

ANTHONY BUTLER,
THE UNITED STATES MINISTER TO MEXICO
FROM OCTOBER, 1829, to MAY, 1836.

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OCT 27 1939

By

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Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma A. and M. College

1938

Submitted to the Department of History
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

1939

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PREFACE

This study has for its purpose a survey of the activities of Anthony Butler as they related to the Texas situation during the period that he was minister from the United States to Mexico; and to present facts of that period and prior to it, which subsequent history has shown has given rise to the war between those two nations and to the misunderstandings which lasted for more than fifty years following.

In order to comprehend more fully the situation it has seemed necessary to review briefly some of the history of the United States and Mexico prior to the period under consideration. This review has carried the study into some diplomatic relations which the United States had with Spain and France, particularly the treaties effecting the purchases of Louisiana and Florida.

The source material used in this study consisted of bound volumes of the correspondence of the Department of State for the years covering the periods mentioned. The background material used consisted of books and articles in periodicals from recognized authors.

In addition, histories of the United States and extracts from Mexican histories have been perused in order to obtain an unbiased slant on the activities of the characters treated in this thesis.

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. T. H. Reynolds, head of the Department of History and Political Science of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, for his supervision and special cooperation; to Dr. Watt Stewart for his kindly help and suggestions in collecting material; also to the library staff, and especially, Miss Margaret Walters, for invaluable assistance given.

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CHAPTER I

Anthony Butler, the United States Minister to Mexico, October, 1829 to May, 1936.

A minister appointed to represent a nation at the seat of another nation represents in an official capacity the ideals, and attitudes of his nation. He reflects also in some essentials the ideas of the official head who gave him his appointment. Hence, in order to appreciate the ministry of Anthony Butler, minister d'affaires from the United States to Mexico, in any adequate sense it is important to review the character of the man who was responsible for his appointment.

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) was an American soldier, statesman and seventh President of the United States from 1829 to 1837. He lived in the age that produced such great statesmen as Washington, Madison, Monroe, Jefferson, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, the Adamses, and Van Buren. He was a lawyer by profession and a fighter by choice. One of his biographers says,

Neither the study nor the practice of law---ever gave him much knowledge of law or developed in him a judicial habit of mind.¹

Though he had but little education as a boy, yet as a man he had dignity and courteous manners and could express himself in a vigorous style. He was, in many ways, typical of the times and the section he represented. He was a frontiersman and not like his predecessors in the presidency, an aristocrat trained to govern. Jackson was the first president who belonged to the

¹Wm. MacDonald, Jefferson Democracy, p. 17.

"common people." He was a member of the Constitutional convention of 1796 of Tennessee to which state he had moved from his native state of South Carolina. In the same year, he was elected to the house of representatives where he distinguished himself by his violent opposition to President Washington.² The War of 1812 gave Jackson the great opportunity of his life. Up to that time he had been only a local figure and even in Tennessee, says one biographer, his prestige was declining.³ Jackson was forty-five when the War of 1812 began. Since 1802 he had been major-general of the Tennessee militia and as soon as he heard of the news of the declaration of war he offered to the President his services and that of 2,000 militiamen. On December 1, 1814, when Jackson arrived at New Orleans he found the city defenseless. In a frenzy of energy characteristic of the man, he inspired the army with his own enthusiasm which quickly resulted in breastworks and trenches preparatory for a defense. He arrested a judge who attempted to resist martial law. His unparalleled energy bore results, for the British were defeated in January, 1815, with a heavy loss, and Jackson became a national hero. He distinguished himself in the Indian campaigns in Florida, and later was appointed military governor of that territory.

Jackson's military career had made him one of the most

²World Book V., p. 3094.

³Ibid., p. 3095.

conspicuous men in the United States and a hero on the frontier. The Tennessee legislature proposed his name as the Democratic candidate for President in 1824. In the election, Jackson received more electoral votes than any other candidate, but failed to receive a majority. The house of representatives elected J. Q. Adams. Jackson seems to have been told and to have believed that he was deliberately cheated out of the presidency and the more he thought about it the more bitter he became toward Clay and Adams. This personal animosity seems to have led to a break in the Democratic party, - the followers of Adams and Clay assuming the name of National Republicans.

Almost from the day of Adams' inauguration, Jackson kept in view the next Presidential election and in 1828 he was elected President by an electoral vote of 178 to 83 for Adams.⁴

The eight years during which Jackson was president reflect with considerable accuracy the character of the man. This does not mean that the acts of the administration which included the introduction of the spoils system, the Nullification Controversy, and the fight against the Bank of the United States cannot be regarded as constructive.

The admission of new states was closely related to the slavery problem which was beginning to assume a rather large place in American politics. About this time Texas was beginning its war for independence from Mexico. It was rightly believed that an independent Texas would soon be annexed to the United States.

⁴Ibid., p. 3096.

When Andrew Jackson became president of the United States on March 4, 1829, the administration inherited some unfinished and unsettled problems of state which had been absorbing the time and thought of such able and experienced statesmen as Henry Clay and J. Q. Adams. Among them were the treaty which aimed to confirm the boundary line of 1819, and the treaty of commerce of 1826, both of them with Mexico. This unsettled business had not always borne the favorable stamp of public opinion, at least of the public that was acquainted with the affairs of state. According to Reeves,

In considering the question of annexation of Texas, New Mexico, and California - it will be necessary to keep in mind that the first step in that direction was not the negotiation for annexation of Texas under Tyler but a series of abortive attempts at south-western extension which begun early in the J. Q. Adams administration. Not until the Administration of Adams were diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico really established. The first instructions of Henry Clay as Secretary of State under Adams, to Joel R. Poinsett, Minister to Mexico, dated March 25, 1825, discussed the advisability of extending the south-western boundary so as to include Texas.⁵

Thus at the outset of our relations with Mexico, grave suspicions were aroused as to the intentions of Mexico's growing and powerful neighbor on the North. Much of the good land from the Colorado river to the Sabine had been granted by the state of Texas and was rapidly filling up with either grantees or squatters from the United States. "A population," wrote Poinsett, "that they (Mexico) will find difficult to govern."⁶

⁵Jesse S. Reeves, American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk quoting Clay to Poinsett, March 25, 1825.

⁶Ibid., p. 62.

The negotiations that followed hinged upon the question as to whether the line of the treaty of 1819 should be adopted as the boundary or a new treaty entered into. It seems that Clay adopted the idea as expressed by Poinsett in an early letter that Mexico would be less loath to part with Texas when it was seen that that country was being peopled with settlers of a different race.⁷ Such, in brief was the state of relations between the United States and Mexico when Jackson succeeded to the presidency. He found a treaty signed but not ratified which left the Sabine as the western boundary. And Jackson made no effort to hurry ratification.⁸

The commerce treaty, bearing date of February 14, 1828, had been negotiated, but the Mexican Congress failed to take any action owing to some objections relative to the return of fugitive slaves and the control of border tribes of Indians. The boundary treaty, as has been stated, had arrived in Washington from Mexico too late to be exchanged within the time limit, and as no effort had been made by the Adams' administration to fix a new period, Jackson was in no hurry to take up the question. Neither he nor his secretary of state, seem to have given the subject any consideration and nothing of consequence was done about it until it was specially brought to their attention by an old friend of the president, Colonel Anthony Butler.

⁷ Ibid., citing Clay to Poinsett, August 5, 1825, p. 63.

⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

Butler was a native of South Carolina who, as a young man had removed to Kentucky and settled at Rushville, where he was a friend and neighbor of John J. Crittenden. Butler married Crittenden's sister. When the war of 1812 broke out, Butler was made lieutenant-colonel, and subsequently colonel, of the twenty-eighth infantry, and in that capacity was in command at Detroit in the spring of 1814 after its recovery by the Americans in the previous autumn. The next winter he was with Jackson at New Orleans, where the foundations were laid for an intimate and confidential friendship. After the close of the war with Great Britain, Butler removed to Monticello, Mississippi, where he became a member of the legislature in 1826. Not long after that time he seems to have acquired some interests in lands in Texas, probably near Nacogdoches. And when Jackson became President, Butler turned up in Washington, "partly as an applicant for office and partly to get the Government of the United States to do something for Texas."⁹

Butler in his later years quarrelled with Jackson who called him a scamp and a liar.¹⁰ He quarrelled with Wilcocks, the American consul in the City of Mexico, who charged him with all sorts of immorality.¹¹

And he quarrelled with Sam Huston, who asserted that he had squandered his wife's property and then abandoned her; that he had swindled many persons in the United States; that he was a gambler; that he was not a citizen of

⁹George Lockhart Rives, The United States and Mexico (New York, 1913), p. 236.

¹⁰Atlantic Monthly, XCV, (February, 1905), p. 220.

¹¹McLane to Butler; (enclosing charges to Wilcocks); H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 190-191.

Mississippi, but a resident of Texas, in 1829; and altogether he was a much worse man than anybody else whom Houston knew.¹²

John Quincy Adams who examined Butler's dispatches on file in the State Department, declared

...that his looseness of moral principle and political profligacy were disclosed in several of his letters, and his vanity and self-sufficiency in others. Some of Butler's correspondence is insolent and even scurrilous in tone; and all of it betrays the author as vain, ignorant, ill tempered and corrupt. A man more unfit to deal with the punctilious, well-mannered, and sensitive people who controlled the Mexican government, or to attempt to restore the delicate confidence in the object and purposes of the Mexican government, could scarcely have been found.¹³

During the summer of 1829 Butler, according to his own account, talked very freely in relation to Texas with both Jackson and Van Buren, then secretary of state. Presumably at Van Buren's request, he prepared a statement as to the geography and production of Texas, and another paper in which he set forth the arguments that might properly be addressed to Mexico to urge the sale of that province to the United States.¹⁴

Rives notes

that in the second of these two papers, Butler points out that there were two rivers flowing into Lake Sabine, one coming from the north, which was commonly called the Sabine, and one coming from the north-west, commonly called the Neches; and he contended that there was ground for argument that the latter of the two was the river which the treaty of 1819 really intended as the boundary. This seems to have been an invention of his own. There never was any

¹²Rives, op. cit. p. 236, quoting Houston to Butler, Dec. 25, 1845.

¹³Ibid., p. 236.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 237, who makes the following notation: These two papers are undated but are found in the Van Buren Library of Congress, under the supposed date of August 11, 1829.

confusion of names. The rivers were clearly laid down in Melesh's map, referred to in the treaty of 1819 and the only reason for Butler's claim was in the fact that as the village of Nacogdoches lay between the two rivers and it would come within American jurisdiction if his view had prevailed.¹⁵

With Butler's papers before him, Jackson prepared a careful memorandum for the secretary of state, in which he directed that Poinsett, then United States Minister to Mexico, should be instructed to renew the proposal for a change in the boundary as fixed by the Florida treaty of 1819. The President wished the line between the United States and Mexico to follow the watershed between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande "to its termination on the mountain," and then it should follow the watershed

dividing the waters of the Rio del Norte from those that run Eastward of them in the Gulf, to the 42^o of North latitude until it strikes our present boundary on that parallel.¹⁶

Joel Roberts Poinsett was the first United States Minister to Mexico after it declared its independence from Spain in 1824. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina, March 2, 1779. Of Huguenot descent, Joel was the son of Doctor Elisha and Ann Roberts Poinsett. His paternal ancestors had migrated to America in search of religious freedom. Joel Roberts was the last of the Poinsetts in South Carolina. He was born during the tumult of war. His father was probably not at home at the time of Joel's birth for he accompanied the South Carolina

¹⁵Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 237-238, et. passim.

forces sent to cooperate with Count D'Estaing in 1779 and at the seige of Savannah, he dressed the wounds of the dying Pulaski. Joel inherited the fortunes of his father whose death occurred at Boston in 1803. Very little is known of his mother except that she was the daughter of an English gentleman.

From his father, Joel inherited fortune, an enviable reputation, charming manners, a good mind, and an interest in learning and refinement. But he did not inherit a robust constitution. All his life he was delicate. After studying in Conn. he was sent to a private school near London where the head master was a relative of his mother. Here he mastered the classics; he also became efficient in French, Spanish, Italian, and German. Later he acquired some knowledge of the Russian tongue, and military science. When he returned to Charleston in 1800 he was full of enthusiasm for the army life. But his distinguished father objected sternly to his only son entering the profession of arms as his occupation. Young Joel was accordingly persuaded to begin the study of law. A year of study proved his utter lack of taste for the practice of law. He was never admitted to the bar. Wanderlust had seized him and his formal education was over.¹⁷ In the early spring of 1801 he set sail for an extended tour of Europe. He visited Russia where he was formerly presented to the Emperor and

¹⁷James Fred Rippey, Joel R. Poinsett, Duke University (Press, 1935), pp.6-8, et. passim.

Empress. Alexander was most cordial and asked him to make a tour of Russia and bring him back a report. This he did in 1807 in company with this young English friend, Lord Royston. This was a long and difficult journey through southern Russia.

In April, 1822, the United States decided to recognize the Spanish-American republic of Mexico. President Monroe appointed Poinsett as minister to Mexico on March 6, 1823. Poinsett was a flaming evangel for democracy but he lacked tact. His career in Chili, where he had been sent by President Madison on an unofficial mission to inquire into the conditions of South American affairs, had revealed both an imprudent aggressiveness and a disposition to violate the rules of diplomatic decorum. While there he had joined the insurgent forces and had taken some part in actual fighting.¹⁸

The Mexican government was suspicious of Poinsett and of the government which he represented due in part to the Spanish minister at Washington who had published damaging - in some respects - defamatory - statements concerning the United States. Rippey says,

Their suspicions had been aroused by the procedure of the United States in reference to Florida, and the blatant oratory against accepting the Sabine River as the Western boundary of Louisiana. Filibuster threats against Mexico added to the resentment of the Mexican government the United States. Zozoya, the Mexican minister to the United States, had written that the neighbors north of the Rio Grande 'will be our sworn enemies.' Thus before Poinsett reached Mexico City efforts had been made to prejudice the Mexican government against him.¹⁹

¹⁸Ibid., p. 106, also see Rives, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 106, et. passim.

With official attitude set against him Poinsett was called upon by his instructions to represent democracy where the dominant element consisted of aristocrats and monarchists; to support the Monroe Doctrine of America for Americans against the official tendency in Mexico to seek European affiliations; to vindicate the prestige of the United States where Great Britain had established a virtual protectorate; to insist on a most-favored nation principle in commerce when the Mexican government favored mutual concessions among the Spanish-American states, - - to oppose Mexico's cherished designs regarding Cuba, and to acquire territory when the mere suggestion of such a transaction confirmed Mexican suspicion, wounded Mexican pride, and intensified Mexican irritation.²⁰

During the four and one-half years Poinsett spent in Mexico, he engaged in negotiations with regard to three important subjects: Cuba, Texas, and commercial matters. In regard to Cuba, five other powers besides Spain were interested in the fate of Cuba: England, France, the United States, Colombia, and Mexico. It was Poinsett's duty to keep a close watch on the situation and discourage any effort on the part of Mexico to launch an expedition against the Spanish authorities in Cuba.

It cannot be doubted - - that the policy which Poinsett was instructed to pursue tended to irritate the Mexican government.²¹

Poinsett's efforts to acquire either a part or the whole of Texas were equally unfortunate in their effect upon the Mexican attitude. His government sought to take advantage of the unmarked boundary of Louisiana in order to extend its territory at the expense of Mexico. The arguments which he was authorized to advance were far from tactful and although

²⁰Ibid., p. 107

²¹Ibid., pp. 110-112, et. passim.

he was eager to acquire Texas it is doubtful whether he ever presented them to the Mexican diplomats. The line of arguments were:

1. The line of 1819 established a community of navigation on the Red River and the Arkansas country which would eventually lead to collisions and misunderstandings; 2. the cession of Texas would make the Mexican capital nearer the center of its territories; and 3. such a cession would transfer the troublesome Comanche Indians to the United States.

How convincing the last two would have been if offered! They must have sounded much like the following arguments would if made by a planter to a neighbor farmer: 'Your house is not in the middle of your fields. Give me forty acres next to my line and you will not have to go so far to work and besides you will get rid of that ugly patch of thistles which my superior intelligence and industry will enable me to handle more successfully than you can.'²²

Adams and Clay did not bring up the subject of boundaries again.

When Andrew Jackson entered the White House in March, 1829, he did not take up the Texas question for several months as has been pointed out in this paper. In July, before Poinsett received any instructions from Jackson, he wrote to Van Buren, Secretary of State,

I am still convinced that we can never expect to extend our boundary south of the Sabine River without quarreling with these people and driving them to court a more strict alliance with some European power.²³

Poinsett found the Mexican government pro-British and pro-European and, as has been pointed out, unfriendly to the United States. Poinsett had asked Adams for a recall. He declared

²²Ibid., p. 113.

²³Poinsett to Van Buren, July 22, 1829; H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Congress, 2 session, p. 286.

that European agents were trying to subvert the republican institutions of Spanish-America and to substitute monarchical forms in place of them and set European princes on American thrones. He declared he had done his best to counteract such designs.

A recall at that time would have saved Poinsett the odium of final failure. But another presidential election was approaching the United States. It was better to leave this ardent friend of Andrew Jackson in Mexico.²⁴

Early in his career as minister, Poinsett aided in the establishment of new Masonic lodges which were intended to be - "purely political centers."²⁵ Hidalgo, it is reported, who first raised the cry of independence became a Mason in 1807. However these lodges were short-lived and many of the brethren were imprisoned and persecuted before the tribunals of the inquisition. But it appears that the Spanish troops which landed in Mexico in 1811 brought in their ranks a number of Masons. Some lodges sprang into being which were composed of men who were not favorable to the idea of a republic.²⁶ In 1825 when Poinsett arrived in the City of Mexico as minister, the need for a similar center for men who professed more liberal and popular ideas appears to have been felt and naturally suggested the idea of founding rival societies. Poinsett, who was himself a Mason, was appealed to for help, or volunteered his advice. At any rate he lent himself to the project and

²⁴Ibid., p. 124

²⁵Rives. op. cit., p. 163.

²⁶Ibid., et. passim. pp. 163-164.

helped to obtain charters for lodges practicing the York rite which were to serve as rivals to the existing Scottish lodges. These newly established York lodges rapidly multiplied and soon became a political machine which controlled the conduct of elections and the distribution of patronage. The rival lodges imitated these methods which soon divided the country not into Republicans and anti-Republicans or into Liberals and Conservatives but into Yorkinos and Escocesses - i. e., York rite and Scottish rite.

Poinsett's course was amazingly impudent, and, in fact, it wrecked his mission. The Escocesses were naturally incensed against him, while the leading Yorkinos were afraid to come to any public understanding with him lest they should be accused of betraying their country.²⁷

The American government, of course, had not authorized Poinsett to enter into local politics, but his attention had been officially directed to another subject on which the Mexican government was acutely sensitive, namely, the cession of Texas to the United States.

Poinsett's instructions bore the marks of careful preparation; they also bore evidence of the desire of the administration to meet the views of those persons in the South and West who felt aggrieved at the result of the Missouri compromise and at the relinquishment of the claims to Texas as agreed to in the treaty of 1819. The Richmond Enquirer, commenting on the compromise bill of 1820, before the Florida treaty was finally ratified, had advised the Southern and Western members of Congress to keep their eyes firmly fixed

²⁷Ibid., p. 164.

on Texas. "If we are cooped up on the North, we must have elbow room to the West."²⁸

As has been stated, Clay's instructions to Poinsett were first to take up the treaty of Commerce, the second a treaty of boundaries; and as to boundaries it was the wish of the United States to have the boundary some place between the Brazos and the Rio Grande so as to give the United States the whole of the drainage basin of the Mississippi if the Mexican government should have no "disinclination to the fixation of a new line."²⁹

Rives states it was proposed that some point between the Brazos and the Rio Grande should be substituted for the Sabine.

The fact was that the over-emphasis and over-confidence with which the government of the United States had repeatedly asserted its claims to Texas had very naturally led the Mexican officials to suppose that the American minister was desirous of reopening the old controversy.³⁰

Whether or not Poinsett's unhopeful view of the situation was justified by facts, it was apparent by August, 1829, that his own usefulness had long since ceased, and that he himself was aware of it.³¹ Yet the president was not eager to displace him for Poinsett had voted for him during the heated contest of 1825. Instructions were merely sent to him authorizing his return to the United States unless a change of sentiment had occurred since he last wrote in which case he might remain at his post. If Poinsett did decide to return to the

²⁸Tyler's Letters and Times of the Tylers as cited by Rives I, pp. 326-166.

²⁹Rives, op. cit., p. 166

³⁰Ibid., p. 167

³¹Ibid., p. 242.

United States he was to leave in charge of the legation, Colonel Anthony Butler. At the same time, long instructions were sent to Butler to cover the case of his having to assume the duties of charge d'affaires.³² Before the messenger bearing the instructions to Poinsett left Washington, the Mexican representative presented to the state department a communication requesting, in the name of his government, Poinsett's recall.³³ The request was at once complied with by adding post-scripts to the instructions of October 16.

The October instructions reached the City of Mexico about December 15 and before Butler had reached that city. Butler had been sent to that city with instructions to Poinsett from President Jackson. Poinsett without delay immediately notified the Mexican Foreign Office that he had been recalled and requested the President of Mexico to fix a date for his final audience. President Guerrero was much too busy at that time defending his own existence to trouble himself with civilities to foreign ministers, for on the night of December 22, 1829, President Guerrero was forced to resign. On December 24, Poinsett was notified by the new administration that he might present his letter of recall on the following day.³⁴

Butler had arrived in the city December 19, 1829,³⁵ and

³²H. R. Doc. 351, 25 Congress, 2 Session, p. 286.

³³Montoya to Van Buren, October 17., loc. cit. p. 638.

³⁴Rives, op. cit., p. 244.

³⁵Butler to Van Buren, December 31, as quoted by Rives, p. 243.

had been in the city only a few days when the Mexican newspapers announced that he had come with instructions to purchase Texas for five million dollars. Where the information had come from did not appear, but it is likely that Butler boasted on his way through Texas of what he was going to accomplish.³⁶ El Sol, the organ of the Bustamente party, which was then in power, expressed editorally the opinion that Butler had so far made no overtures on the subject,

We presume that he does the new administration the justice to suppose it incapable of a transaction as prejudicial and degrading to the public as it would be to the minister who would subscribe to it.³⁷

This probably inspired utterance was not calculated to encourage the American representative, and indeed the state department exhibited no expectations of Butler's accomplishing anything as is evidenced by Van Buren's instructions to him on the same day that leave was given Poinsett to retire.

Van Buren's instruction to Butler had been one long complaint of the unfriendly and ungrateful attitude of the Mexican government toward a country which had been its earliest and best friend.³⁸

Poinsett reached Washington in March, 1830, and expressed most fully to the President and the Secretary of state the highly unfavorable opinion he had formed in relation to public affairs in Mexico. These conversations convinced the administration that a change in Butler's instructions was imperative and on April 1, 1830, Van Buren wrote Butler that

³⁶Ibid., p. 244.

³⁷Translated in H. R. Doc., 351, 25 Congress, 2 session, p. 310

³⁸Rives, et. passim, p. 245.

the President, after hearing Poinsett, did not despair of a final arrangement, but was convinced that this was not an auspicious time for beginning negotiations for the purchase of Texas.

To watch the state of public mind, the opinions of the principle members of the government and hear what is said on all sides is all that is for the present expected from your agency in the matter.³⁹

Thus were Jackson's fervent hopes for obtaining the fertile lands of Texas temporarily laid aside.

A private letter from the President to Butler reinforced the admonitions of the Secretary of state:

I have full confidence that you will effect the purchase of Texas, so important for the perpetuation of that harmony and peace between us and the Republic of Mexico, so desirable to them and to us to be maintained forever, and if not obtained is sure to bring us into conflict, owing to their jealousy and the dissatisfaction of those Americans now settling in Texas under the authority of Mexico who will declare themselves independent of Mexico the moment they acquire sufficient numbers. This our government will be charged with fomenting, although all our constitutional powers will be exercised to prevent. You will keep this steadily in view, and their own safety, if it is considered, will induce them to yield now in the present state of their finances.⁴⁰

The acquisition of the province of Texas and the addition of the territory to our Western boundary, declared the President, had long been considered an object of high interest not only because of the intrinsic value of the territory itself, but also for the guarantee it would afford that the present harmony existing between Mexico and the United States

³⁹Van Buren to Butler, April 1, 1830, Ibid., pp. 59-62, as cited by Rives, p. 245.

⁴⁰Rives, Loc. cit., p. 243.

may remain for a long period undisturbed...and which there is a strong probability for supposing will never be effected until a transfer of that province shall be made to the United States...all the tract of Country comprised within the limits of a line beginning at the Rio Grande del Norte on the North East corner of the State of Chihauhau continuing on that parallel to the Pacific ocean as the South boundary and the 42° North Latitude as the North boundary.⁴¹

The University of Texas received in a quantity private papers of Anthony Butler. In these are dispatches from the state department at Washington bearing the autograph signatures of Secretaries Van Buren, McLane, and Forsyth; a mass of private correspondence with Secretary Alaman, and twenty original letters from President Jackson to Butler. Jackson's letters to Butler deal almost exclusively with the purchase of Texas which was perhaps "the dearest wish of Jackson's Presidential career and which was the chief aim of Butler's mission."⁴²

When Butler arrived at Washington from Mexico City upon leave granted for the purpose of communicating certain facts and opinions relative to the United States and Mexico he wrote to John Forsyth, Secretary of State of the United States, under date of June 17, 1835. He goes at length into discussion relative to the acquisition and boundary of Texas, mentioning the fact that President Jackson was very desirous of adding that territory to the western boundary of the United States. He seemed most anxious to impress President Jackson

⁴¹W. R. Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence of the U. S., VIII, pp. 289, 290, 295.

⁴²"Private Papers of Anthony Butler", Eugene C. Barker, Nation 96:600-1, (June 15, 1911.)

with the fact that the minister to Mexico had been very zealous to accomplish the mission whereunto he was sent:

The Undersigned feels great satisfaction in being able to say, as he is warranted in saying, that the time has at length arrived when a contract may be concluded for obtaining everything which the President desires.⁴³

Thus evidence seems to bear testimony that the acquiring of the State of Texas was one of the special objects of Butler's mission to Mexico.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 294-296.

CHAPTER II

Mexico's Apprehension of the United States Government at the Inception of Butler's Mission.

Incidents which gave rise of Mexico's apprehensions or grievances against the United States were not few in number. As has been pointed out earlier in this paper, Poinsett busied himself in promoting the organization and growth of Masonic lodges of the York rite which were rivals of the Scottish rite, and thus embittered Mexican officials who regarded such lodges as fostering political discrimination. These newly established York lodges rapidly multiplied; they opened their doors to men of all classes and soon became a very political machine which controlled the conduct of elections and the distribution of patronage. As the York lodges developed in political effectiveness, their rivals imitated their methods and the country soon became divided. Poinsett was popularly believed to have been the chief cause in promoting the success of the York rite. Such belief, even if it had been unfounded, must have produced the worst effects, for it the American Minister was thought to have been busying himself in local politics it would follow that his government was intent on interfering in domestic concerns of her weaker neighbor. Rives says, "And there was an regretable amount of truth in the charges against him."¹

¹Op. cit., p. 161.

The boundary line had been a vexed question between the United States and Mexico ever since the purchase of Louisiana. As has been pointed out, Poinsett was to take up a treaty of commerce and a treaty of boundaries. On the subject of boundaries Mexico was very sensitive. Mexico regarded all movements toward Texas and New Mexico with jealous apprehensions.² Much of the good lands from the Colorado River to the Sabine had been granted by the state of Texas and was rapidly peopling up with either grantees or squatters from the United States. "A population," wrote Poinsett, "that they (Mexico) will find difficult to govern."³ The negotiations relative to a boundary line hinged on the question as to whether the treaty of 1819 should be adopted. In order to more freely appreciate Mexican claims as to the boundary it might be worth while to recall the treaties which had bearing on the Louisiana country.

The treaty of 1763 between England and France which closed the Seven Years' War effected a complete change in ownership of a large part of North America. Canada and all the French possessions east of the Mississippi including the Floridas, excepting New Orleans, were ceded to England; and the King of France at the same time ceded to Spain and her successors in perpetuity, all the country known under the

²Jesse S. Reeves, American Diplomacy Under Tyler and Polk. p. 62.

³Reeves, op. cit., p. 62.

name of Louisiana - as well as New Orleans and the island on which it stands. But in 1800, October 1st, by the treaty of Il defonso, Spain ceded back to France the colony or province of Louisiana with the same extent. But France did not long continue mistress of Louisiana for in 1803 she ceded to the United States the said territory with said rights and appurtenances as fully and in the same manner as they had been received from Spain.⁴ By this we see that the boundaries were not clearly defined. Livingston and Monroe, before they signed the treaty of purchase, had asked in vain for an intelligible and precise definition of this great territory. They were told in effect that they had made a noble bargain and they doubtless would make the best of it. Every spot to which a French trapper had wandered or on which a French colonist had built a hut was or might be claimed to be French territory. Nevertheless, the French government had previously formulated for its own use, a tolerably precise declaration as to the starting points which it meant to claim for the boundary west of the Mississippi.

In secret instructions issued to the French commander in Louisiana the pretensions he was to assert were clearly and concisely stated:

The extent of Louisiana is well determined on the South by the Gulf of Mexico. But bounded on the west by the river called Rio Brave from its mouth to about 30 degrees parallel. The line of demarcation stops after reaching this point.⁵

⁴Rives, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵Adam's History of the United States, II, p. 6.

In the light of our present knowledge of facts, it is perfectly apparent that the French pretensions to claims for settlements were ridiculous and unwarranted. Except for the brief occupation by La Salle's colony and the short-lived raids in 1719 and 1721, no Frenchman had ever been in possession of any part within two hundred miles of the river (Bravo). There never was any agreement of the boundary of the kind mentioned.⁶

Spain rested her title to her possessions in the New World upon the universally recognized basis of discovery and occupation. As early as 1519 the shores of Texas were explored by Pineda. Sixteen years later Cabeza de Vaca and three companions wandered across the interior of Texas.

Between 1540 and 1543 Coronado and DeSota may have visited parts of Texas, and during the next hundred and forty-four years several expeditions from Mexico visited the country unvisited as yet by any rival explorers.⁷

When Jefferson learned that the boundaries of the new possession were left so vague his course seemed plain. He proposed to fix the line by agreement. Instructions were accordingly sent to Monroe to go from Paris to Madrid to join Charles Pinkney, the American minister in Spain, in an effort to adjust the matter.⁸ Monroe and Pinkney were not long in doubt as to the temper of the Spanish government and Monroe

⁶Rives, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁸American State Papers - Foreign Relations II, p. 626.

left Madrid without accomplishing the mission where unto he was sent. Finally, an agreement was reached with Spain as follows: American troops were to remain east of Arroyo Hondo and the Spanish troops were to remain west of the Sabine. This agreement remained in force for about fifteen years with the neutral ground between these two rivers becoming a place of refuge for bandits and desperados.⁹

Mexico's claims concerning the boundary were based upon treaties prior to this time (1800). When the subject was again resumed events had occurred which had changed Europe and Americas to political control. The crown of Spain had been set upon the false and unworthy head of Ferdinand VII and all the American Continental Spanish possessions had broken into revolt. Monroe was then president and he deemed it expedient to sign the treaty accepting the Sabine as the western boundary of Louisiana and thus abolishing the neutral ground. The treaty was formally signed February 22, 1819. The treaty line followed the present western boundary of Louisiana, the southern boundary of Oklahoma, cut off the south-west corner of Kansas, and the greater part of Colorado. Then it followed the 42 degree of parallel, North Latitude, across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. The Senate voted unanimous approval of the treaty two days after it was signed. The Spanish withheld ratification for two years or to 1821. Mexico was recognized as a republic by the United States government in 1824. Then it became the official duty of

⁹Ibid., pp. 13-15, et passim.

Mexico to ratify or reject the boundary treaty of 1819.

As has been pointed out in this paper, the Mexican ratifications reached Washington too late to be exchanged within the time limit and no effort had been made by the Adams' administration to fix a new period.

In the spring of 1827 Mexico was still withholding her endorsement of the treaty of 1819, and the United States had not accepted a commercial treaty negotiated by Poinsett the year before. Then Adams instructed Poinsett, through Clay, to offer Mexico \$1,000,000 for all of Texas to the Rio Grande, but Mexico demanded the Sabine or fight. Her settlements at Natchitoches and the presidio of Adaes had been established as early as 1689, she asserted, and to accept the Rio Grande as the boundary would mean the loss of much valuable land as well as the Mexican settlements mentioned which were a dishonor to Mexico.

Another cause for Mexican apprehensions was the series of filibustering attempts from the United States into the state of Texas. The cession of Louisiana to the United States brought with it a new and serious danger of foreign encroachment into Mexico. The arm of government at Washington was not long, and the backwoodsmen who had won Tennessee and Kentucky, and were already across the Mississippi, were not the men to respect an imaginary line. Even before the cession of Louisiana a certain Philip Nolan with some twenty men, mostly Anglo-Americans, left Natchez, crossed Louisiana into Texas and began collecting wild horses somewhere on the Brazos

River. He had no authority to enter Texas and he was attacked by a Spanish force. Nolan was killed and the rest were taken prisoners.

When the Mexican Revolution broke out, Texas became the scene of a great deal of fighting in which adventurers from across the border bore an active part. Filibusters from east of the Sabine were at all times ready to take advantage of any opportunities that the phases of contest might afford. In 1812 a body of men under the command of a man who had been a follower of Hidalgo led a filibustering expedition into Texas. Many of the men were American citizens and among them was a former officer in the United States army, Lieutenant Augustus Magee. This little force, which at first numbered only one hundred-fifty-eight, marched through Texas from end to end being constantly recruited from Louisiana.¹⁰

In 1827 Mexico had another concrete cause for anxiety relative to colonization of Texas, perhaps the most outstanding one. Two years prior to this date, Hayden Edwards obtained a contract under the state Colonization Act, just then passed, to settle eight hundred families in East Texas. The bounds of this grant included Nacogdoches and the surrounding territory some of which had been settled since 1716. Edwards was enjoined to respect existing titles within his grant, but there were few of the old inhabitants who had ever completed titles to the land they occupied. Edwards inter-

¹⁰Rives, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

preted his contract strictly with the result that local Mexican inhabitants whose forefathers had claimed land for a century were threatened with dispossession and eviction unless they agreed to pay \$520. To them that sum was impossible. Finally President Victoria intervened with an order for annulment of Edward's contract and his expulsion from the country. Edwards had spent three years and a great deal of money in obtaining his contract and he was determined to resist the execution of the decrees. He made an alliance with some chief of the neighboring Cherokee Indians and on December 16, 1826, proclaimed the independence of the Fredonia Republic. Austin aided Mexico in putting down this rebellion.¹¹

¹¹Barker, Mexico and Texas, 1821-1835, pp. 50-52, et passim.

CHAPTER III.

Texas.

Butler had a personal interest in Texas. He appeared at Washington, D. C., August, 1829, and urged the purchase of Texas. He held that the Neches was of rights the river meant in the treaty of 1819, and not the Sabine. "A view probably inspired by his lands near Nacogdoches, Texas, between the two rivers."

Jackson sent Butler shortly to Mexico with secret instructions for Poinsett and among the instructions he was authorized to offer sums up to \$5,000,000 for various slices of Texas. As Mexico had been hostile to any cessions, no means were to be left untried. Jackson advised Butler to aggravate gently Mexico's fears of American filibusters invading Texas and point out to Mexico her crying need of money.¹

Butler was extremely interested in the United States government acquiring Texas, by treaty if easy or if easier, to fight as has been pointed out; or to make Mexico a loan and take a mortgage on Texas. "Butler approaches Alaman," says Reeves, "with a plan by which the United States should make a loan to Mexico with Texas as security. Jackson was appealed to for definite instructions upon the plan."²

¹Stenberg, Richard R., "Jackson, Anthony Butler and Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XIII, pp. 270-271, (Dec., 1932), et passim.

²Butler to Jackson, Feb. 10, 1833, quoted by Reeves, p. 71.

Jackson refers his letter to Livingston and asks him to reply:

Instruct Colonel Butler to bring the negotiations to a close. The convention in Texas meets the first of next April to form a constitution for themselves. When this is done Mexico can never annex it to her jurisdiction again or control its legislature. It will be useless after this act to enter into a treaty of boundary with Mexico.³

Butler went to Washington in June, 1835. While there he made an extended report to Forsyth, Secretary of State, in which he outlined a new plan to acquire Texas through the bribery of Hernandez, a priest in Santa Anna's household. Butler stated that if his plan were adopted the treaty which would give us Texas

Would only be the first of a series which must at last give us dominion over the whole of that tract of territory known as New Mexico and the higher and lower Californias, an empire in itself - a paradise in climate, rich in minerals and affording a water route to the Pacific through the Arkansas and the Colorado Rivers.⁴

Or it may have been his personal interest as mentioned by Barker:

The University of Texas received in a quantity the private papers of Anthony Butler. Butler was charge de affairs of the United States at Mexico from October, 1829, to May, 1836. There are dispatches from the United States Department at Washington, D. C., bearing the autograph signatures of Secretaries Van Buren, McLane, and Forsyth; a mass of private correspondence with Secretary Alaman; thirteen letters from Joel R. Poinsett; twenty original letters from President Jackson to Butler.

³Op. cit., p. 72.

⁴Butler to Forsyth, June 17, 1835. Manning, VIII, p. 289.

Copies of many of these documents are to be found at Washington and in the American Embassy at Mexico. Jackson's letters deal almost exclusively with the purchase of Texas which was perhaps 'the dearest wish of Jackson's Presidential career and which was the chief aim of Butler's mission.' Butler was personally interested in the purchase of Texas; that he shrank from no means of purchasing Texas; that for six years he deceived President Jackson with the hope of approaching success when there was no hope; and at the end 'Jackson pronounced him a scamp and a liar.'⁵

These papers show that in two speculating concerns - The Arkansas and Texas Land Company and the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company - Butler held script aggregating a million acres, and in case of cession of Texas the value of this was contingent upon the recognition of their titles by the United States. The Mexican government did not recognize the legality of these grants. Butler had authority when he returned to Mexico in the autumn of 1835, after a brief visit to Washington, D. C., from one James Prentice of New York, who represented by his own account the principal stock of the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company, to buy the soil of Texas for ten million dollars while obtaining a transfer of political jurisdiction therein to the United States. "There is no evidence," says the author, "to show how seriously Butler considered this bazarre proposal."⁶

On Alaman's passing from the picture, Jackson grew chary of his agent's boldness. Chances were slim and new

⁵Barker, Eugene C., Nation XCII, (June 15, 1911) pp. 600-601.

⁶Ibid., et passim.

men, especially such a turn-coat as Santa Anna, might not be offered private inducements safely.⁷

Before returning to Mexico in 1835, Butler went to New York seeking a lucrative agency for the New York-Texas land speculators and a more ample means of facilitation than the \$500,000, he said Jackson allowed. Butler told Prentice that a cession was now ripe and offered his services to gain a treaty in which he would "protect and secure" the speculator's land titles for a consideration. As we know, Butler was authorized to offer \$1,000,000 for a cession of the territory east of the Rio Grande to the United States. This fact was used to to this land agency as an inducement to secure from them a more lucrative agency for himself. He was given \$5,000 forthwith and promised further money and Texas lands if he succeeded.⁸

"Butler went to Texas," says Stenberg, "and dallied there during September and October."⁹ Butler explains this delay in Texas in a letter to Secretary Forsyth, November 28, 1835, saying he was ill of fever.¹⁰

Butler told Jackson in June that California could be

⁷Rives, op. cit., p. 274; also see Bassett's Correspondence of Jackson, pp. 244-247.

⁸Ibid., pp. 282-283, et passim, quoting James Prentice to Butler, New York, July 17, 1835: Prentice to Butler, September 20, 1841, in Butler's MSS.

⁹Stenberg, op. cit., pp. 264-268, et passim.

¹⁰Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence, VIII, p. 305.

purchased after Texas for an extra half million and ~~On~~ ^{On} had such hopes in Butler's diplomacy that he instructed him on August 6, to try to secure as boundary the Rio Grande ^{the} 1835 the 37 parallel and a line thence running westward to the Pacific.¹¹

Robert Cleland Glass makes this statement about the attempts to purchase California:

The early negotiations for the purchase of California were closely interwoven with the contemporaneous negotiations for the acquisitions of Texas forming indeed simply a minor part of the larger project. Anthony Butler, a man eminently unqualified for any position of trust, was sent to Mexico in 1829 to carry out a scheme for the purchase of Texas which he himself had probably suggested. For six years Butler is left free to work his will...From the first Butler's communications to the United States State Department began to hint of bribery and soon were openly advocating it. Butler returns to the United States in 1834 for a conference with President Jackson. He brought with him a letter written by Hernandez, a priest close to Santa Anna, in which he promised to bring about a cession of the desired territory for \$500,000. 'This territory,' assures Butler to Forsyth, 'would comprise the tract known as New Mexico, Higher and Lower California and Texas.' This letter brought cool response from the President. However, the suggestion made by Butler regarding 'higher California' helped to kindle the passion of Andrew Jackson for the 37th parallel line of latitude from the Arkansas River to the 'South Sea,' to include the river and bay of San Francisco and was the foundation of Forsyth's instructions to Butler of August 6, 1835. This is the first official attempt to secure from Mexico any part of her territory on the Pacific Coast. The chief effect was to obtain possession of San Francisco Bay as a desirable place for vessels engaged in whaling business.¹²

¹¹Forsyth to Butler, August 6, 1835, Manning, op. cit. p. 33.

¹²"Early Sentiments for the Annexation of California" Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVIII, (July, 1914), pp. 1-40.

That Jackson should have dismissed Butler from the service is apparent; but his determination to stand by his old friends kept him from recalling him. Forsyth, we may guess, urged that Butler be recalled, but a middle course was finally decided on, and under date of July 2, 1835, Forsyth wrote to Butler as follows:

I have presented for the consideration of the President your letter of the 17th relating to a negotiation with Mexico for Texas. By his directions, I have the honor to inform you that no sufficient reasons appear upon it for any change in the instructions that have hitherto been given you on that subject...No confidence is felt that your negotiation is likely to be successful, but as you entertain a confident belief that you can succeed in a very short time it is deemed proper to give you that opportunity...The President, however, directs me to say that the negotiations must be brought to a close at once so that the result may be known by the meeting of Congress...You will be expected in the United States as soon as it is closed to report the result, whatever it may be, to the President.¹³

The patience of the Mexican government at last gave way when Butler busied himself in Texas just before the outbreak of the revolution. The Minister of Foreign Relation in Mexico, wrote to Washington saying it was manifest that public opinion was very unfavorable toward Mr. Butler:

...to whom are imputed intrigues unbecoming a diplomatic agent. Which imputation is strengthened by the present occurrences in Texas, the revolt having commenced while that gentleman was in those parts. The government of the United States was, therefore, to be requested to recall Mr. Butler in order to avoid the necessity of tendering him his passport.¹⁴

¹³Forsyth to Butler, July 2, 1835, State Department MSS, quoted by Rives, op. cit., p. 259.

¹⁴Monasterio to Castillo, Oct., 1931; H.R.Doc. 351, 25 Cong., 2 sess., p. 719.

Butler, of course, accomplished nothing during the remainder of his stay in Mexico, but he wrote repeated letters enquiring whether his time would not be extended beyond the first of December and urged that his efforts were paralyzed by the uncertainty of his position. Finally, on December 16, 1835, Butler was informed that -

...as the time for his return to the United States had expired the nomination for his successor would be sent to the Senate the following day -

and he was further told that the government of Mexico had asked for his recall.¹⁵

During the six years of his residence in Mexico, Butler never abandoned the project of securing Texas or at least a he led the Washington government to believe he had not. His correspondence with the officials in Washington showed, says Manning,

..an unblushing readiness to resort to bribery and trickery when he found that legitimate diplomatic effort would not accomplish his purpose.¹⁶

Rives makes a summary comment in the following words:

Five years had been wasted in attempts to win over Mexico to a decision to sell Texas and the only fruit of Butler's negotiations was a cheap and low plan of bribery with a priest as go-between. Jackson at last was convinced of Butler's unworthiness and instructed his recall on December 16, 1835.¹⁷

¹⁵Forsyth to Butler, December 16, 1835, Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁶Early Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Texas, p. 260.

¹⁷Op. cit., p. 75.

CHAPTER IV.

Conclusions.

In concluding this paper it may be worth while to review some of the logic, if any, that Butler used in his correspondence with President Jackson and his subsequent activities by citing what some reputable writers have written concerning Butler's diplomacy or lack of diplomacy in dealing with Mexico.

Eugene C. Barker, to whom we have referred in this paper, comments:

The logic by which Butler, in his correspondence with Jackson, maintained the right of the U. S. to the territory east of the Neches, is ludicrous. He describes the Neches as nearly a mile wide at its mouth 'a bold and deep navigable river;' the Sabine on the other hand as shallow and unnavigable. Had Mr. Adams known the topography of the country when he negotiated the Florida Treaty, a different specification of boundary would have been made. Butler always returned to the conviction that only bribery 'or presents if you prefer the term,' he once wrote Jackson, 'could the United States obtain Texas.'

Barker defends Jackson from the implications made by writers, that he was well aware of Butler's intrigues and that by his silence, approved them.¹

From Bernard Mayo comes the following summary of Butler:

From Monticello, Mississippi, came Colonel Anthony Butler with glowing tales of the Mexican province of Texas and the ease with which it could be acquired. 'Crown your administration with an Empire' urged Butler to Jackson, 'annex Texas!' Ignorant of Spanish and

¹Mexico and Texas, pp. 46-48, et passim.

diplomacy and financially interested in Texas lands, Butler's only qualification for the job was an intimate acquaintance with Texas and a strong desire to see it annexed. Fate and Andrew Jackson had chosen him agent of that predominant American force - expansion. He urged President Jackson to insult the Mexican minister at Washington: 'Give him a drubbing. Show Mexico her place! It takes a couple of months to annex an Empire.' Butler tried to bribe the Mexican administration headed by General Padraze who was fearful of the propriety of the measure; then Butler offered to lend Mexico money with Texas as security. The Constitution forbade that. This forced Butler to try his hand at revolution. Butler wrote Jackson that he had hired the President of the Congress for \$600,000 'of the sum to which you have limited me in purchasing men and the remainder in purchasing the country.' Thus proposing bribe and violence, he at the same time protested indignantly against charges of Yankee intrigue in Texas. When the Mexican government said they would not degrade themselves by selling their soil 'to a rival power and from the highest rank among American nations sink to contemptible mediocrity,' he (Butler) called that moonshine; 'Mexico would do anything for money.' For six years he thrived on opposition; he held mysterious conferences and thoroughly enjoyed life in the Mexican capital. Armorous inclinations did not preclude get-rich-quick schemes. The American minister lent money at the usurious rate of two and one-half per cent a month, and wrote most horrible letters to his debtors. 'I have never known so base and bad a man,' wrote an American resident, 'Our minister has not one friend in Mexico amongst the foreigners and is despised by most of the Mexicans.' Another characterized him as 'ignorant, mischievous, immoral; a gambler, a bully and a rake.' Jackson dismissed Wilcox, the American Consul, when he sent in these acquisitions, and forwarded the acquisitions on to friend Butler who could 'answer them in ample time.'²

Butler seemed bent on the possession of parts or all of Texas and when he filed in his attempts to negotiate a treaty which would push the boundary line west to the Neches, or to purchase the land west to the Colorado River or even the Rio Grande, he proposed to forcibly seize the land in dispute. In a letter to Jackson in 1834, he wrote:

²"Apostle of Manifest Destiny," American Mercury, XVIII, (December, 1939), pp. 420-426.

If you will withdraw me from this place and make the movement to possess that part of Texas which is ours, placing me at the head of the country that is occupied, I will pledge my head that we will have all we desire in less than six months without a blow and for the price we are willing to pay for it.

"Upon receipt of this letter," says Rives, "Jackson endorsed the following characteristic memorandum:"

A. Butler. What a scamp. Carefully read. The Secretary of State will reiterate his instructions to ask for an extension of the Treaty for running the boundary line, and then recall him or if he has received his former instructions and the Mexican Government has refused, to recall him at once. A. J.³

But Jackson allowed Butler to remain. Texas revolted. Then Butler was recalled at the request of Mexico and on March 3, 1837, the United States recognized Texas as an independent nation.

Jessie R. Reeves makes somewhat of a summary of Butler's activities during the six years of his ministry in which he says in part:

In the Spring of 1843, J. Q. Adams, then a member of the lower house, spent many hours in going over the correspondence of Butler. 'His mission', Adams records in his diary, 'was chiefly the cession of Texas. The three-fold and double-dealing line of negotiations: 1st. a commercial Treaty; 2nd. indemnity for all sorts of claims; and 3rd. to strip Mexico of Texas, Santa Fee, and California, runs into the most curious details of Jackson and Tyler Duplicity.'⁴

From another source comes this version of the difficulties arising in Texas during the period of their revolutions which were causing great concern to the Mexican Government.

³Ibid.

⁴Adams, Memoirs, XI, p. 343, quoted by Reeves, op. cit., p. 70.

Speaking of Austin, the writer says:

In November he came to terms with Santa Anna. In December he started home. His arrest took place January, 1834, at Saltillo...We lack as yet the full version of the Mexican end of the story. But one cardinal detail is known. The mole-like diplomat, Anthony Butler, spent the autumn of 1833 trying to bribe his way toward a cession of Texas to the U. S. His cynicism went as far as offering one official two-hundred thousand dollars. And when reporting to Jackson that he might use some half million 'of the sum to which you limited me in purchasing men and the remainder in purchasing the country,' it is to Jackson's credit that this performance caused a burst of indignation at the White House and led to Butler's recall. Butler's shameful activities were the background against which Mexico looked upon the Bexar letter of Austin in which he (Austin) had told the authorities of Bexar (San Antonio) that it was his belief that no reforms were to be gained from the government and urged the town to take the lead in declaring Texas a separate state from Coahuila.

But Butler seems to have been interested in land speculation. Land speculation was an obscure and apparently evil force moving in the darkness behind politics at that time. Land companies had been formed to buy up the claims of the needy empresarios and often they practiced fraud. Anthony Butler was allegedly connected with Texas land speculations. The Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company of New York, which bought out a number of empresarios, and boldly cheated a greater number of American immigrants, is notorious. Butler's visit to Texas in 1832 was in company with the agent of this unscrupulous concern.⁵

In writing about Butler's instructions from Jackson to purchase San Francisco Bay, Robert Cleland Glass comments:

Butler probably never pushed the proposition. Indeed Butler's course was one of constant dishonor.

An endorsement on Butler's letter to Jackson, March 7, 1834, declared him a 'scamp.' Later, 1843, when Butler charged Jackson with consenting to his schemes of bribery,

⁵Stephenson, Nathaniel, Chronicles of America Series, XXIV, p. 183.

the venerable ex-president called him a " 'liar' in whom there was neither truth, justice, or gratitude."⁶

Rives in making reference to the early boundary claims relative to the Neches instead of the Sabine being the river meant in the 1819 treaty, says of Butler:

It was the presentation of these documents by Butler, then a speculator in Texas lands, which seems to have first aroused Jackson's interest in the subject of the acquisition of Texas. These (claims) seemed to have been an invention of his (Butler's) own. There never was any confusion of names; the rivers were clearly laid down in Melish's map referred to in the Treaty of 1819; and the only reason for Butler's claim was the fact that as the village of Nacogdoches lay between the two rivers it would have come within American jurisdiction if his views had prevailed...When the line between the United States and Texas was finally run in 1840, the commissioners agreed without difficulty that the Neches did not form the boundary.⁷

There does not seem to have been the slightest ground for Butler's repeated assurances that he was in a hand's breadth of success. His motive in giving them was plain enough. He wanted to be retained in office and if he could only make the President believe that his removal would wreck a promising negotiation he would be safe. Butler's only diplomatic success was in getting the two treaties ratified which Poinsett had negotiated.⁸

Manning makes this comment:

During the six years of his (Butler's) residence (in Mexico city) he never abandoned the project (of purchasing or annexing Texas) showing in his correspondence with the officials at Washington an unblushing

⁶Glass, Robert Cleland, "The Early Sentiment for the Annexation of California," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVIII, (July 1914), pp. 1-40, et passim.

⁷Op. cit., p. 237, citing Sen. Doc. 199, 27 Cong. 2 sess. 60, note.

⁸Ibid., p. 247.

readiness to resort to bribery and trickery when he found that legitimate diplomatic effort would not accomplish his purpose.⁹

In the light of the above mentioned facts and many others which the writer has read relative to the mission of Butler as minister from the United States to Mexico, it seems indisputable that Anthony Butler, by his many acts of wanton dishonor, betrayed the trust of the United States Government and thus laid the basis for a hundred years of misunderstanding between the governments of the United States and Mexico.

⁹"Texas and the Boundary Issue," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XVII.

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