Part Three: ELLEN

A dash of sadness in his air,
Born, may be, of his over care,
And may be, born of a despair
In early love — I never knew;
I question not, as many do,
Of things as sacred as this is;

Joaquin Miller.
With Walker in Nicaragua.

7. Bewitched

In his November 19, 1844 letter from Venice, Billy told John Berrien Lindsley that he expected to be back in Nashville by the following April or May, and that he hoped to pass his 21st birthday (May 8, 1845) at home. The exact date of his return to America is not available, but in July, 1845 he presented to his alma mater three volumes, all dignified and impressive tomes in Latin, that he had brought as a gift from Europe.

The nation was then mourning the unexpected death of ex-President Andrew Jackson, undisputed populist leader of the Democratic Party and revered military hero of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Jackson died at his Hermitage mansion in the outskirts of Nashville, on June 8, 1845, assisted in his agony by Doctor John Berrien Lindsley (Billy's intimate friend). Doctor Edgar, father of another friend of Billy, delivered the funeral oration.

Billy's father was one of three trustees commissioned by the city of Nashville to surrender the land donated to the state for the Capitol of Tennessee. The cornerstone laying ceremony took place on July 4, and on October 1, 1845, Billy escorted his sister Alice at the Commencement of the University for the graduation of his brother James.

By that time, Billy had announced to his parents his decision to abandon medicine. Mrs. Bryant recalls that the news naturally caused considerable surprise and disappointment, but his decision was not questioned, and he began to study law. He started his apprenticeship at the office of Edward & Andrew Ewing under the guidance of Judge Whitford in his home town, but on December 1, 1845, he moved to New Orleans, then the largest metropolis south of Baltimore. Its one hundred thousand cosmopolitan residents and its location on the Mississippi delta made New Orleans the cultural mecca and commercial emporium of the South.

Almost three months after arriving in New Orleans, Billy

reopened his correspondence with John:

> New Orleans, Feb. 25, 1846
> Dear John:
> I ought to have written to you some time ago, but you know how apt man is to be absorbed in the trifles which are "seen" and to be led away from the things "unseen" which are real. How hard it is for us to abstract our minds from the sensible, and to fix them on the spiritual! Rare friendship is, I conceive, one of our most spiritual enjoyments. Love has in it some alloy, — something "of the earth, earthy"; ambition is too often the desire of mere power, without the qualification of power for doing good. . . . [1]

"Of the earth, earthy," biblical words from Paul (I Cor. 15:47), is a relic of bygone piety from olden times that Billy yearns in vain to recover in his friendship with John. The opening paragraph transmits a pale reflection of the nostalgia impressed in the letters from Paris, London, and Venice. A phrase in the closing paragraph -- "Since I got to New Orleans I have got one letter from home, of about half-a-dozen lines," suggests a coldness in family relations possibly provoked, partially at least, by his decision to abandon medicine. In the rest of the letter, he tells that he has already commenced the study of the Civil Code, and is engaged in reading the commentary on it by Toullier in twenty-one volumes. He talks about the carnival that just ended, "and with it a lot of fooleries went out . . . "

According to the New Orleans press, the celebrated Mardi Gras carnival of that year, surpassed anything that had been seen for many years, but the *Picayune* reporter wasn't thinking of people like Billy when he observed that to those who saw it for the first time it must have been full of interest and wonder.

The coming of Lent and the celebration of carnival did

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[1] William Walker, Letters to John Berrien Lindsley.

not interrupt the stern application of inhuman codes that "civilized" man calls Justice. For instance, on Saturday, March 28, 1846, a slave girl named Pauline was hung from the gallows of the prison on Orleans street. At 12:30 p.m. "when the drop platform fell, the seat upon which she sat gave way, and she dangled in the air. It was painful, terrible, to see the fearful struggles of the dying woman, for it was several minutes before all was over, and her neck was not broken by the fall, and she died from strangulation. At the expiration of about twenty minutes, she was taken in and pronounced dead by the physician."[2]

This horrid spectacle took place in sight of a crowd who gathered at an early hour to see her launched into eternity. There were men, and boys, and women with infants in their arms — all stretching their necks, standing on tip-toe, pushing and jostling each other so that they might get a good view. After all, Pauline's crime had been of such "atrocious character," that even the Governor "positively refused to commute the sentence."[3]

Pauline had been sentenced to death "upon a conviction for cruelty to her mistress." Her master had fallen in love with Pauline, and left her in charge of the house when he made a trip to the West. Pauline at once commenced a series of "most revolting cruelties," confining the master's wife and children to a small, dark closet, giving them but little and inferior food, and punishing them with daily whippings.

Her execution had been delayed when it was discovered that Pauline was pregnant. But after delivery of the baby, in accordance with the provisions of the black code, the "wretch Pauline, the slave who so cruelly tortured her mistress," received her "adequate punishment."[4]

As if chosen for the occasion, that evening the Orleans Theatre presented Donizetti's opera *The Martyrs*, in which the heroine, Pauline, embraces Christianity and rises to heaven, beheaded in the Roman amphitheater. As if to remind

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[2] "The Execution of Pauline," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), 3/29/1846, p.2 c.4.

[3] "The Execution," Ibid., 3/28/1846, p. 2, c. 5.

[4] "A White Woman Cruelly Tortured by a Slave," Ibid., 1/15/1845, p.2, c.3.

the people of New Orleans of the colored girl's tragedy, on Easter Sunday, April 12, 1846, the newspapers reported the wreck of the brig *Pauline* near Cape Hatteras.

The gallows for a slave "cruel to her mistress" contrasts with the case of Chat Botte, which happened on the day that Billy arrived in New Orleans. Chat, alias *Moustache*, was a colored boy, the slave of a baker named Louapre.

Chat died. Louapre's neighbors testified in court that they had heard *Moustache* groaning and crying for mercy during his final days as his master kept administering successive rounds of fifty to one hundred lashes. Louapre had a physician to certify that the boy had died "from tetanus produced by cold." The judge ordered the disinterment of the body, and the Coroner reported that there were severe cuts all over, and that considerable portions of flesh were missing from some parts of the hands, "but whether from lashing or gnawed off by the rats the doctor could not say."[5]

Louapre was committed "to be examined before Recorder Genois," but the press promptly lost interest in the case and failed to reveal the penalty, if any, imposed on the baker.

Billy left no record of his opinion on the deaths of Pauline and Chat, but soon afterwards, in an April 3 letter to John, he alludes to the riots, hangings and murderings "which have recently embellished the history of that city of abominations -- Nashville."[6] He gives no details, but the March 24 *Picayune* does.

It all began with the eternal triangle between a clerk named Robert Porterfield, his wife, and a journalist named Judson. The husband defended his honor with pistols at ten paces, and fell dead when Judson's bullet lodged in his brain. The moment the death of Porterfield was known in Nashville, a large crowd tried to lynch Judson but the police saved him in the nick of time.

At the Court House during the trial, Porterfield's brother, armed with three revolving pistols of five barrels

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[5]"The Slave Case," Ibid., 12/4/1845, p. 2, c. 4.

[6]William Walker, Letters to John Berrien Lindsley.

each, discharged fifteen bullets at Judson who instantly began running away. Mr. James Walker (William Walker's father), innocent bystander, was wounded "slightly" in the back, but none of the bullets hit Judson.

During the chase, he fell from a balcony and broke a leg. That didn't save him from the crowd, and again they tried to lynch him. A rope was put about his neck, he was placed upon the gallows and swung off. But the rope broke and he fell to the ground, when the police again intervened and conveyed him back to jail.

Billy's reaction to the doings in Nashville is remarkable, for he fails to mention the particular event in which his father received a bullet that could have proved fatal. He simply condemns Nashville as a "city of abominations," without stating exactly why.

In the same letter, he also wrote the following paragraph:

> Now I am going to tell you a secret —fingers on the lips, mind! — confidential, *sub rosa* and all that. No doubt that much speculation in cotton, corn, sugar and negroes is carried on in New Orleans; but there is one speculation as thriving as any of these — that of marriages or speculation in wives. The sales of this article have not been very numerous; for the market has been overstocked, glutted, filled to overflowing, and purchasers became nice in their choice and sellers were not disposed to lower their demands. Not a word of this to any one, or I am a ruined man; nay, prithee, if thou dost not burn this letter, put it under double lock-and-key, hide it in thy most secret drawer, and carefully keep it from other hands. I am almost afraid to trust it under the guardianship of a seal.[7]

Billy's demand for top-drawer confidentiality when he has revealed no names, details, or secrets, is strange. The

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[7]Ibid.

matter is personal, for it can ruin him. Would the "speculation in wives" mean that he plans to get married?

Indeed, Billy was in love. The girl's name was Ellen Galt Martin: She was 20 years old, pretty, intelligent, charming, well-educated, and rich -- but also a deaf mute. She was born in New Orleans in 1826, eldest daughter of John and Clarinda Glasgow Martin, both of distinguished ancestry from Charleston, South Carolina. The Martin's residence in New Orleans was 131 Julia street, in an exclusive block of "Thirteen Houses" between Camp and St. Charles.

When Billy arrived in New Orleans on December 1, 1845, he lodged at the *Planters' Hotel*, paying $1.50 daily for room and board. Shortly afterwards he moved to the home of a former classmate, Doctor Robert James Farquharson, who had graduated from the University of Nashville in 1841 and had received his M.D. at the University of Pennsylvania with Billy in 1843. Farquharson had a high standing among the medical men in New Orleans and resided in one of the exclusive "Thirteen Houses" on Julia street.

Being neighbors, Ellen and Billy saw each other frequently, and Martin family tradition vividly recounts that they soon became engaged. The same tradition tells that when Ellen was five years old an attack of scarlet fever left her totally deaf and dumb. She had been educated at a special school in Philadelphia and was a happy girl who used to go to balls and parties, carrying a tiny pad and pencil, and had lovely times and many beaux. Her father paid $2,500.00 to R. Riboni, a high-priced society portrait painter, for her painting. (See copy on page 72).

Instead of simply and plainly writing that he met a girl he would like to wed, Billy talks in parables in his letter to John. He discourses about supply and demand in matters of matrimony, and, having said nothing about himself, he begs John to destroy the letter, "or I am a ruined man." A possible reason for this, and for his strange reaction to the doings in Nashville, will be analyzed in chapter ten.

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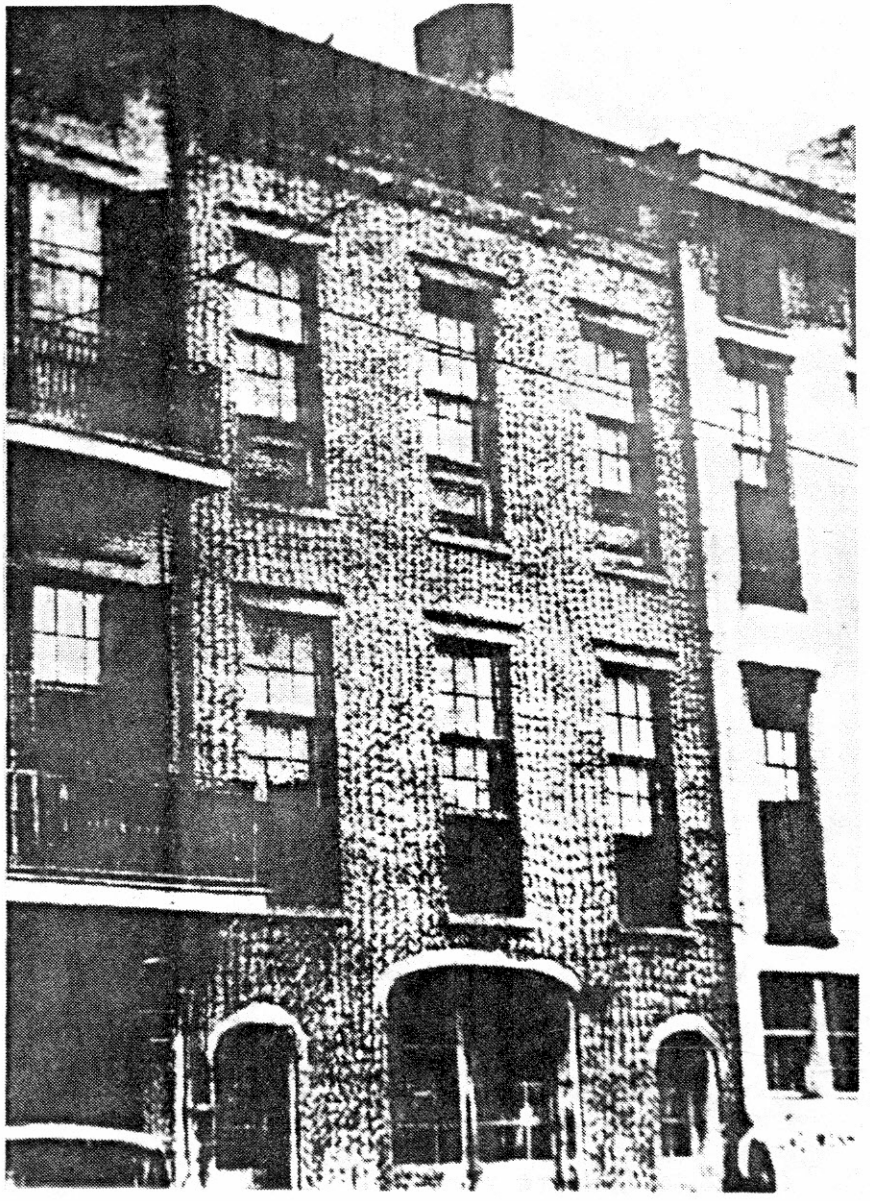

THE MARTIN RESIDENCE
131 JULIA STREET, NEW ORLEANS

On the date of that letter, the Oregon Question was still provoking protracted debates in the U.S. Congress and British Parliament. Rabid fanatics clamored for war on both sides of the Atlantic while sedate statesmen behind the scenes worked out the bases for an amicable agreement. Mexican-American relations, on the contrary, were rapidly deteriorating.

General Mariano Paredes Arrillaga had rebelled against the Herrera government in Mexico in December, 1845, and with the arrival of the New Year the general had become president. Acting in harmony with the apparently overwhelming national sentiment, Paredes refused to receive Mr. John Slidell as Minister Plenipotentiary from Washington. Slidell was forced to stop at Jalapa, unable to proceed to the capital.

Meanwhile, the Mexican press waged a frenzied warmongering campaign: "To secure peace, we must buy it with blood . . . Defeat and death at the Sabine [Texas-Louisiana boundary] is glorious, but agreement at Mexico City is execrable . . . an infamy!"[8] Besides, Mexicans felt they had a destiny to fulfill: "That of upholding the preponderance of our race and the nationality of the Spanish-American people."[9] Finally, war with the U.S. would be a new crusade against the infidels who seek to destroy the only true religion, Catholicism. Unmistakably, Mexico "must arm and launch a giant expedition by sea and land, to force the U.S., by fire and sword, to unanimously adopt the Roman, Apostolic, Catholic religion."[10]

Slidell remained in Jalapa many weeks, waiting in vain for permission to proceed to the capital to present his credentials. President Polk then ordered the U.S. Army to move and occupy strategic positions on the northern bank of the Rio Grande, in Mexican territory claimed by Texas but assigned by Mexico to the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. The only village in the disputed area was Corpus

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[8] Jesús Velasco Márquez, *La Guerra del 47 y la Opinión Pública (1845-1848)*, (Mexico: Sep/setentas, 1975), p. 37.

[9] Ibid., p. 77.

[10] Ibid., p. 78.

Christi, founded in 1839 by Henry L. Kinney on the right bank of the Nueces river, and occupied by the U.S. Army in August, 1845, after the annexation of Texas.

In March, 1846, obeying orders from President Polk, General Zachary Taylor advanced from Corpus Christi more than one hundred miles to the south to hold positions at Point Isabel, north of the Rio Grande at its mouth on the Gulf, and at a point thirty miles upstream, across the river from Matamoros.

Such a critical international turn of events didn't merit any comment from Billy in his April 3 letter to John. Apparently, his mind was entirely dedicated to Ellen.

On April 26, 1846, the hostilities broke out on the Rio Grande, commencing the war between the United States and Mexico. The first reports of fighting were received in New Orleans on May 2, and the glowing accounts from soldier-correspondents quickly kindled a martial "epidemic insanity" in town. Volunteer regiments were rapidly organized and immediately sent to the front, via Point Isabel. *Jackson Guards, The Legion, Montezuma Regiment, California Guards, Cazadores* (made up of Spanish Americans) and many more, were followed by volunteer regiments from Memphis, St. Louis, Nashville, and other points in the Mississippi Valley.

One of the first Louisiana volunteers was Charles Callahan, a young printer destined to lose his life at San Jacinto, Nicaragua ten years later, fighting for William Walker's cause. The first hero of the Rio Grande eulogized by the *Picayune* was Captain Samuel H. Walker, "gallant Texan... as brave a man as ever breathed."[11] His namesake's heroism, however, didn't seem to inspire Billy. On the contrary, bewitched by Ellen, he remained a stalwart pacifist amidst the martial frenzy that raged in the city. He registered his feelings in a June 4 letter to John:

> Tennessee has, I suppose, the Texas or Mexico fever on her; the malady has abated considerably in this place; for a little time the patient was far

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[11] "From Our Second Edition of Yesterday," *Daily Picayune*, 5/10/1846, p. 2, c. 3.

> gone in a delirium of joy and destructiveness. War was preached up as being the noblest and sublimest of all the states and conditions of men —a spectacle of delight for gods and demigods. Some of the speechifiers seem to have taken their parts from the discourses of Milton's Moloch: only the terrible declamation which we fancy to belong to Moloch was dwarfed into mere twaddle about the irresistible power and incorruptible virtue of the American people.
>
> A Methodist preacher volunteered as Chaplain to one of the regiments: and on going to his Colonel in order to know how to equip himself, was quite surprised to hear that he was not to wear a sword and put on a coat with bright brass buttons. Some of the chaplains seem to think that the people in Mexico are Pagans; for they talk of planting the standard of the *Cross* amid the plains of the conquered country. I would sooner have expected to hear them talk of pulling down the *Cross*.[12]

Held captive by love, Billy repudiated violence and scorned the martial fever of the time, ridiculing Reverend L. L. Allen, Chaplain of the Louisiana Volunteers, who in a May 24 letter declared to the *Picayune*: "And rest assured as soon as the star-spangled banner shall waive over the ramparts of Matamoros, there are men ready promptly to unfurl the banner of the cross by its side."[13] Billy's pungent observation about pulling down the cross clearly reveals that at this point he did not share the national obsession to conquer or "convert" other countries.

Many other Americans, of course, also held pacifist views, in both the North and the South. Many condemned President Polk's policy of employing brute force to enlarge the national boundaries, denouncing it as wrong and shameful. Protestant clergymen in Wayne county, Alabama, even prayed

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[12]William Walker, Letters to John Berrien Lindsley.

[13]"Chaplain of the Louisiana Volunteers," *Daily Picayune*, 5/26/1846, p. 2, c. 2.

in public for the success of Mexico.

Despite strong opposition, on May 13 the president obtained from the Congress a Declaration of War against Mexico in response to American blood shed on the Rio Grande in April. The legislators promptly authorized expenditures in excess of 36 million dollars for the prosecution of the war. On June 15, American diplomats secured England's neutrality in the conflict by signing the Oregon Treaty, fixing the border at parallel 49° and leaving their monarchical rival in possession of British Columbia. The signing of the Oregon Treaty effectively vanished all Mexican illusions of European aid.

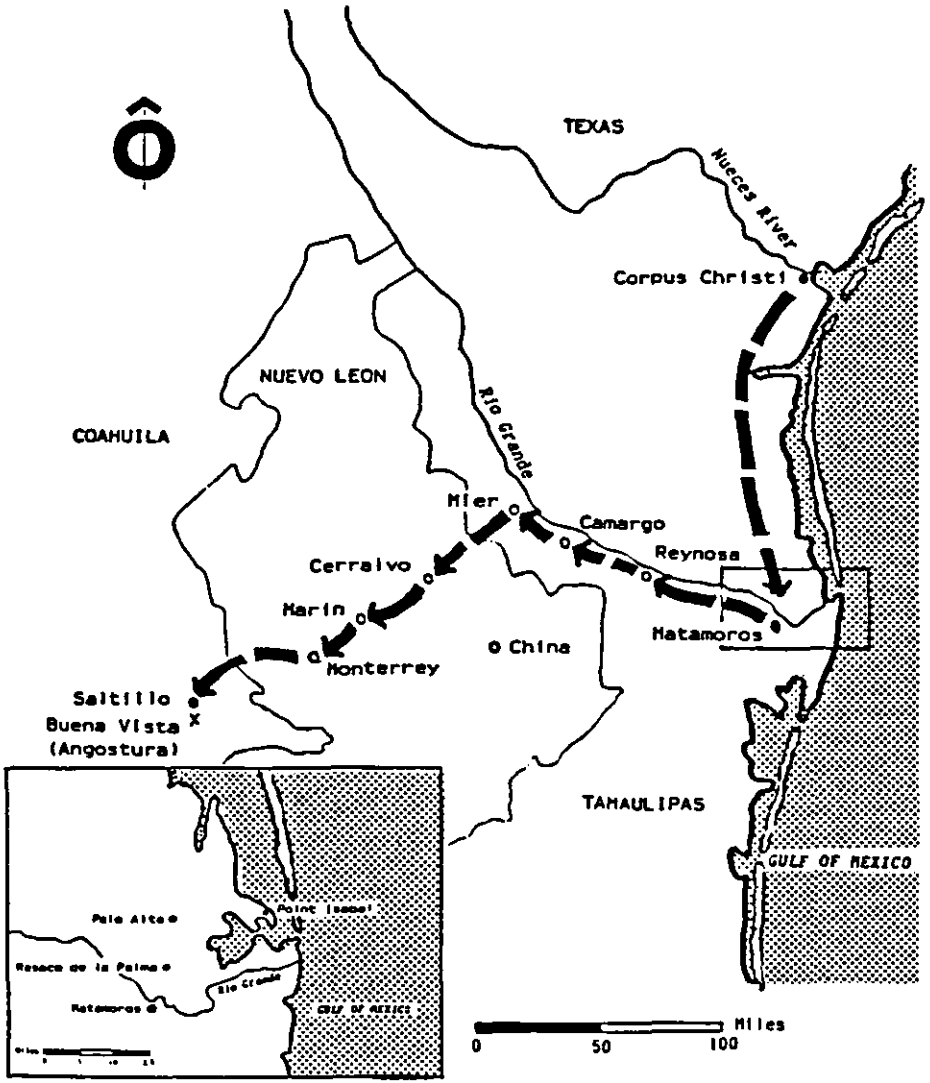
In addition, internal dissent further weakened Mexico's capacity to wage war. At the start of hostilities, Alta California was in open rebellion against the central government, and Yucatán had formally decreed her independence from Mexico. Moreover, insurrectional *Pronunciamientos* proliferated in several other states, alleging, as a pretext, that President Paredes had monarchical schemes. The possibility of restoring the monarchy, however, soon vanished with the death of the Archbishop of Mexico, who was its principal promoter.

By August, the liberals had joined forces with General Antonio López de Santa Anna's followers. They deposed Paredes, placed General Mariano Salas as interim president, and gave command of the army to General Santa Anna, who was in exile in Cuba.

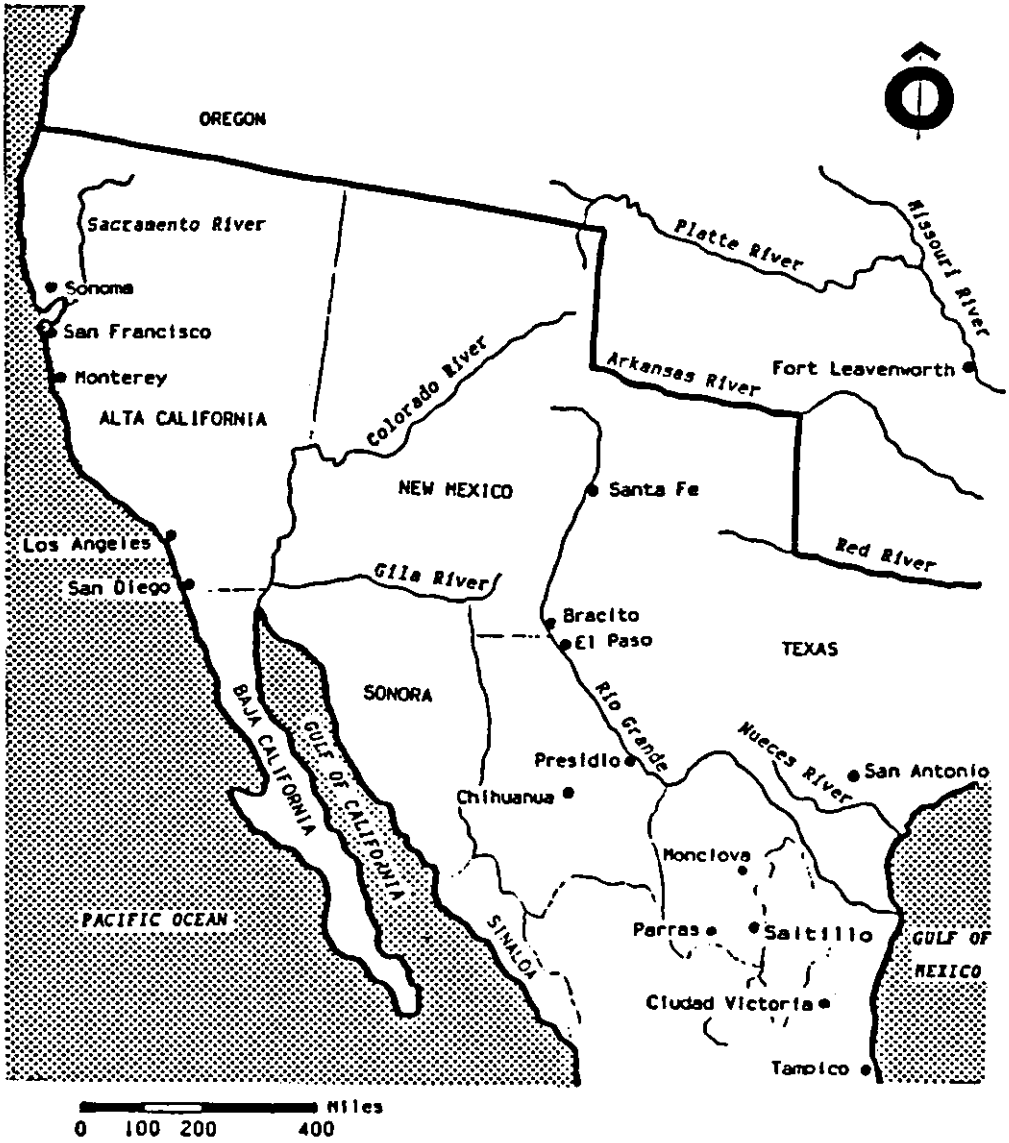
The U.S. government began making overtures for peace at the end of July, and the American ships blockading Veracruz allowed Santa Anna to enter Mexico aboard a British vessel from Havana. Widespread speculations arose about a secret understanding between Santa Anna and Polk to end the war. Mexican public opinion, however, was unanimously hawkish, and the American proposals for peace talks found no receptive ears in the Mexican capital.

When hostilities broke out in April, the U.S. Army had 7,000 men; the Mexican Army had more than 40,000 soldiers commanded by forty generals. On May 8 and 9, General Zachary Taylor's 2,300 soldiers defeated General Mariano Arista's 6,000 at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, across the river

TAYLOR'S CAMPAIGN



THE WESTERN SECTOR



from Matamoros. A few days later, Taylor occupied the town.

Within a few weeks, 11,000 volunteers strengthened Taylor's army on the Rio Grande. He advanced to Camargo on July 14, then to China, San Fernando, Punta Aguda, Cerralvo, Papa Gallos, and Marin, finally arriving at the gates of Monterrey on September 19. More than 10,000 Mexican soldiers commanded by General Pedro de Ampudia defended the fortified town during several days of fierce hand to hand fighting and artillery duels. They surrendered the stronghold on September 24 under terms that allowed the orderly evacuation of Ampudia's defeated army.

Three additional columns invaded Mexico at that time. General Stephen P. Kearny with 2,700 men advanced from Missouri late in June and occupied Santa Fe, New Mexico on August 18 without meeting any resistance. Some units then continued towards El Paso and Chihuahua, while Kearny and part of his cavalry went to California by way of the Gila.

General John Ellis Wool with 3,500 men marched from San Antonio on September 29. After taking Presidio de Rio Grande and Monclova, they joined forces with Taylor at Parras, and occupied Saltillo on November 16.

The third column, 700 volunteers under General Jonathan D. Stevenson, sailed from New York on September 26 aboard three vessels, via Cape Horn to the Pacific. When they arrived in San Francisco on March 6, 1847, Alta California was already in American hands.

In June, 1846, about one hundred foreign residents supported by Col. John C. Fremont's 62 soldiers (who "happened to be" in California, on their way to Oregon) rebelled against the authorities in Sonoma. Commodore D. Sloat, of the Pacific Squadron, took possession of Monterey on July 7. Following the arrival of Kearny's 120 cavalrymen in December, the last battles at San Gabriel and Mesa, near Los Angeles, on January 8-9, 1847, left the entire province under American control.

Commodore Sloat's squadron consisted of 10 ships, 236 guns, and 2,000 sailors, which was sufficient to blockade all Mexican ports on the Pacific. Commodore David Conner's 11 ships, 248 guns, and 2,300 sailors in the Gulf of Mexico controlled Veracruz, Tampico, Alvarado, and the other Atlan-

tic ports. Conner's men occupied Tampico on November 14, 1846. General Taylor's vanguard army entered the town a few days later, after pushing through Ciudad Victoria from Monterrey.

In December, 1846, the Mexican Congress named General Santa Anna President of the Republic, while the general was busy at San Luis Potosí, mustering 30,000 men to block the road between Taylor's army and the capital. Despite the uninterrupted series of defeats on the field and the pressing absence of economic resources, Mexican politicians and the press were solidly hawkish, and nobody seemed willing to listen to Washington's repeated overtures for peace talks.

According to some Mexican leaders, the United States was a giant with clay feet, ready to crumble, and some optimist souls boasted that Mexico would soon transform American cities into heaps of rubble. But before the year was over, the state of Campeche had rebelled against the central government and declared its neutrality in the war, while rumors from the southern border said that 4,000 Guatemalan troops were ready to invade Chiapas to reclaim it for Central America, to which it had belonged in the past.

In the United States, the November congressional elections resulted in a victory for the Whigs, giving them control of the House and leading to renewed criticism of President Polk's foreign policy. Mexican nationalism, however, left no alternative but to prosecute the war until the end, and Congress authorized the required expansion of the armed forces and the additional funds requested by the administration. Abraham Lincoln, Whig congressman from Illinois, voted in favor of war appropriations while at the same time calling the war unjust.

The *New York Journal of Commerce* commented: "Destiny is at work. The folly and blindness of Mexico on one side, and the impulse of the American population on the other side, will insure the speedy conquest of all Mexico . . . the destruction of Mexican nationality."[14] In New Orleans, the *Picayune* summarized the momentous events in one phrase:

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[14] "Prosecution of the War." Ibid., 10/29/1846, p. 2, c. 2.

"Westward the star of empire takes its way."[15] It also quoted Silsbee, the comedian at the American Theater, who defined the new frontiers of the United States, "bounded on the North by the aurora borealis, on the East by the rising sun, on the West by the horizon, and on the South by as far as we choose to go."[16]

Billy, however, continued under Ellen's spell, and showed no interest in international politics, Manifest Destiny, or the Mexican war. In his January 21, 1847 letter to John, he didn't say a word on those subjects.

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[15]"Events of vast magnitude . . . ." Ibid., 10/6/1846, p. 2, c. 4.

[16]"A New Boundary Question." Ibid., 12/13/1846, p. 2, c. 1.

8. Positivistic Thinker

On January 21, 1847, Billy wrote a short letter to John, sprinkling it with Latin words that conveyed his continued dedication to the study of law. He expected to come before the Supreme Court in a few days in order to be examined previous to admission to the bar of Louisiana, but considered the subject matter more important than the diploma. He also told John that, for him, the president of the republic -- *de jure* sovereign, despite his apparently high position, is "nobody at all," the same as any plain lawyer.

This implicit disdain for President Polk is one with Billy's pacifism while he was under Ellen's spell, although he makes no reference to her or the war in the letter. There is no mention of any member of his family, either, which is remarkable because his uncle Joseph Norvell had died in Nashville and the New Orleans papers had published his obituary on January 17.

Half of the letter is about an article that Billy published in *The Commercial Review of the South and West*, a monthly journal founded and edited by J. D. B. De Bow. The *Review* aimed at promoting the development of the South, and it was the best of its kind in the decades before the Civil War. Billy, a fervent promoter of the journal, tells John that he is a close friend of De Bow and is collaborating with him as assistant editor to improve the publication. The *Picayune* noticed the change, commenting that the February 1847 issue of the *Review* "was better printed than ever" and the May issue, "extremely elegant."[1]

In January, 1847, on the eve of becoming a lawyer, at 22, Billy had published the first article of his career in the *Commercial Review*, on a subject pertaining to his true voca-

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[1] "Commercial Review for February," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans) 2/5/1847, p.2, c.1; "De Bow's Commercial Review . . . ," Ibid., 5/2/1847, p.2, c.1.

tion. It was titled "Venice -- its Government and Commerce." In eight pages it displays a number of Billy's beliefs and attitudes which contribute to define the ideals and goals that would guide him in the future.

Billy's article reveals that he was a student of the modern Empiricism that Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and John Locke set in motion in the seventeenth century, which in 1847 culminated in the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill. The empirical scientific method of the natural sciences --observation of phenomena, and reasoning directed to the study of laws governing their relations, applied to history and other subjects, constituted the fundamental tenet of Comte's Positivism. One of Mill's basic postulates was that historical events must depend on the psychological and ethological laws which govern the action of circumstances on men and of men on circumstances. In his article, Billy analyzed Venetian history, searching for empirical laws of human behavior "to see if we cannot from the ruins of the republic extract some lessons to guide us in the conduct of the future."[2]

Billy's Positivism arose naturally from his scientific training during adolescence -- from Dr. Troost's teachings at Nashville and the medical school in Philadelphia (branded as "too-matter-of-fact" by Laurent, of the Sorbonne).[3] In addition, his stay in Paris and London when Comte's and Mill's original contributions were just coming out and his conspicuous interest in European political, social, and economic matters, undoubtedly influenced its development.

In his analysis, Billy found that courage links liberty to greatness:

> . . . Place a people in the best position imaginable, and if they are without national spirit and energy, they will do nothing. On the other hand, modern history shows us that a community with enter-

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[2]William Walker, "Venice, its Government and Commerce," *The Commercial Review of the South and West* III, No. 1 (Jan. 1847), pp. 49, 52.

[3]Mentioned by Billy in his 7/15/1843 letter to John from Paris.

> prise, placed in a very unfavorable position, will arrive at wealth and power.
>
> . . . If then, the government of a country depresses courage, and raises fear, it must be unfavourable to commerce. On the contrary, increase the courage and self-reliance of a people, and they will extend their commerce . . .
>
> How then, is national courage fostered? And let it not be supposed that it is a question important only to conquering, and warlike tribes or people. No; courage is at the bottom of all men's greatness and power, and without it, a nation must die, ignobly, deservedly. But, with this principle ever brightening and increasing, there is no end to a people's career.
>
> . . . We may put our reasoning into the form of a syllogism, thus: freedom increases courage, courage increases commerce; therefore, freedom increases commerce . . .[4]

Billy's conclusion was palpable in the booming atmosphere of New Orleans, his syllogism supported by the roar of Anglo-Saxon cannon on Mexican soil. His favorable remarks concerning commerce and religious tolerance, accurately mirrored reality in the Colossus of the North. His observations on Helenic literature, Marco Polo's book, the brilliant coloring of Murano glass, and the glorious tints of Titian's and Veronese's creations vividly reflected the culture he acquired in Europe and denote a scale of non-material values. The whole article, and specially his comments on democracy, aristocracy, and despotism exposed views that are relevant under the light of his actions in Mexico and Nicaragua. For instance, about despotism and slavery he said:

> . . . We must understand by despotism, absolute government, no matter whether in the hands of a one, few, or of many. Fear is produced by absolute power,

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[4]Walker, "Venice . . . ," p. 51.

> and it matters little where the power is lodged.
>
> . . . At one period, Foscari wished to retire from public life; but the patricians refused to let him resign the Dogeship. From this we perceive his complete slavery; for no slavery is so abject as that which forces a man, against his will, to be the instrument through which others exercise power.[5]

A second article by Billy appeared in the April, 1847 issue. It was a book review of the second volume of Charles Gayarrê's *Histoire de la Louisiane*. The volume covered only a short period in the eighteenth century, but it provided Billy with sufficient notes to play his tune of Positivism on the keyboard of History:

> In order to understand the nature of things we must ascend to their origin. The old philosophers in forming their theories of the universe always went back to a history of creation; and Moses opens his theology with the account of order evolved from chaos. So the modern physiologist has found out that the best way of studying life and its developments, is to observe the germ and its motions. To understand the character, conditions and laws of a people, we must examine minutely the facts connected with their origin; for those facts contain the principle of national growth and increase, and, it may be, of national decay and death.[6]

The three illustrations advanced by Billy precisely portray the three stages of human knowledge -- Theological, Metaphysical, and Scientific -- defined by Comte in his *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. According to Comte, in the Theological state, the human mind supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings

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[5]Ibid., pp. 50, 51.

[6]William Walker, "Histoire de la Louisiane." *The Commercial Review of the South and West* III No.4 (April 1847), p. 279.

(Moses' account of order evolved from chaos). In the Metaphysical state, the mind supposes abstract forces capable of producing all phenomena (the old philosophers forming their theories of the universe). In the Positive state the mind applies itself to the study of laws governing the invariable relation of succession and resemblance of phenomena (the modern physiologist studying life and its developments).

Comte explained that the first characteristic of Positive Philosophy is that it regards all phenomena as subjected to invariable natural *Laws*. Reasoning and observation, duly combined, are the means of this knowledge. Now that the human mind has grasped celestial and terrestrial physics, there remains one science to fill up the series of sciences of observation -- social physics. Billy expressed identical thoughts with different words:

> To understand the character, condition and laws of a people, we must examine minutely the facts. . . And although it is much less difficult to trace the necessary sequence of events in the physical than in the moral world, . . . there exist in the latter as well as in the former, general and fixed laws which govern nations and individuals.[7]

His comments on Gayarre's book filled fifteen pages of the *Commercial Review*, recounting minute details of the cession of Louisiana from France to Spain. He analyzed the factors that influenced British, French, and Spanish political decisions, and explained the difficulties that the colonists experienced and their consequential rebellion. Again, Billy's observations shed light on facets of his thinking and opinions, relevant in the context of his future filibustering activities in Mexico and Nicaragua:

> From these extracts we not only learn some of the grievances complained of by the colonists, but we perceive something of their habits of thought and

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7Ibid.

> the boldness with which they advocated certain principles of trade and commerce. . . . The leading rebels against the Spanish government were the first to offer submission to the new governor; and they soon found that they had to do with a man of firm and energetic character. One of his first acts was the condemnation to death of several of the ringleaders in the late rebellious movement; and although this might appear cruel to the French of that time, we can hardly censure O'Reilly gravely for it, particularly if we consider how loose must have been the ideas of a Spanish soldier of that time on the subject of treason.[8]

* * * * * * * *

Meanwhile, the war in Mexico kept on lengthening the interminable chain of American victories. Advancing from Santa Fe, Col. A. W. Doniphan's 600 men defeated the Mexicans at Bracito on Christmas Day and on December 27 occupied El Paso, on the Rio Grande. After reinforcements swelled their ranks to 1,200, they proceeded south to meet and defeat General José A. Heredia's 2,800 men at the battle of El Sacramento on January 28, 1847 and, next day, they entered the city of Chihuahua.

Having completed the conquest of the northern half of Mexico, without the Mexicans evincing any sign of wishing to talk peace, the American high command decided to open a second front at Veracruz, aiming at the heart of the Mexican capital.

General Worth's veteran troops were pulled out from Monterrey, via Tampico, to form the nucleus for the Veracruz invasion force. This reduced General Taylor's army in the Saltillo sector to less than 5,000 fighting men. Santa Anna took advantage of the situation and advanced from San Luis Potosí at the head of 20,000 soldiers. They traversed 350 kilometers of cold, arid highlands to engage the enemy on February 22-23 at the Angostura pass, on a farm named Buena

[8] Ibid., p. 293.

Vista, six miles south of Saltillo.

Following two days of fierce hand to hand fighting with artillery support, and unable to dislodge the defenders, the Mexicans were forced to withdraw when they ran out of provisions. As explained in Santa Anna's report, the extreme penury afflicting government coffers thwarted his efforts to provide his men with the minimum requirements of bread and drinking water and sufficient fodder for the irreplaceable beasts of burden.

Vice-President Valentin Gómez Farías, liberal leader and interim head of state during Santa Anna's time at the front, devised a plan to gather financial resources. He decreed the confiscation of Church property, and this resulted in yet another civil war. According to newspaper accounts, the priests advised Mexican women to abstain from marital relations for the duration of Gómez Farías' decree. Consequently, this revolution was called *El Pronunciamiento de las Mugeres* (The Women's Insurrection).

Moreover, bloody encounters between *Puros* (Liberals) and *Polkos* (Conservatives) continued in Mexico City for several weeks until the president returned from Buena Vista on March 23 and immediately repealed the unpopular decree. He also abolished the office of vice-president, eliminating Gómez Farías from power. When Santa Anna again went to the front on April 2, he named Don Pedro Anaya, *Presidente Sustituto*, and Don Pedro instantly seized the opportunity to liberate all political prisoners. He let out of jail men who had been imprisoned for over 25 years, since the days when Mexico had won her independence from Spain in 1821.

In late April, the Catholic Church again enjoyed secure her extensive holdings; Mexican women cohabited with their spouses; newspaper editorials continued their refrains of "War to the death! No quarter or mercy for the aggressor!" and the government coffers remained empty as ever. Renewed peace talks proposals from President Polk were again ignored by the Mexicans.

In the meantime, General Worth's veterans, padded with large numbers of green troops, marshalled an army 12,000 strong under General Winfield Scott. On March 10, 1847, they landed on a beach three miles south of Veracruz and besieged the city. Scott subjected it to heavy bombardment and forced

its surrender on March 27, capturing 5,000 armed defenders and over 400 pieces of Mexican artillery. He then began the long march towards the central plateau at the head of 8,500 men.

Santa Anna blocked his way at the mountain defile of Cerro Gordo with 12,000 troops, but suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Scott on April 17-18. The Mexican casualties surpassed 1,000, against 431 for the Americans who also captured 3,000 prisoners and 45 heavy guns. Four hundred Tennessee volunteers led the assault on the mountain stronghold, and 79 of their number fell dead or wounded on the battlefield.

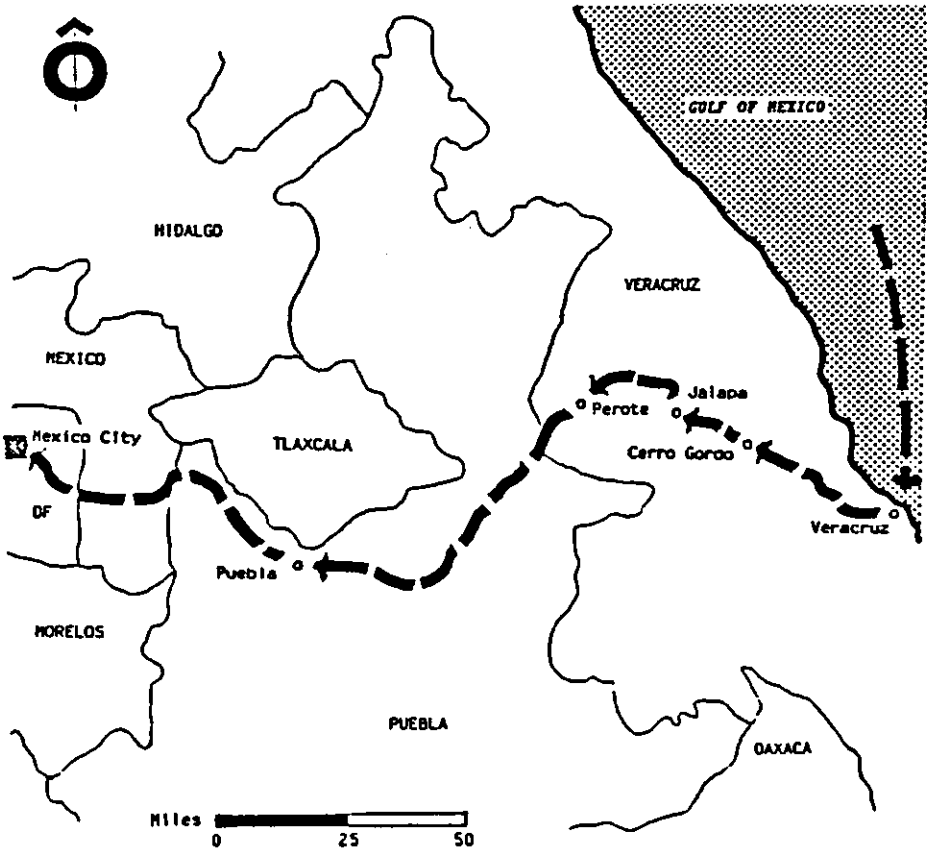
(Major Robert Farquharson sustained a serious injury below the groin. Another schoolmate of Walker, Col. William T. Haskell, received special praise from the general in the official battle report, and had the additional distinction of being the only officer in the Tennessee regiment to walk away unscathed from Cerro Gordo).

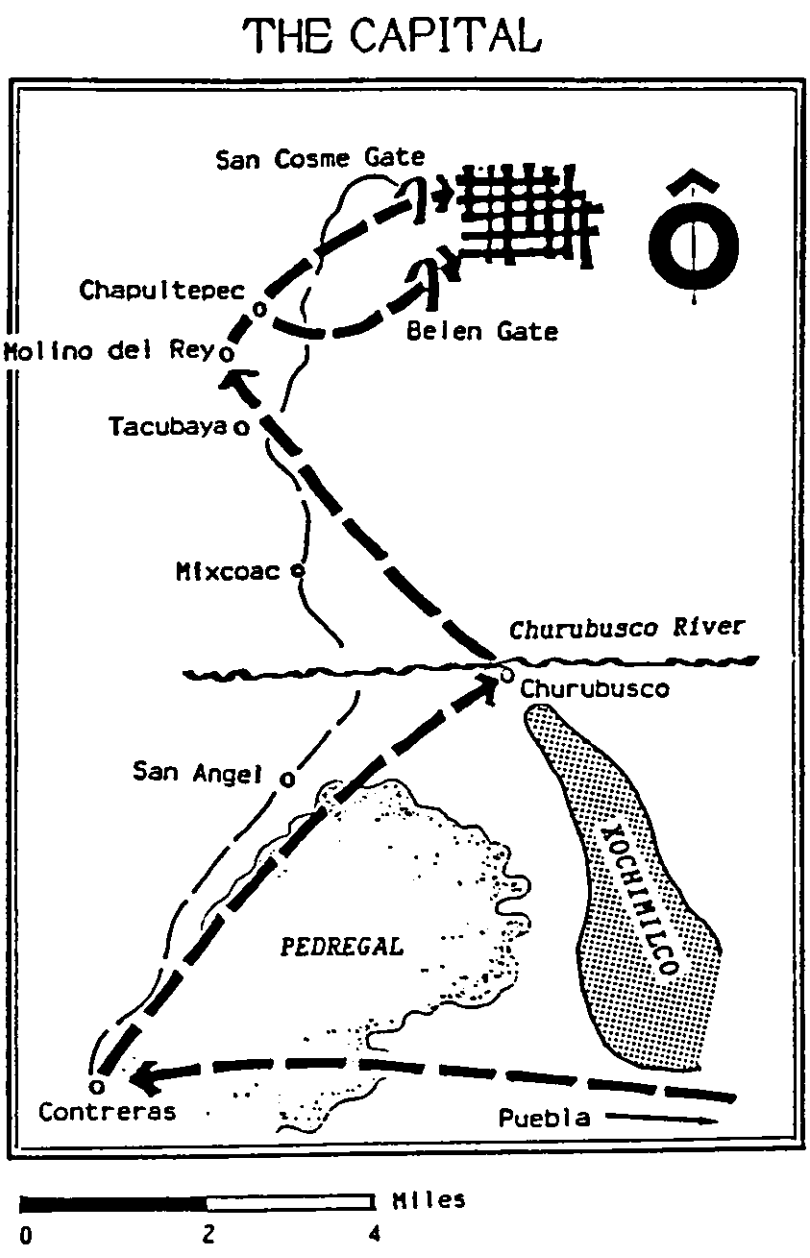
Scott went on to occupy Jalapa and Perote, and without encountering organized resistance, he entered Puebla on May 15. At the conclusion of the first year of war, many American volunteers were anxious to return home, having completed their period of enlistment. The army's advance halted, marking time for the arrival of replacements. At that juncture, diplomatist Nicholas Trist, personal envoy of President Polk, appeared on the scene at Puebla with full powers to negotiate peace.

Trist got in touch with Santa Anna through British agents in the capital, but the Mexican Congress denied the required authorization to initiate peace talks. Although the editorial writer of *El Razonador* and a few of his colleagues were beginning to suggest that it would be wise to hear what Washington had to say, the Mexican press, as a whole, persisted in its fanatical warmongering campaign in defense of "national honor." This allowed only two alternatives --either an overwhelming Mexican victory over the Northern barbarians or a glorious death and burial under the ruins of the beloved Aztec motherland.

With the arrival of new recruits, Scott's 10,000 man army began to move again on August 7. It engaged the 30,000 Mexican soldiers defending the capital on August 19, in the

SCOTT'S CAMPAIGN





Pedregal de San Angel. At dawn next day, the Americans defeated General Gabriel Valencia at Contreras. Furious fighting throughout the day led them to another victory in the afternoon, dislodging General Manuel Rincón from the bastion of Churubusco. Rincón was one of eight generals, 205 officers, and 3,000 enlisted men captured by the Americans.

The debacle forced Santa Anna to bide for time to reorganize his defenses. He suddenly was willing to listen to Mr. Trist's proposals without waiting for permission from Congress, concerting a suspension of hostilities while commissioners from both sides sat at the bargaining table at Tacubaya.

The American delegate asked Mexico to recognize the Texan border at the Rio Grande and to cede New Mexico and Upper and Lower California to the United States for a sum of money to be determined later. On September 3, Trist modified his proposal, allowing Mexico to keep Lower California and suggesting that the area between the Rio Grande and the Nueces could be left as no-man's land. The Mexican commissioners did not budge from their original demands on the Nueces River as the Texas border, and acceded only on giving up the part of California above parallel 37°, which would have left Monterey in Mexican hands.

Unable to reach agreement on any bases for peace, hostilities were resumed on September 8 with a vicious engagement at Molino del Rey. The fierce fighting continued until the Americans captured the fortress of Chapultepec on the 13th, rushing into the metropolitan suburbs through the gates of Belén and San Cosme. Santa Anna pulled out the remnants of his army, and Scott took possession of the Mexican capital on September 14, 1847, proceeding to severely crush several outbreaks of urban resistance in subsequent days. A Frenchman, on the spot, told what happened in a letter dated at Mexico City, September 28, 1847:

> . . . On the 14th, in the morning, the Americans entered the city in a very quiet manner, and Gen. Scott was already in the palace, when on a sudden the people of the low classes commenced throwing stones on the Americans from the tops of the houses, and from all the streets, whilst individuals of a

> better standing fired from the windows and balconies on the Yankees, who were far from expecting such treatment.
>
> Gen. Scott ordered immediately pieces of artillery to be placed in all directions and soon swept the streets with grape shot, but this proved insufficient to subdue the insurrection. Gen. Scott then sent a few companies on divers points with orders to break open every house out of which they should fire, to put to the sword those found within, and lastly, to sack the property therein contained.
>
> This order, which was executed with great moderation (thanks to the secret instructions of Gen. Scott,) but in some cases with stern energy, soon put down the insurrection. These scenes lasted three long and sad days — from the 14th to the 16th, and I assure you we were much alarmed during the whole of the time.[9]

During the engagements between August 19 and September 13, the Americans suffered 3,000 casualties -- counting dead, wounded, and missing -- losing 30% of their initial army. Mexican losses were much greater, for only 2,000 men were left to accompany Santa Anna in his retreat, out of the 30,000 that defended the city in August.

The Mexicans also lost the San Patricio Battalion, a unit made up in large part of American deserters, particularly Irish Catholics. Their distinctive flag was decorated with a shamrock, a figure of St. Patrick and the harp of Erin. At least 65 of the San Patricios were taken prisoner at Churubusco on August 20, tried by court martial and sentenced to hang. The New Orleans *Picayune* correspondent described the macabre scene of the mass hangings:

> . . . The total number of deserters hung at San Angel and Mixcoac was *fifty*, and well did they deserve their fate. Thirty of them were hung at Mix-

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[9]"Our Victories Fully Confirmed." *Daily Picayune*, 18/14/ 1847, p. 2, c. 4.

> coac on the morning of the 13th. They were compelled to stand upon the gallows until the flag they had deserted was flying from Chapultepec, and were then all swung off at the same time. Not one of them complained that his fate was undeserved.[10]

* * * * * * * *

At the time when Haskell, Farquharson, and other friends of Billy served their country in Mexico, he was busy in New Orleans preparing for the required examination for admission to the bar. He studied with preceptors, as was the custom then.

On Monday, June 14, 1847, at the Supreme Court of Louisiana, Billy was examined in open Court and pronounced by the judges to be sufficiently qualified to practice as Attorney and Counsellor in the several Courts of the state. Billy then took the oath prescribed by law and was admitted by the Court accordingly.

Early in July, the New Orleans papers began to report increasing numbers of deaths from yellow fever, which soon reached alarming proportions, becoming the worst epidemic in the history of the city. In less than four months, the pestilence killed five thousand people, and tens of thousands fled, seeking refuge in safer environs. Commercial activity in the Mississippi port was completely paralyzed. Pascagoula, Biloxi, Pass Christian, Bay St. Louis, and other watering places overflowed with transient residents, one of whom was Billy. On September 5, he wrote a letter to John from Pascagoula, Mississippi:

> . . . The fever is uncommonly violent in its forms this year, so that every one who can leave town — even those who had thought themselves acclimated, is flying from the infected region . . .
>
> I had so many little things during the winter and spring to harass and annoy me, that I hardly felt

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10"Mr. Kendall's Letters," Ibid., 10/15/1847, p. 2, c. 5.

> sufficiently good-humoured to write to a friend: and an ill-natured letter is not like an ill-natured speech, in at one ear and out at the other. On the contrary, it has an air of malice prepense and words which in conversation would be passed unnoticed look quite hostile when staring at you with their darkened faces from the pale and agitated paper.
>
> There is a fine piece of mock-heroic for you, worthy the pen of an old and experienced news-paper editor! Wouldn't I be a fine fellow to follow after the army and give magnificent relations of its incomparable exploits? Then, notice, if you please, how many points of excellence there are in that fine sentence of mine: even the meagre merit of alliteration — pale paper — may be found in it. 'Twas quite unintentional too, I declare — an inspiration of genius sudden as 'winged words' of the magnetic telegraph![11]

Perhaps the "many little things" that harassed and annoyed Billy during the winter and spring were related to the delay in his appearance before the Supreme Court for admission to the bar. But even as he began his career as a lawyer, he was already thinking of journalism. His ironic reference to the army reveals the same pacifist attitude that he had in June, 1846. Even if his thought had been real and not merely in jest, his chances as a war correspondent were nil, for the military campaign had ended with the conquest of the Mexican capital by Scott.

On October 14, 1847, a cold wave covered New Orleans with frost for several days. On the 19th the Board of Health officially announced the termination of the epidemic. Steamboats and trainloads of passengers from the watering places begin to arrive next day. They knew from experience that the first frost signalled the disappearance of the yellow fever, though nobody could explain why.

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[11] William Walker, Letters to John Berrien Lindsley, (Pascagoula, 9/5/1847).

9. Jacksonian Democrat

The cluster of Mexican defeats leading to the fall of the capital destroyed the Mexican Army as an organized fighting force. The remnants under Santa Anna made a final, desperate, unsuccessful assault against the American garrison in Puebla at the end of September. From then on, they were able to wage only hit and run guerrilla actions along the vital supply lines of Taylor and Scott, while the Americans rapidly brought in reinforcements to consolidate their hold over the conquered nation.

Towards the end of 1847, practically all the 43,536 enlisted men in the U.S. Army were on Mexican soil -- 32,156 under Scott, spread thin from Veracruz to the capital; 6,727 under Taylor from Matamoros to Saltillo; 1,019 in Alta and Baja California; and the remaining 3,634 in New Mexico, along the Oregon Trail, and in Indian territories west of the Mississippi. Half of the troops belonged to the regular army, and the other half to the Volunteer Corps.

As usual, factional quarrels hindered the Mexicans. On abandoning the capital, the government moved to Querétaro, but a lack of quorum persistently obstructed the performance of urgent tasks by the Congress. On September 16, Santa Anna relinquished the "Interim Presidency of the Republic" to Don Manuel Peña y Peña, who in turn passed it on to General Pedro María Anaya on November 11, only to return it to Peña y Peña on January 8, 1848; there was a total of nine governments in less than a year.

The Executive, paralyzed by destitution, seemed willing to resume peace talks with the enemy, but Santa Anna and most factional leaders insisted on continuing the war, though nobody could come up with a plan for providing the indispensable resources for waging it.

In October, the State Legislature declared Michoacán independent from the rest of Mexico. The governor of San Luis Potosí followed a similar course in January, and his

Pronunciamiento at Querétaro was promptly seconded by Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and Zacatecas. At the same time, delegates from Mérida arrived in Washington to propose the annexation of Yucatán to the United States. Rumors circulated in Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Coahuila and Chihuahua, about the formation of a *Sierra Madre Republic* separate from Mexico, like Texas had done.

For some leading American soldiers, the plight of the vanquished meant the end of Mexico. Gen. J. A. Quitman, Military Governor of Mexico City, stated bluntly: "I say, hold on to this country. It is its destiny. It is ours."[1]

But Henry Clay, undisputed leader of the Whig party, was alarmed and opposed annexation of any part of Mexico, specially by conquest.

In his Annual Message to Congress, President Polk reiterated that the war had not been waged for conquest: The U. S. merely sought redress from Mexico "for the wrongs she has done us, and indemnity for our just demands against her." To accomplish this, he recommended that New Mexico and Upper and Lower California "should be retained by the United States as indemnity."[2]

Public opinion favored the permanent incorporation of California and New Mexico into the Union, although the best way to end the war was heatedly debated. Many condemned the government for its insistence on military operations.

The House, controlled by the Whigs, refused to approve the additional funds and troops requested by Polk. Senator John C. Calhoun, Democratic leader of the "anti-Jackson" faction and peerless defender of Southern interests, joined forces with the Whigs against the president. On the Senate floor he alleged that vigorous prosecution of the war would dim the chances for peace, and sided with Clay against the annexation of Mexico to the Union: "We have never incorporated any people into this Union but the Caucasian race -- the free white man; and shall we now corrupt this free white population by introducing into our confederation the Indians

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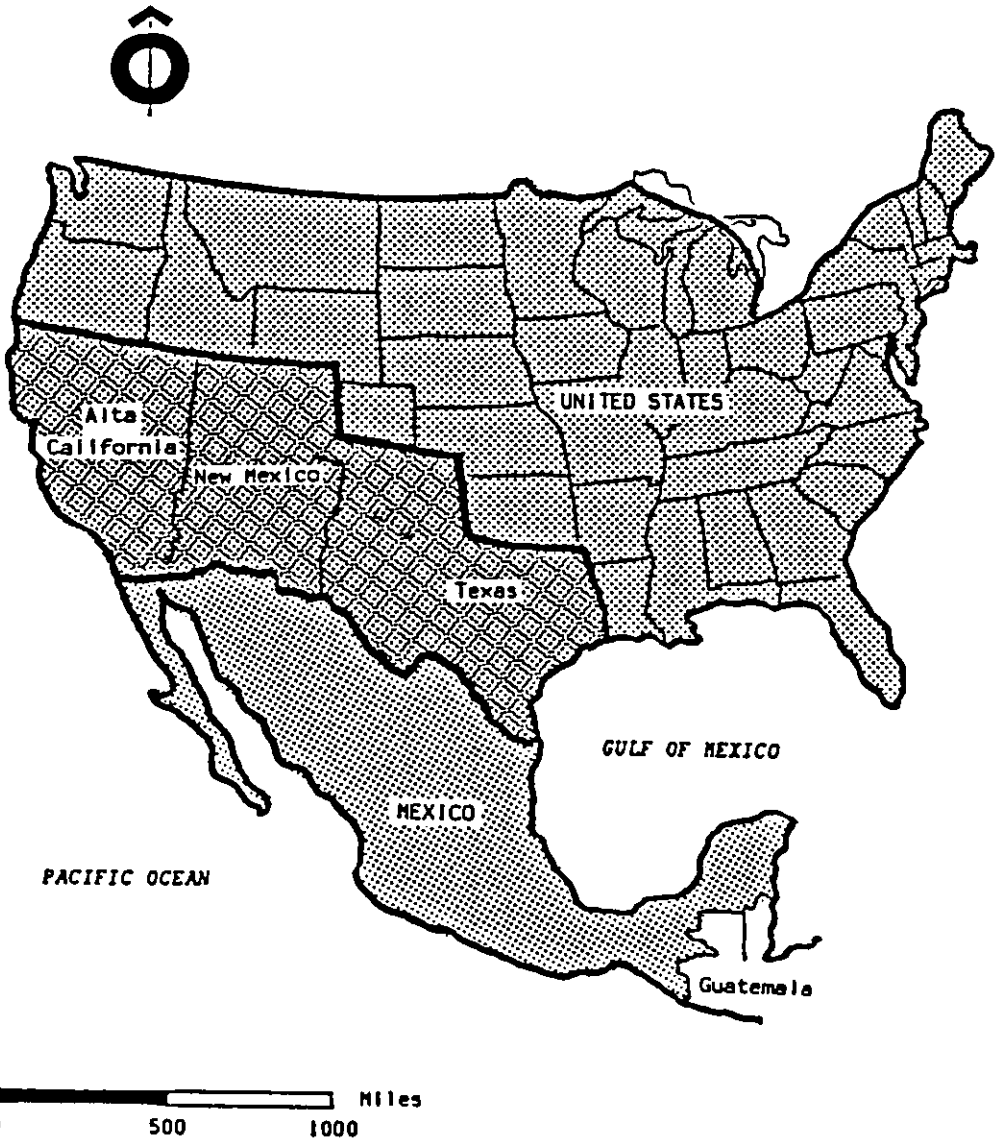
[1] "Gen. Quitman's Letter," *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), 12/15/1847, p. 1, c. 7.

[2] "The President's Message," Ibid., p. 2, c. 2.

THE SPOILS OF WAR



and the mixed races of Mexico?"[3]

As the incorporation of New Mexico and California is possible because of their small population, and necessary "because public opinion is made up, and there can be no peace with Mexico short of an acquisition of territory,"[4]

Calhoun proposed to pull back the American troops to a defensive line to be marked by military experts in the northern regions of Mexico.

The controversy finally came to an end when U.S. envoy Nicholas Trist and the commissioners from the Querétaro government signed a peace draft at Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. By it, Mexico recognized the Texas border at the Rio Grande, and ceded New Mexico and Alta California to the United States in exchange for twenty million dollars. President Polk sent the treaty to the Senate for ratification, suggesting only minor changes.

When the whole country debated the merits of the document, on March 11, 1848 Billy expressed his viewpoint in an article titled "The Trist Treaty," in *The Daily Crescent* newspaper. In the article, Billy emerges as a supporter of Manifest Destiny, proclaiming the inevitable expansion of the United States and its piecemeal absorption of all Mexico. Indeed, the military events of the past two years had produced a radical change in his attitude. From an avowed pacifist, he suddenly glorified American expansionism. Ellen's charm seems to have ended.

In March, 1848, various presidential candidates mobilized their forces for the November elections, and topics related to the termination of the war monopolized the political debates. When President Polk announced his decision not to seek re-election, the leading Democratic aspirants unanimously support his policies, each one hoping to secure for himself the backing of the party machinery.

On the other hand, the Whigs anxiously searched for ways to discard the unpopular anti-expansionist posture of their leader, Henry Clay. Both triumphant generals, Taylor and

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[3] "Speech of the Hon. John C. Calhoun," Ibid., 1/13/1848, p. 2, c. 4.

[4] Ibid.

Scott, showed signs of serious presidential ambitions. But the overwhelming popularity of Taylor made him a sure winner, regardless of the party.

Taylor was an old veteran of the 1812 war with England and successful Indian campaigns. His victories at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterrey, and Buena Vista had converted him into a national hero. When troops were removed from his command to benefit Scott at Veracruz, the American people reacted by lavishing their sympathies on him. Keen Whig leaders happily abandoned Clay and offered the party's candidacy to Taylor. Billy recorded his comments on that particular political move in an article titled "Hero Presidents," in *The Daily Crescent:*

> In all ages of the world glory and power have been the rewards of the successful warrior. Among the wandering tribes of the steppes of Tartary and sands of Arabia, as well as among the polished people of western Europe, and the naked savages of North America, the best soldier has always been recognized as the first man of his time . . .[5]

But although Billy continued to glorify military power, he opposed the nomination of General Taylor, as it would mean to "turn from its proper use the high office created by our fathers for certain great purposes. It is to change into an office of reward for military merit that which was intended for a place of duty and labor."[6]

Billy was clearly not a Whig, for his militaristic attitude certainly excluded him from Clay's circle. He was a Democrat, and he tells John in a letter dated March 18: "As to my going over to the democracy, you know it is but a return to old principles: and my faith in the old creed will be so much the stronger, as I have passed through the stage of skepticism, and am now more secure in my opinions than if

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[5]William Walker, "Hero Presidents," *Daily Crescent* 3/10/1848, p. 2, c. 4.

[6]Ibid.

I had adopted them as a mere matter of course."[7]

In the meantime, the Senate had approved the Trist Treaty on March 10, 1848. Once ratified by the Queretaro legislative chambers and signed by commissioners from both countries, President Polk signed the document on July 4, thus officially terminating the Mexican war on the 72nd anniversary of his country's independence.

With the closing of the Mexican war, American politicians faced the question of introducing slavery into the conquered lands. The contest raged in the Congress, rekindling violent debates begun in 1846 in connection with Oregon, when Senator David Wilmot, abolitionist Democrat from Pennsylvania, had proposed a proviso prohibiting slavery in the new territory. Even though Southerners had no intention of extending their peculiar system to the Northwest, where climate was inhospitable for agricultural labor by slaves, they nonetheless stood tenaciously firm against the "Wilmot Proviso," defeating it in both houses in March, 1847.

The acquisition of California and New Mexico renewed the controversy in 1848, prolonging the sessions of Congress until late August and reversing the previous result by the final passage of the Wilmot Proviso in regards to Oregon but leaving the question undecided for the other territories.

Both parties tried to avoid the question in the electoral campaign. The Democratic National Convention nominated Michigan Senator Lewis Cass for the presidency, and balanced the ticket with a Southern general, William O. Butler, from Kentucky, for vice-president. The Whigs chose General Zachary Taylor, Southern gentleman born in Virginia and owner of plantations and slaves in Mississippi, with New Yorker Millard Fillmore for running mate.

The four candidates assumed hazy moderate positions on the issue, and none dared express any definite opinion on the introduction of slavery in the new territories. This naturally angered the zealots at both ends. The abolitionist Free Soilers in the Barnburners faction of the New York Democratic party rallied under the battle cry of "no more slave

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7William Walker, Letters to John Berrien Lindsley.

states and no more slave territories." and inscribed "free soil, free speech, free labor and free men" on their banner. They nominated Ex-President Martin Van Buren to oppose Taylor and Cass in November.

The signing of the Trist Treaty at Guadalupe Hidalgo did not keep the Mexicans from offering a final token of resistance to the invaders, although suffering one more defeat. On March 16, 1848, at Santa Cruz de Rosales, Chihuahua, 700 men under Col. Sterling Price inflicted 300 casualties on Gen. Angel Trías' forces, while also capturing 40 officers, 14 pieces of artillery, and 2,000 small arms.

At the cessation of hostilities Mexico was utterly bankrupt. The authorities at Querétaro were forced to borrow one hundred fifty thousand pesos from the church to defray urgent expenses during the legislative sessions, and the initial three million dollars paid by the United States were instantly drained from the Mexican treasury to support the new government of President José Joaquín Herrera, elected by the Congress and inaugurated on June 3, 1848.

When the last American troops evacuated Veracruz on August 1st, Mexican government forces had already quashed a rebellion led by General Mariano Paredes in Guanajuato. Other *pronunciamientos* agitated Mazatlán and Tampico. The Apaches were on the rampage, sowing terror in Sonora, Chihuahua and Durango, and a large Indian uprising played havoc in Yucatán.

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On April 11, 1848, Billy published in *The Daily Crescent* an article on "University Studies." It was in complete harmony with his Positivistic philosophy and Democratic creed. His emphasis was on freedom of thought and the rejection of "a certain standard of orthodoxy, erected by a certain sect in politics, religion or literature." His closing remarks, denouncing "high tariff notions," flowed naturally from his Southern pen, since protectionist policies favored Northern industrial interests.

That Summer Billy visited his family and friends in Nashville. His presence added to his parents' happiness when another son, Lieut. Lipscomb Norvell Walker, returned, after

serving one year in Mexico in the Third Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers.

In Nashville, Billy saw his former schoolmates and also his old friends and instructors, Doctor Gerard Troost and Dr. Philip Lindsley, president of the University. Impressed by his knowledge and eloquence, they invited Billy to deliver the Annual Address before the Alumni Society and he prepared an essay titled "The Unity of Art."

He delivered it on October 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the First Baptist Church, the best auditorium for a large audience in the city. Fifty years later, his cousin Mrs. Bryant vividly remembered that he surprised even his parents in his eloquent presentation. Doctor Philip Lindsley was dumbfounded by Billy's oratorical powers and declared that he was the greatest Nashville's man ever graduated by the university. He characterized Billy's speech as truly marvelous.

The alumni were so impressed that they asked Billy for a copy of the speech and published it.

The Unity of Art is a valuable synthesis of Billy's mind. It took him approximately one hour to unfold before the hometown audience his patriotic, Christian, and positivistic philosophy.

Christian concepts emerged early in the speech, spreading out "at home" into every nook and cranny of Nashville's First Baptist Church:

> Man — a being of clay endowed with a soul . . . We begin to feel that all is made upon a plan . . . that there is a sentiment of love, as well as a reason in creation . . .
>
> The Christian's God is a God of love, a God of Mercy, a God who sympathizes with us in our sufferings as well as in our successes . . . Religion keeps alive the sacred flame of virtue that burns from age to age in the breasts of the great and the good.
>
> Art is one . . . The true, the beautiful and the

> good, are never found in opposition to each other, but are only different manifestations of the same divine spirit . . . The true life —the life of the spirit — the life spent in the pursuit of the true, the beautiful and the good, must be co-extensive and co-eternal with art . . . Eternal, then, as art itself, will be the pursuits in which the soul shall hereafter engage.[8]

He defined Art to be "the knowledge we derive from the spiritual world: and it is, if I may so speak, a trinity, of which Beauty, Truth and Virtue are the unities."

His positivism emanated early in the speech when he considered the "Art of arriving at truth" and eulogized Sir Francis Bacon, pioneer philosopher of modern empiricism. He explained: "The great truth of the Baconian philosophy is that science, although born in the heavens, lives upon earth, and that if she would be faithful to her divine origin, she must be useful to the human race."

He extolled the use of the inductive method in political science, history, and other branches of the humanities, calling attention to the many "triumphs of the Baconian philosophy" and celebrated the human race "in its career of never-ending progress."[9]

His patriotism flowed in words applauding republican political principles, in his praise of the Constitution, and in his support of the American conduct of the Mexican war. He presented patriotism as the "great and cardinal virtue," and elaborated:

> No matter how barren or rugged, how cold or repulsive may be the country which a man calls his own, still he must cling to it with an attachment that admits of no weariness, with a love that knows no ceasing.

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[8]William Walker, *The Unity of Art*, (Nashville: A. Nelson "Record" Office, 1848).

[9]Ibid.

> For this country of ours is intertwined with all the holiest and noblest feelings of our nature. With it are connected the joys of infancy and childhood, the pleasures of family and friendly intercourse, the delights of home, the recollections of a life spent in usefulness and for promotion of the welfare of our fellow-creatures: and it is in our native soil that we wish our bones to be laid when we have fulfilled the purposes of our being and attained the ends for which we were brought into existence.[10]

Allied to patriotic sentiments, Billy reaffirmed his liberal creed when exalting the American form of government, "founded on the philanthropic principle that a man has a right to do whatever he pleases, provided he does not injure his neighbor," and also when advocating the economic thesis of self-interest advanced by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* — that "the gain of the individual is the gain of the community."

Billy considered poetry "the most universal of the Fine Arts." His acclaim for poetry and the poet, who "remains the same, whether he is savage or civilized," registered a thought expressed several months earlier in *Hero Presidents*, that "man is the same in all his essential qualities — in the power of his reason and the vigor of his imagination —whether he struts in pantaloons or stalks in all the dignity and grace of primeval nakedness." But among the poets his favorite was Byron:

> . . . the name of Byron will be remembered as long as there is any sympathy for suffering genius, and the monument which he has erected to himself in his words and in his works will out-last even the stately temple in which repose much of England's greatness and glory.[11]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

According to the Nashville *Republican Banner*, the allusions to European culture delighted the audience with "a subject so beautifully portrayed" and the number of "elegant illustrations used, being as original as the style was chaste and severe."[12]

His illustrations ran the gamut from Ancient Greece to current events -- from Homer to Lamartine -- saturating the atmosphere of the First Baptist Church in Nashville with memories of his two years spent in Europe. And closing the ranks of mythological, historical, and imaginary figures that sprang out of Billy's lips in *The Unity of Art*, out came "the Prince of Darkness -- the incarnation of evil":

> . . . True, Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost, and oftentimes we are forced to admire his power and his character. But it is the good and not the evil part of the Miltonian Satan that we admire: it is "the unconquerable will," and not "the study of revenge, immortal hate," that makes the character interesting and attractive. Falsehood, and Error, and Vice, may sometimes take the garb of Beauty and seem to be the things they are not: but Good Taste carries the Ithuriel spear which detects the disguise and reveals the fraud.[13]

In fact, a true "Satan" lurked in Billy's unconscious mind, and Billy carried an Ithuriel spear that revealed its presence. His Satan was the Oedipus complex, and his magic spear was the psychological defense mechanism called *projection*. Both can be detected in *The Unity of Art*, in Billy's important remarks on Byron's *Manfred*.

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[12] "The Alumni Address." *Nashville Republican Banner and Daily Whig*. 10/6/1848. p. 2, c. 1.

[13] William Walker, *The Unity of Art*.