to be used by the filibusters, but that Walker and his men had slipped out of harbor and avoided arrest. Although he was sure Walker could not successfully carry out his mission, he promised to notify Washington so that future missions would be stopped.[21] He also informed Bonilla that he had sent a circular to the consul at Acapulco, to be transmitted to San Francisco, informing any commanding officer of an American vessel to suppress any unlawful de-

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[18] D.A.C., January 19, 1854.

[19] Bonilla to Gadsden, Mexico City, August 20, 1853, Department of State, Despatches from United States Ministers to Mexico, 1823-1906, RG 59, National Archives. (Microfilm copy in the Oklahoma State University Library).

[20] Bonilla to Gadsden, November 15, 1853, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

[21] Gadsden to Bonilla, November 18, 1853, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

sign on Mexico. He then wrote the president asking him to provide stronger measures against filibustering.[22] Walker's action was inopportune for Gadsden, for it further convinced Santa Anna that the United States was still intent on annexing more Mexican territory. Later, in January, Gadsden informed the Charleston Daily Courier that "had not the insane expedition caused Santa Anna to set his face resolutely against it," further negotiations probably would have added Lower California to the United States.[23]

The rumors continued to spread, and by January the American consul at Mazatlán reported Mexican officials claiming that more than six hundred Americans had already landed at Todos Santos and that three hundred Mexican soldiers were being sent to repel the invaders.[24] When John Cripps, Secretary of the American legation in Mexico, wrote to William L. Marcy, Secretary of State, in February, he complained of the filibustering invasion and that Mexican newspapers were filled with declarations against the United States and her intentions against Mexico.[25] Cripps had tried to reassure Bonilla in January that the United States was making every effort to bring the expedition to an end, but failed to convince the Mexican minister of his sincerity. To Bonilla, Walker was not only violating existing treaties between the United States and Mexico, but in particular the domestic laws of the

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[22]Gadsden to Bonilla, November 17, 1853, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

[23]Garber, Gadsden Treaty, p. 98, quoting Daily Courier.

[24]Gatton to Cripps, January 12, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Mazatlán.

[25]Cripps to Marcy, February 5, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

United States.[26]

Still Cripps was adamant and replied that both California and federal authorities had made every attempt to prevent Walker's ship from leaving harbor. In reply to Walker's violation of American laws, Cripps reminded the Mexican minister that only "suspicion" of intentions did not warrant the arrest of a person.[27]

Earlier, in November, Juan Robinson, the American consul in Guaymas, had informed Gadsden that the reports of an invasion of Sonora were quite alarming to the citizens of Guaymas and that if a United States ship of war could be sent to the port to prevent a landing, it would greatly reduce the anxiety of the inhabitants there and create great confidence towards the American government.[28] By February, due to the excitement expressed against Walker's filibuster, Robinson was forced to leave the city and go to Mazatlán.[29] A month later it was rumored throughout Guaymas that over 1,500 filibusters were in Lower California preparing to cross over the Gulf into Sonora.[30]

Federal officials had attempted to stop the expedition. Under orders of the president, General Hitchcock had seized the brig Arrow

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[26]Bonilla to Cripps, January 30, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

[27]Cripps to Bonilla, February 1, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City. This is an issue that Walker would use in his trial.

[28]Robinson to Gadsden, Guaymas, September 25, November 5, 1853, Department of State, Despatches from United States Consuls in Guaymas, Mexico, 1832-1896, RG 59, National Archives. (Microfilm copy in the Oklahoma State University Library).

[29]Robinson to Cripps, February 22, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Guaymas.

[30]D.A.C., March 24, 1854.

and forced Walker to charter the Caroline and make a hasty departure. Though public opinion set in against Hitchcock, on December 16, 1853, he received word from Jefferson Davis, the new Secretary of War, that his work as commander of the Department of the Pacific was commendable.[31]

On January 9, 1854, Davis assigned Brevet Major General John E. Wool as the new commander of the department.[32] Wool had no intention of allowing continued recruitment for Walker's expedition. On January 18, President Pierce, after receiving the news of Walker's venture, issued a proclamation "warning all persons who shall connect themselves with any such enterprise or expedition," and called "upon all officers of this Government, civil and military to use any effort which may be in their power to arrest for trial and punishment every such offender."[33] Even before the proclamation, Davis had informed Wool to "use all proper means to detect the fitting out of armed expeditions against countries with which the United States are at peace" and to co-operate with the civil authorities in maintaining the neutrality laws.[34]

Wool took immediate action and on March 1 reported the arrest of Watkins, which he felt would inevitably end Walker's expedition for

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[31]Croffut, Fifty Years in Camp and Field, pp. 402-405.

[32]House Executive Document 88, 35th Congress, 1st session, Vol. X, p. 5.

[33]United States Statutes at Large, 32d-33d Congress, Vol. X, pp. 1177-1188.

[34]Senate Executive Document 16, 33d Congress, 2d session, Vol. VI, pp. 7-8.

lack of reinforcements.[35] On March 21, Watkins was brought before the federal District Court and charged with violating section six of the Neutrality Law of 1818, which stated that any person setting on foot, providing or preparing means for military expeditions against nations at peace with the United States would be declared "guilty of a high misdemeanor and shall be fined not exceeding three thousand dollars, and imprisoned not more than three years."[36] The questions for the jury was to decide whether or not an illegal expedition had been promoted by Watkins, and if so, did he take part in it.[37]

Hoping to win the sympathy of the jury, Edmund Randolph, one of the defense attorneys, elaborated on the Apache curse of northern Mexico and the corruption and incompetency of Santa Anna's government. He then went on to show that Watkins had no intentions of invading Mexico until after the Anita left port. Henry S. Foote, the other attorney for Watkins, attempted to prove the law of 1818 unconstitutional. Judge Ogden Hoffman, however, pointed out to the jury that the constitutionality of the law had already been proven and that the jury must judge the guilt or innocence upon the basis of the evidence in violation of that law. Finally, on March 25, Watkins was found guilty and recommended to the mercy of the court. On April 8, he was convicted and fined $1,500.[38] On April 4, Captain George R. Davidson was released for lack of evidence, but on April 11, Frederic Emory,

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[35] House Ex. Doc. 88, 35th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. X, pp. 10-11.

[36] United States Statutes at Large, Appendix, Vol. III, p. 449.

[37] D.A.C., March 22, 1854.

[38] D.A.C., March 23, 24, April 8, 1854.

Walker's Secretary of State, changed his plea to guilty and like Watkins was fined $1,500.[39]

Following the arrest of Watkins and Emory, public opinion started turning against the filibusters as Californians began to realize that Walker's sweeping proclamations could not be backed by deeds. Reports of his demise began to drift back to San Francisco, and only a few were surprised with his surrender.[40] Walker was not arraigned until June 2, at which time he pleaded "not guilty." Because of the absence of Frederic Emory and then later of Judge Hoffman, however, his case did not come to trial until October.[41]

Edmund Randolph and Calhoun Benham were the defendant's counsel. Walker also acted as an attorney for his own defense, and in his opening statement to the jury he claimed that "I shall introduce evidence to show that at the time of leaving this port, my intention was to proceed to Guaymas and thence by land to the frontiers; and I shall also prove that it was only after we had got to sea and beyond the territory of the United States, that this intention was changed, so as to land at La Paz, and previously to this, such was not my intention to proceed and land there in a hostile manner."[42]

As S. W. Inge, the district attorney, pointed out, the jury would

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[39] D.A.C., April 4, 11; Senate Ex. Doc. 16, 33d Cong., 2d sess., p. 53; Emory was arrested in San Diego on March 8. D.A.C., March 15; Dr. Hoge, Walker's surgeon was arrested earlier. D.A.C., March 3; Davidson had been arrested in San Diego the same time that Watkins was apprehended. D.A.C., February 25, 1854.

[40] D.A.C., March 20, June 5, May 18, 1854; House Ex. Doc. 88, 35th Cong., 1st sess., p. 49.

[41] D.A.C., May 27, June 3, 9, October 7, 11, 12.

[42] D.A.C., October 18, 1854.

have to determine the intention of Walker at the time of leaving the territory of the United States. If he did plan on making a hostile landing in Mexico before leaving, then he would be guilty of violating the neutrality Statute of 1818.

Benham still denied the constitutionality of the neutrality law and explained quite well Walker's attitude toward Section VI when he asked, "What nation would be willing to be bound by such a law?---only the weak to protect themselves against the strong. We all know that international law is nothing but force....We cannot shackle and bind down the progress of nations, as we may regulate the actions of individuals."[43]

As in Watkins' case, Randolph then spoke of Walker's expedition "as one of the highest character and glory." It was intended to "drive back the savage Apaches." As Raousset had been betrayed, it was Walker's duty to continue the enterprise. Walker then made an eloquent appeal on his own behalf stating that the inhabitants of Sonora had begged him to return with enough Americans to "drive back the Apaches"; but because of the interference of U. S. authorities, he was unable to take enough men to help the oppressed Sonorans: "They were bound on an errand of humanity and their mission was higher authority than international law." He had "hoped to rescue a land from savages and make it the abode of order and civilization."[44] Despite the verdict of the jury, "he had one consolation, of which no ignorant or malicious

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[43] Ibid.

[44] D.A.C., October 19, 1854.

person could rob him--it was that of a conscience void of offence."[45]

Inge ridiculed the statements of the defense and declared to the jury that even if the humane purposes of the filibusters were just, the expedition was still in violation of the law. When the judge charged the jury for a verdict, he stated that the constituionality was not the question, but its violation by Walker: "If, however, the chartering a vessel and putting arms and munitions of war on board, the going out to sea, the leaving at night and the hostile acts of the party after they had landed in Lower California, if these facts were sufficient to come to the conclusion in the minds of the jury that hostility was meditated before the expedition had set sail, then they might find the defendant guilty." The jury had little trouble in making a decision. After only eight minutes, they returned a verdict of not guilty.[46]

To Juan Almonte, an able Mexican statesman, the trial of Walker exemplified the indifference that Californians had manifested before and after Walker's expedition.[47] As early as January, 1854, Senator William M. Gwin of California practically foretold the outcome of Walker's trial. In arguing with his colleagues over the ability of the United States government to enforce the neutrality laws, he contended that as long as adventurous spirits resided in a country such as

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[45] Ibid.

[46] D.A.C., October 20, 1854.

[47] Garber, Gadsden Treaty, p. 163; Even before the trial, Gadsden commented on the sincere distrust of most Mexicans toward the American system and how the Mexican newspapers continued to assail the "progress of liberty." Gadsden to Marcy, Mexico City, September 2, 1854, Dept. of State, Des., Mexico City.

California, as long as the principle of territorial expansion was recognized, and with countries such as Sonora and Baja California lying next to the United States "you will find citizens of the United States engaged in such enterprises."[48] Both Joseph Morehead and William Walker were products of their own time. They were not patriots, but only pirates seeking personal glory under the guise of "manifest destiny."

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[48] Congressional Globe, 33d Congress, 1st session, (1853-1854), Vol. XXVIII, pt. 1, p. 207.

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