

## Part Five: COLONEL DICK DOBS

'You know me?' cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. 'You have long been a favourite of mine.' he said: 'and I have long observed and often sought to help you.'

'What are you?' cried Markheim. 'the devil?'

'What I may be,' returned the other. 'cannot affect the service I propose to render you.'

'It can,' cried Markheim: 'it does! Be helped by you? No. never: not by you! You do not know me yet: thank God, you do not know me!'

'I know you,' replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity, or rather firmness. 'I know you to the soul.'

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Markheim*.

## 17. Dob's Mission to Guaymas

In the November, 1852 elections, the Democratic team of Franklin Pierce swept out of office the Whig administration of President Millard Fillmore, presaging better days ahead for the Southern fillbusters. Pierce belonged to the Eastern element of the Democratic party which inclined, for the sake of harmony and prosperity, to oppose anti-slavery agitation and generally to placate Southern opinion. He was pro-Southern as a matter not only of political strategy but also of business expediency. His cabinet included Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, secretary of war; James Guthrie of Kentucky, secretary of the treasury; and James C. Dobbin of North Carolina, secretary of the navy. In his Inaugural Address, March 4, 1853, the new president promised an aggressive foreign policy, heralding another era of territorial expansion as previously carried out under Polk:

The policy of my administration will not be controlled by any timid forebodings of evil from expansion. Indeed, it is not to be disguised that our attitude as a nation, and our position on the globe, render the acquisition of certain possessions, not within our jurisdiction, eminently important for our protection, if not, in the future, essential for the preservation of the rights of commerce and the peace of the world.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the news from Mexico continued to unfold "the thrice told tale of rebellions and revolutions without number." which promoted the *Alta* to remark:

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<sup>1</sup>"Inaugural Address." *New York Herald*, 3/5/1853, p.1 c.2.

Poor Mexico! her fate seems to be sealed. Beset on all sides —the prey of civilized and savage man — torn asunder by internal discord — bankrupt and powerless, she is rapidly and surely falling to ruin. In a little while her national sun will have set, to rise no more.<sup>2</sup>

After the surrender of the French and their evacuation from Guaymas, rumors of forthcoming expeditions against Sonora became current in California. When Count Raousset recovered his health in Mazatlán and returned to San Francisco on March 9, 1853, he was lionized as the hero of Hermosillo. A month later, he was allegedly the leader of a large expedition preparing to go to Sonora. It was said to consist of fifteen hundred men, including Americans, French, and Germans; and it would be ready to sail in a very short time.

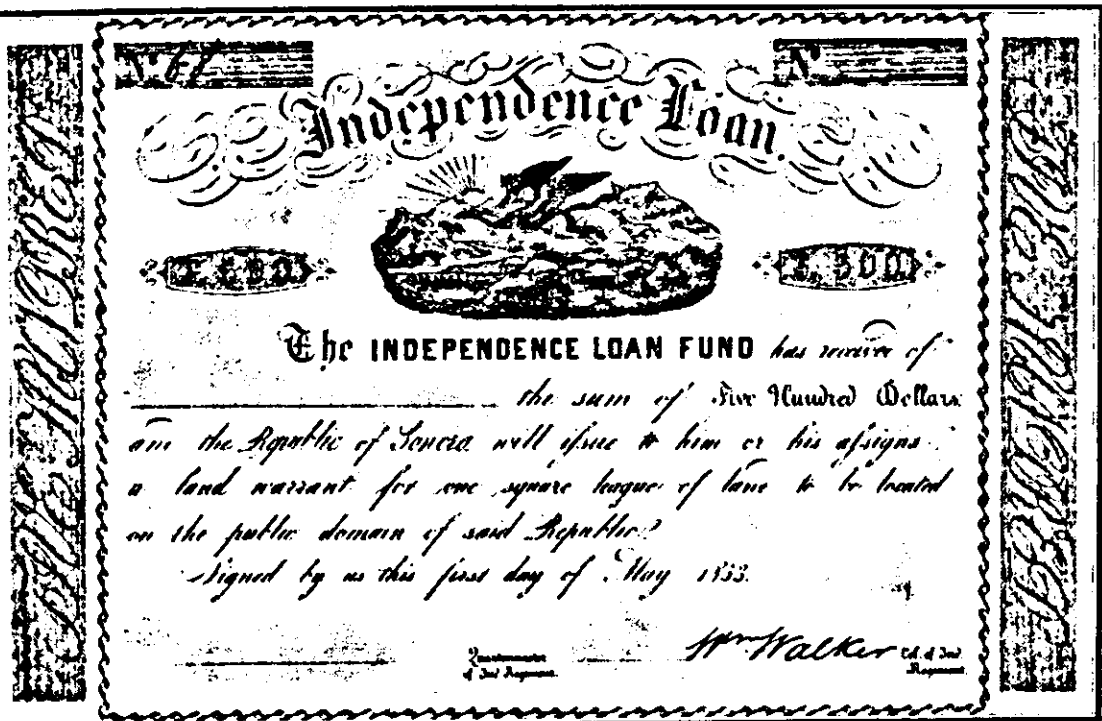
French Consul Dillon opposed the expedition. On May 4 he wrote to Joseph Calvo, fellow consul in Guaymas, telling him about his efforts to stop it. He also revealed that, besides Raousset's, plans for a different expedition against Sonora were on foot. The other venture was "exclusively American": it had the support of men in "high places" in California, and its leaders were "important members of the California Legislature at Benicia."<sup>3</sup> Several months later, when the Walker expedition was already on Mexican soil, the *Alta* disclosed how it had begun:

As long ago as last winter, there was a great scheme in the process of formation, for the purpose of taking the State of Sonora and planting the institution of slavery on the Pacific. The headquarters of these "manifest destiny" men, who foresaw that the people of the United States must carry the

<sup>2</sup>"We surrender our columns." *Daily Alta California*, 12/7/1852, p.2 c.1.

<sup>3</sup>Rufus Kay Wyllys, *The French in Sonora*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), p.264.

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FANTASY-LAND WARRANT

principles of liberty, equality and republicanism to all parts of North America. was Benicia.

A delectable crowd of hangers-on were about the capital. whose chief object was to mature their plans for this campaign. They saw the duty clearly before them, to carry the glorious institution of slavery into territory now free from it, at the point of the bayonet. To perfect their plans they met at Benicia. and. like prudent and sensible men as they were, got clerkships in the Legislature, and without doing any duty, they got from \$10 to \$20 each, per day.

Since then. they have been at work cautiously and adroitly, arranging their plans. and the ball has now opened. The great work has begun, and our citizens are rushing to the scene of action to share the booty, the beauty and the glory.<sup>4</sup>

To raise funds for their venture. Henry A. Crabb and fellow slavery schemers sold the "public domain" of the future "Republic of Sonora" at five hundred dollars for each square league of land. "The Independence Loan Fund" receipts. issued on May 1. 1853. were signed: "WM. WALKER. Colonel of the Independence Regiment."<sup>5</sup> Thus, shortly before his 29th birthday. worthy Dick Dobs was at the helm in the Inner Crescent City. finally ready to astound the world with the marvelous feats of his military genius.

Walker's original plan was to invade northern Sonora by land with his "Independence Regiment."<sup>6</sup> To facilitate mat-

<sup>4</sup>"As long ago as last winter." *Daily Alta California*. 12/15/1853. p.2 c.1.

<sup>5</sup>"The Sonora Fillibustering Expedition." *Ibid.*. 12/1/1853. p.2 c.1.

<sup>6</sup>James L. Springer sworn -- Resided in Marysville in February, 1853: Mr. Emory was in Marysville then. and present when Mr. Walker spoke of going to Sonora: the plan proposed to me was to go by land to the frontiers of Sonora and take up vacant lands for ranches: this was the plan first proposed by Walker and Emory." ("Trial of Wm. Walker for Filibustering." *Ibid.*. 10/19/1854. p.2 c.3).

ters. the pro-slavery legislators introduced a bill in the Assembly at Benicia, "authorizing certain parties to organize and equip certain military companies for the protection of our eastern and southern frontier."<sup>7</sup> The Committee on Military Affairs disapproved the bill in the House. A similar measure introduced in the Senate, under the pretext of apprehending a famous and elusive "bandit," Joaquin Muriata, also failed when it was indefinitely postponed on May 16.

Earlier in May, news from San Diego had arrived in San Francisco, announcing that the Army Commanding General would obey orders issued by President Fillmore before leaving office, and that "the expedition will never be permitted to pass the cordon of military posts located in the Southern district."<sup>8</sup>

Unable to go by land, William Walker had to change plans and invade Mexico by water. In May he had "confidential" talks with Raousset-Boulbon.<sup>9</sup> He offered a proposal of cooperation; but the Count declined, he later said, because he was working for his own particular ends, and, moreover, the presence of Americans in his ranks would antagonize the people of Sonora.

In fact, Raousset's project soon collapsed when the capitalists who had agreed to finance it, failed to do so. Moreover, he received "pressing letters" from the French Minister in Mexico. According to Raousset, Minister LeVasseur asked him to come immediately, because President Santa Anna

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<sup>7</sup>"Our Correspondence from the Capital," *San Francisco Herald*, 5/3/1853, p.2 c.2.

<sup>8</sup>"Our San Diego Correspondence," *Ibid.*, 5/7/1853, p.2 c.5.

<sup>9</sup>At the trial of the French Consul for breach of the Neutrality Laws, at the U.S. District Court in San Francisco on May 24, 1854. William Walker was called to the stand, and on being sworn, said: "What I do know of the connection between Dillon and Boulbon, was a long time ago: It was a year ago: have not seen Boulbon for a year: not since May, 1853: could state nothing as to what I knew at that time: I refuse to state it on the ground that any thing which passed between me and Raousset was confidential." ("Trial of the French Consul, Mr. Dillon," *Ibid.*, 5/25/1854, p.2 c.3).

had "expressed to him a desire to see me there."<sup>10</sup> LeVasseur had offered Santa Anna to place the count's sword at the service of Mexico, and at his earnest entreaty and of Monsieur Dillon's, Raousset left San Francisco aboard the *Golden Gate* on June 16, on his way to meet Santa Anna at Mexico City.

Walker sailed for Guaymas on June 11, aboard the British brig *Arrow*, to reconnoiter the field for a new plan of action. He even hoped "to visit the Governor of Sonora, and try to get such a grant as might benefit the frontier towns and villages."<sup>11</sup> His former law partner Henry P. Watkins, Watkins' son, James L. Springer, "and others," went with him.<sup>12</sup> Upon landing at Guaymas on June 30, the authorities refused to give them a permit to go to the interior. "Unfortunately for Mr. Walker . . . the consul of Mexico at San Francisco, by a previous vessel, had advised the authorities at Guaymas not to permit Mr. Walker upon any pretext to visit the interior, as he purposed doing so with treasonable designs."<sup>13</sup>

Walker turned to the American Consul in Guaymas, Don Juan Robinson, for assistance, and "a voluminous correspondence ensued between the authorities and the consul," to no avail. The consul's nephew, Tobin Robinson Warren, recorded in his memoirs the impression that Walker made on him:

. . . During the brief visit of this afterwards-noted filibuster, the writer had an opportunity of

<sup>10</sup>"Interesting Correspondence," *Daily Alta California*, 9/24/1854, p.2 c.2.

<sup>11</sup>William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*. Mobile: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1860, p 20.

<sup>12</sup>Springer's testimony: "I went to Guaymas with Walker in June, 1853; Watkins and his son were along, with others; we had passports from the Mexican consul; we attempted to go into the interior, but were prevented by the Prefect of Police refusing us passports; we staid in Guaymas about 20 days. Watkins stayed longer." ("Trial of Wm. Walker . . .").

<sup>13</sup>T. Robinson Warren, *Dust and Foam*, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1859), p. 210.

seeing a good deal of him, and became greatly impressed with his astuteness and determined character: for although sanguine in temperament, and insanely confident of success, still he evinced such an extreme degree of caution as almost to disarm the suspicions of the Mexicans themselves before leaving them.

To have looked at William Walker, one would scarcely have credited him to be the originator and prime mover of so desperate an enterprise as the invasion of the state of Sonora.

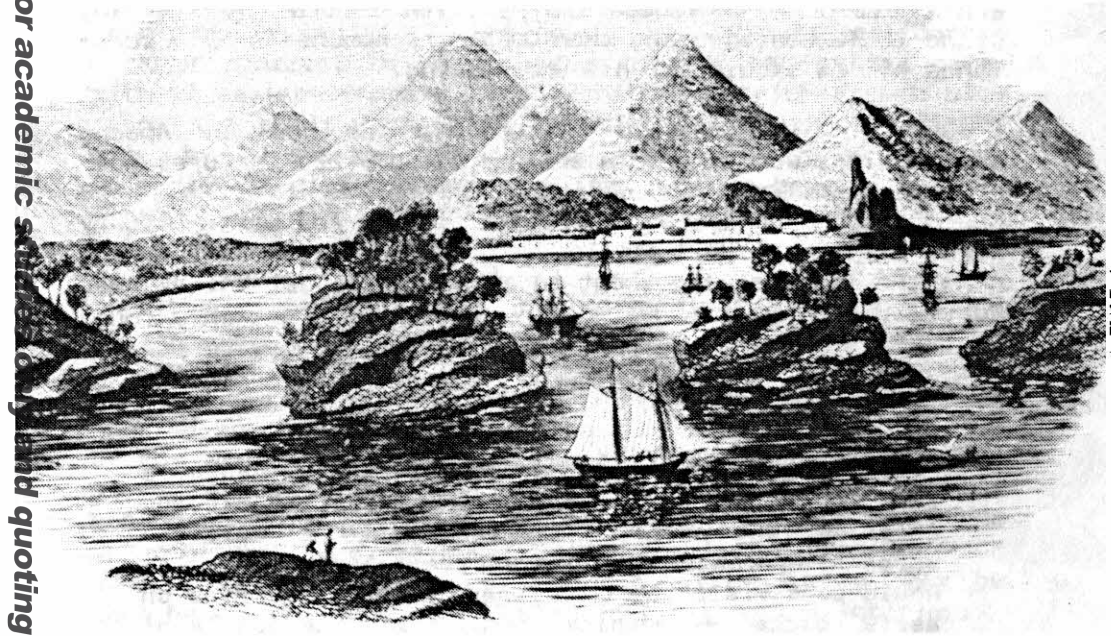
His appearance was that of anything else than a military chieftain. Below the medium height, and very slim, I should hardly imagine him to weigh over a hundred pounds. His hair light and towy, while his almost white eyebrows and lashes concealed a seemingly pupilless, grey, cold eye, and his face was a mass of yellow freckles, the whole expression very heavy.

His dress was scarcely less remarkable than his person. His head was surmounted by a huge white fur hat, whose long knap waved with the breeze, which, together with a very ill-made short-waisted blue coat, with gilt buttons, and a pair of grey, strapless pantaloons, made up the ensemble of as unprepossessing-looking a person as one would meet in a day's walk. I will leave you to imagine the figure he cut in Guaymas with the thermometer at 100°, when every one else was arrayed in white. Indeed half the dread which the Mexicans had of filibusters vanished when they saw this their Grand Sachem. — such an insignificant-looking specimen.

But any one who estimated Mr. Walker by his personal appearance, made a great mistake. Extremely taciturn, he would sit for an hour in company without opening his lips: but once interested, he arrested your attention with the first word he uttered, and as he proceeded, you felt convinced that he was no ordinary person. To a few confiden-



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GUAYMAS

tial friends he was most enthusiastic upon the subject of his darling project, but outside of those immediately interested, he never mentioned the topic.<sup>14</sup>

Tobin Robinson Warren was one of the confidential friends to whom Walker spoke of his darling project and he collaborated in its execution, as will be seen in the next chapter. Ostensibly, Walker wished to protect Sonora from the Apaches. Of course, his real aim was to carry out his Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, with Sonora the stepping stone to Tehuantepec and then Cuba. The Apaches simply furnished him an excuse for his undertaking.

During Walker's stay in Guaymas, the news of Apache depredations were indeed alarming. On July 22, the Ures government newspaper, *El Nacional*, chronicled in detail the recent Apache forays under the title: "The Apaches! --Eighty Murders in One Week," closing with the phrases: "At the last news the Indians were about to attack Noria del Valle, near Guaymas. As everybody knows, Governor Gandara not only found the State coffers empty, but also large debts to pay."<sup>15</sup> This situation decided for Walker his new plan of action. In his own words:

. . . the Apaches had visited a country-house, a few leagues from Guaymas, murdering all the men and children, and carrying the women into a captivity worse than death. The Indians sent word that they would soon visit the town "where water is carried on asses' backs" — meaning Guaymas; and the people of that port, frightened by the message, seemed ready to receive any one who would give them safety from their savage foe. In fact several of the women of the place urged Walker to repair immediately to Cal-

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> "Los Apaches! -- 80 Muertos en Una Semana." *El Nacional*, 7/22/1853, p.4 c.1.

ifornia, and bring down enough Americans to keep off the Apaches.

What Walker saw and heard at Guaymas satisfied him that a comparatively small body of Americans might gain a position on the Sonora frontier, and protect the families on the border from the Indians . . .<sup>16</sup>

It may be possible to reconstruct the scene with the aid of Tobin Robinson Warren's descriptions in his memoirs: William Walker arrived at the American consul's residence, a long rambling building fronting the sea, with immense corridors or piazzas. He was ushered into a long salon, paved with tessellated marble, its furniture of rich French pattern, the walls hung with paintings, with a magnificent piano by Collard and Callaro, and a mammoth harp by a French celebrity. A glass door opened, and a whole bevy of frightened young girls came forward to receive him -- Mrs. Robinson heading the procession.

Although the Robinson young ladies didn't speak a word of English, their alarmed expressions were adequate to convince Walker that he must bring enough Americans to resist the Apaches. His new plan of action was now clear to him, and he hurried back to San Francisco to carry it out. On July 23, he re-embarked at Guaymas on the brig *Arrow*. The barque *Caroline*, owned by the American consul, sailed from Guaymas behind the brig, with Tobin Robinson Warren aboard. At the point of departure, Walker received permission from Governor Gándara to travel to Ures, the capital of Sonora, but by then he was no longer interested in visiting the interior.

The *Arrow* touched at La Paz, Baja California, before rounding Cape St. Lucas to head north. As it cruised up the west coast of the peninsula, on August 19 a comet appeared in the northwestern sky, near the horizon, presenting a well defined nucleus and a broad tail of great brilliancy. After

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<sup>16</sup>Walker, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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shining nightly for ten days or so. it became invisible to the naked eye for the passengers of the Arrow. Yet. its prophetic message lingered on. lighting up the *shadow spirits* in Walker's Inner Crescent City:

*Nation makers! onward go!  
All earth shall yet your triumph know!*

That celestial herald was Ellen's star for the Inner Crescent City inmates —like the comet that appeared in the heavens in July of 1850, when Walker went to encounter the "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" in the West. It was a portentous omen for Dick Dobs at the onset of his filibustering career. And Dobs, like Bem and so many of the captains and reformers of the world, relied upon fate and the stars.

## 18. 'Forty-Five Immortals

During the summer, while William Walker went to Guaymas, his friends stumped through the mining districts of California, helping each other in their quests for office. Although belonging to different parties, Henry H. Crabb and Tod Robinson (Whigs), Edmund Randolph (Opposition Democrat), and Parker Crittenden (State Reform Party) appeared frequently together at political meetings in Sacramento, Stockton, Columbia, Tuolumne, and other places, unanimous in their opposition to Governor Bigler's and Broderick's Democratic machine.

Election day on September 7 was disastrous for Walker's friends, who failed to win a single contest. His seat not being at stake, but only Crabb would return as senator from San Joaquin in the next session. Their spirits brightened when the *Arrow* arrived in San Francisco on September 9 and immediately all of them went to work to help William Walker carry out his plan. When the *Caroline* anchored in the bay three days later, San Franciscans had been already told by the press, that "there will be a party -- perhaps two or three parties -- formed in California. In a short time, destined for an excursion down the coast."<sup>1</sup> And tall tales of fabulous riches began to lure adventurers into joining the expedition to Sonora:

A gentleman who left Guaymas on the 23d of July, and reached this city yesterday, brings the intelligence that the silver mines of Arrizona [sic], the same about which Raousset de Boulbon had a difficulty with the Mexican authorities some time ago, have turned out to be of unparalleled richness. News

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<sup>1</sup>"There was a report current." *Daily Alta California*, 9/12/1853, p.2 c.1.

had been received at Guaymas, a short time previous to his departure, announcing that immense deposits of silver ore had been discovered at Arrizona, yielding a dollar's worth of pure silver to three pounds of ore. The news produced great excitement among the inhabitants; and upwards of a thousand men had left Guaymas and Hermosillo for the mines.<sup>2</sup>

Although Walker and his Southern friends attempted to organize a "secret expedition" and were "very judicious about it,"<sup>3</sup> the *New York Herald's* San Francisco correspondent instantly furnished accurate details about their activities and plans:

San Francisco, Oct. 1, 1853.

The principal topic of news here just at present, although it is scarcely mentioned in the papers, is the projected expedition to Sonora. That an expedition has already been organized, for the purpose of taking forcible possession of the State of Sonora, there can be no doubt. The leaders of the expedition are William Walker, formerly connected with the *San Francisco Herald*, and Col. J. Watkins of this city.

Walker will go with the advance party, and Watkins will follow as soon as their arrival is heard of, with a larger force. About two hundred men have been already recruited, and will leave here with Walker in the course of the next fortnight. They purpose going by sea, and, sailing up the gulf of California, intend landing somewhere in the neighborhood of Guaymas.

The leaders of the party say that there are but two hundred troops in the State of Sonora, and that it will be about ninety days before any reinforcement can be sent by Santa Anna.

The leaders of the expedition here have drafted a

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<sup>2</sup>"Important from the State of Sonora." *San Francisco Herald*, 9/11/1853, p.2 c.3.

<sup>3</sup>"Summary of News," *Alta*, 10/1/1853, p.1 c.6.

constitution for the "Republic of Sonora," and have already issued bonds, made payable upon annexation to the United States. Considerable money has already been raised, and there is no doubt that the expedition will sail.

The United States Minister in Mexico has requested the authorities here to keep a sharp look out, but the probability is that the authorities will not meddle in the matter.

Most of the leaders of this affair are Southern men, and it is the design to make Sonora a slave territory.

The ostensible object of the expedition is to drive the Indians from the mining region of Sonora.<sup>4</sup>

The facts were accurate as far as the writer knew them, but when that letter was placed in the mail pouch that left San Francisco aboard the steamship *Pacific* at 2 P.M. on Saturday, October 1, 1853, events had already transpired that doomed the expedition to sure failure. At 10 P.M. on Friday evening, a party of soldiers acting under orders of General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, the U.S. Army's Pacific Division commander at San Francisco, had taken possession of the brig *Arrow* lying at the foot of Clay street wharf. Only the captain, his wife, child, and the ship's mate were aboard, but in the hold of the brig the soldiers found a quantity of arms, ammunition, a lot of camp kettles, and other cooking utensils for military forces. Many of the boxes were marked "Col. Stevenson's Regiment."<sup>5</sup>

General Hitchcock's unexpected seizure of the *Arrow* seriously disrupted Walker's plans. He and his friends immediately endeavored to regain possession of the vessel and cargo, and sued the general for \$30,000 damages, with attorneys Tod Robinson and Edmund Randolph representing Walker at the Superior Court. The general chronicled detailed accounts

<sup>4</sup>"The Expedition to Sonora." *New York Herald*, 10/20/1853. p.1 c.6.

<sup>5</sup>"Seizure of the *Arrow*." *Aita*, 10/2/1853. p.2 c.2.

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of the proceedings in his private diary, and on October 9 he wrote:

During Monday night [October 3] Major Andrews, then in charge of the vessel, was privately informed that an attempt to take her out of his hands would be made on Tuesday morning by the men whom Walker had engaged for his expedition, whereupon he hauled her from the wharf and anchored her out in the stream.

On that evening the collector came to my quarters and exhibited real or affected alarm about the state of things. He said he had suffered the greatest anxiety, etc., etc., and ended by advising me to give orders to my guard that, in case of attack, the vessel should be surrendered without opposition. I presume the secret managers of the expedition had created this alarm in the mind of the collector as far as it was real. I had seen him and U.S. Senator Gwin together, and had reason to suspect Gwin's fidelity to the government.<sup>6</sup>

Senator William M. Gwin, a native of Tennessee, was the leader of the pro-slavery (anti-Broderick) Democrats in California. They were designated by their opponents as the "custom-house party," on account of the large share of Federal offices that fell on them in 1853, at the onset of the Pierce administration.<sup>7</sup> It is obvious that General Hitchcock

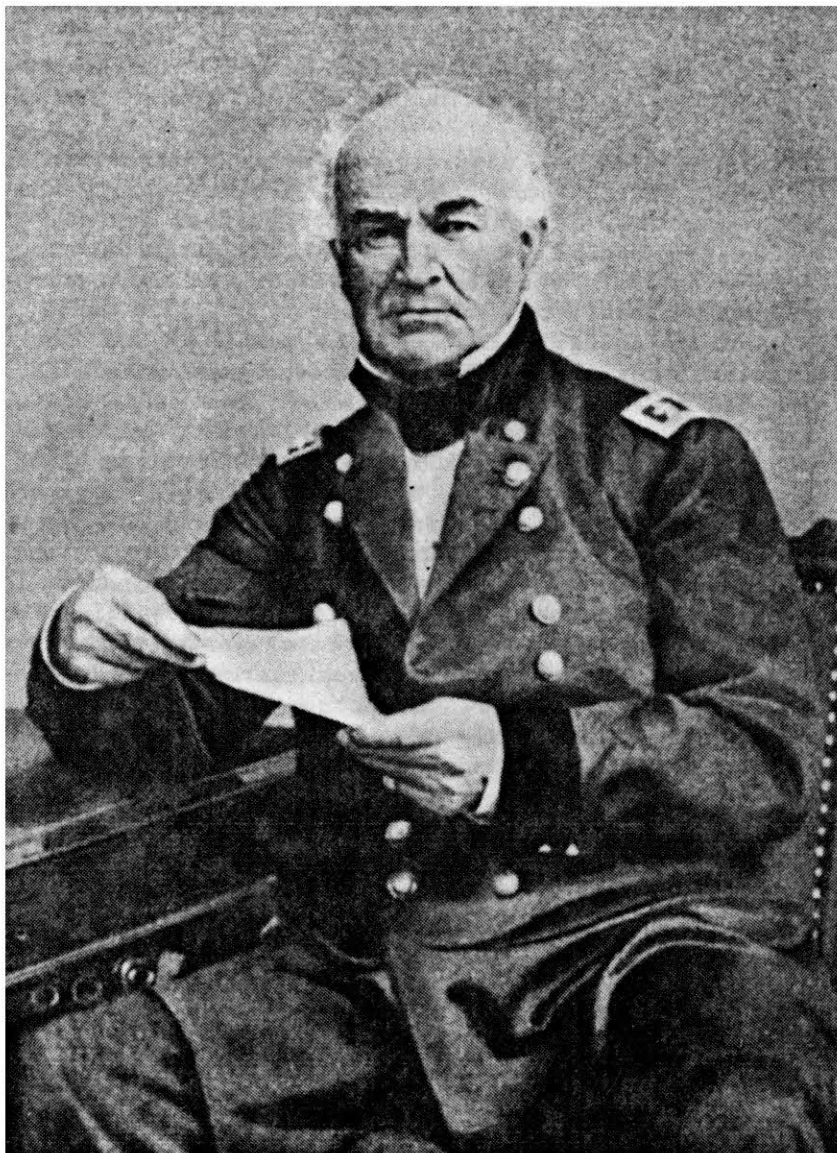
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<sup>6</sup>W. A. Croffut, ed., *Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S.A.*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 400.

<sup>7</sup>When the Civil War began, in 1861, Gwin was arrested by United States Army officers as a Southern sympathizer, but later released on lack of evidence to try him as a traitor. During the war he devised a plan for colonizing Sonora with Southerners, and travelled to France and Mexico, seeking the support of Napoleon III and Maximilian. Gwin was to be given the title of "Duke of Sonora." The French Emperor enthusiastically approved the plan in Paris, but at Mexico City Maximilian never granted Gwin an audience to discuss his colonization scheme. The Archduke realized that his support of the American would only foster more hatred for his regime. Upon his return to his native land, at the end of the war, Gwin was again arrested and

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GENERAL ETHAN ALLEN HITCHCOCK

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was talking about Southern slavery propagandists when he mentioned Gwin among the "secret managers" of Walker's expedition and "had reason to suspect Gwin's fidelity to the government." His diary continues:

Seeing that my acquiescence in the collector's proposal would insure the attack, I peremptorily and with some show of real indignation refused assent.

I then went to the U.S. district attorney and found that he, too, as I believed, had been corrupted, probably by Senator Gwin. . . .

Another thing: A Mr. Crabb, a member of the Legislature, has started an independent move on Sonora, and has asked a passport from me. I have declined to give it. Then Senator Gwin himself called and urged me to give the passport or "safe conduct" to "the Hon. Mr. Crabb," saying "he could be useful to our government by dissipating prejudices!" They are either fools or think I am one. I kept my temper and declined to comply. A pretty thing, indeed, that I should be dragooned into giving such a protection to a leading man of a hostile force against Sonora! — and at the solicitation of a senator of the United States! But they have not succeeded. As the matter now stands I am almost alone in this community in opposing the expedition.<sup>8</sup>

On this page of General Hitchcock's diary, pro-slavery Gwin (Democrat) pleading for pro-slavery Crabb (Whig), exposes another link in the covert slavery chain and the "secret managers" of Walker's expedition to Sonora. Their scheme was a widely known "secret" by October 10, when the San Francisco *Herald* transcribed the "Plans of the Expedi-

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held in confinement for several months. Finally released in the spring of 1866, rumors persisted for some time that the former California senator was enticing renegades from the defeated South to participate in a filibustering scheme against Sonora. Joseph Allen Stout, *The Liberators*, (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1973), Chapter 10.

<sup>8</sup>Coffrut, *Ibid.*

tionists" which the Sacramento State Journal had "learned by rumor" and published three days earlier. The organizers expected to invade and conquer Sonora, upon which:

. . . a state government would at once be organized, (the constitution being already made, agreed to and in their pockets, and the principal officers chosen), and the flag of the new republic (also made) of most enchanting colors run to the top of the flag staff of the tent which might have the honor of being considered the capital of the newborn nation.

The funds to carry on the Government are already provided. Sixty-five millions of paper currency, for the faithful redemption of which the public lands and precious mines, together with the faith of the nation, is already pledged, (and which is said to be already printed on beautiful bank paper) . . .

. . .[once they have] declared themselves independent, and issued their paper as above, certain parties are to proceed immediately to New York, Washington and San Francisco, and convince the capitalists there how easy it would be for them to make thirty millions or so by purchasing the paper at half its face, and then using their influence with Congress to admit Sonora into the Confederacy.<sup>9</sup>

Legal arguments dragged on, but despite the concerted efforts of influential politicians and judges, the filibusters failed to regain possession of the Arrow or its cargo. No private pleadings by Gwin and Crabb, nor public writs from the Superior Court, could possibly sway the general. Hitchcock preferred to resign rather than give in. Though he stood almost alone in the community in opposing the expedition, in his own words, "I know I am right, and that is enough for me." When he wrote them in his diary, on October 17, the issue of the Arrow was irrelevant, however, because

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<sup>9</sup>"Plans of the Expeditionists." *San Francisco Herald*, 10/10/1853, p.2 c.5.

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Walker's expedition had already departed from San Francisco aboard the barque *Caroline* at 1 o'clock that morning.

Walker had made a contract with the captain of the vessel, Howard A. Snow, to convey the party for \$20 a head, but they were to furnish their own provisions. The *Caroline* cleared for Guaymas with normal passengers and cargo. At 1 o'clock in the morning on the 17th, a small steamboat came alongside and tugged her to sea.

As she began moving away from the wharf, arms and military supplies and a number of men, some of them completely drunk, were transferred from the tug to the barque. About a dozen men, 18 cases of powder, 4 kegs of bar lead, many percussion caps, some 300 pounds of balls, and numerous moulds, were left behind on the wharf when a U.S. Army officer showed up and seized the articles on the point of being embarked for the *Caroline*.

At sunrise, reveille sounded by drum, and the filibusters rushed on deck for a head count: forty-five men in military formation headed by First Captain John Chapman, under the command of Mr. Walker whom they gave the title of Governor of Sonora. Their arms and military supplies consisted of about twenty-five rifles and between seventy and eighty cavalry muskets, of the breech loading kind, one hundred cans of refined gunpowder, one pound each, and several small bars of lead. Also two six-pounders which belonged to the vessel.

The *Caroline* also carried her regular passengers, eighty-five Mexicans and Germans totally guiltless of any hostile design against Sonora, and an American lady, Mrs. Chapman, wife of the filibusters' captain. Henry A. Crabb was supposed to be on board, but he changed his mind at noon on the 16th, took his baggage off the vessel, returned his ticket, and got his passage money refunded. He no doubt knew that the odds were too great to run the risk.

Col. Dick Dobs didn't worry about the odds. One of the Mexican passengers recorded the events on board. On the second morning at sea, the beat of the drum again woke everybody up at sunrise: the forty-five filibusters formed on deck, weapons were distributed, and they listened to Walker's speech: "He referred to the sixteenth of October as a memorable day in the annals of civilized and enlightened

nations, exciting his soldiers to battle against the savages, etc.: which harangue was greeted with many hurrahs!"<sup>10</sup>

From then on, Walker had his men "almost constantly in military formation," and by the time the *Caroline* reached the tip of the Lower California peninsula, Captain Snow had joined Walker's forces and was called by them "Admiral of the Navy."<sup>11</sup> He decided that all passengers should place their weapons and valuables under his care, so that they would be safe. The Mexicans and Germans complied, handing him more than fifty revolvers, several repeater muskets, and over thirty sharp edged weapons. "Admiral Snow" subsequently made a number of ballots, each with the name of a filibuster, and proceeded to draw lots for the weapons, which were thus distributed among the new owners.

They spent several days cruising along the coast, waiting for reinforcements expected from San Francisco. At the Cape, Walker landed with Chapman and ten men to obtain information and provisions, and next day returned on board with a little meat and some cheese. Tired of waiting, and seeing that none of the expected vessels had appeared, on the 28th of October they sailed away from Cape St. Lucas towards the harbor of La Paz, "where they hoped to find the ships that they said were due, for that was the place of rendezvous agreed upon at San Francisco."<sup>12</sup>

Even Dick Dobs knew that it would be suicidal to land in Sonora with forty-five men. Hence, when the expected reinforcements failed to appear, he decided to land at La Paz, in Lower California. In Walker's own words:

The object of these men in leaving California was to reach Sonora; and it was the smallness of their numbers which made them decide to land at La Paz. Thus forced to make Lower California a field of

<sup>10</sup>"Entre las declaraciones." *El Nacional*, 12/2/1853, p.4 c.1.

<sup>11</sup>ibid.

<sup>12</sup>ibid.

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operations until they might gather strength for entering Sonora, they found a political organization in the peninsula requisite.<sup>13</sup>

The Republic of Lower California was thus born, and forty-five filibusters achieved fame when they entered the pages of history as her founding fathers in November, 1853.

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<sup>13</sup>William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, p. 19.

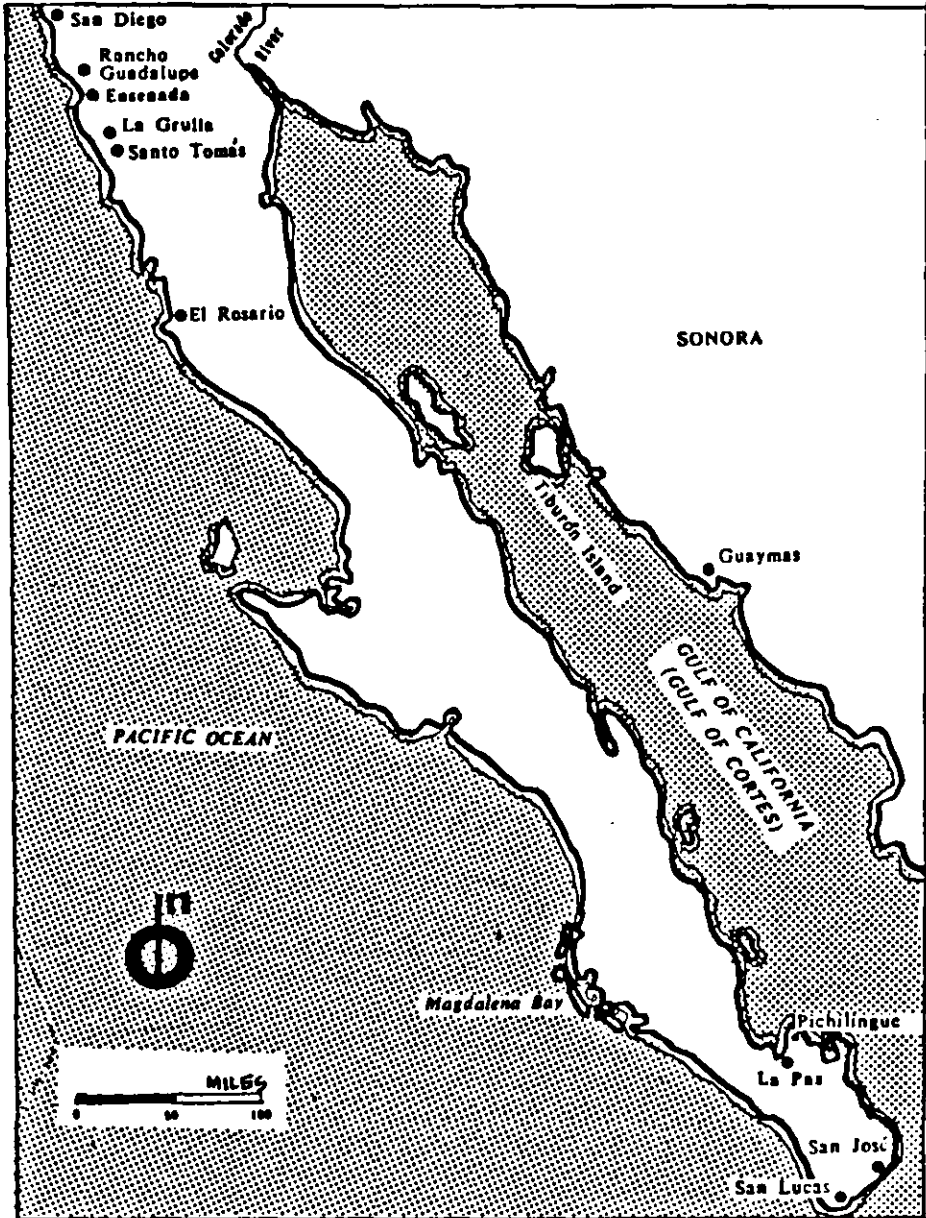
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THE REPUBLIC OF LOWER CALIFORNIA (1853)



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## 19. The Republic of Lower California

On Thursday morning, November 3, 1853, the *Caroline* entered Pichilingue bay, outside La Paz, flying the Mexican flag. In a short time three small boats and the harbor pilot came alongside and were immediately captured. All passengers not belonging to the expedition were confined in their cabins. "with three sentries in sight, with peremptory orders from Mr. Walker to shoot any one who might make a signal or movement tending to alter the disorder that they shamelessly called order."<sup>1</sup> Walker, Snow, Chapman and two others landed in a captured boat and paid a friendly visit to Governor Rafael Espinosa.

Finding Espinosa unsuspecting and the town defenseless, Walker re-embarked as his ship entered the harbor of La Paz, and then landed in force, capturing the capital of Lower California in less than thirty minutes. His men lowered the Mexican flag in front of the Governor's house and hoisted their own flag, made during the trip by Mrs. Chapman: three horizontal stripes, red, white and red, with two golden stars in the white. "They said it was an emblem for independent Sonora and Chihuahua."<sup>2</sup> Señor Espinosa was grabbed by the necktie and brought prisoner aboard ship. "Although as passengers we were confined to our cabins, we managed to observe that they offered liquor to Señor Espinosa and made him several propositions which he vigorously rejected."<sup>3</sup>

Walker immediately proclaimed to the world the birth of the new nation:

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<sup>1</sup>Entre las declaraciones." *El Nacional*. 12/2/1853. p.4 c.1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## PROCLAMATION

*Issued on the third day of November, 1853*

The Republic of Lower California is hereby declared Free, Sovereign, and Independent, and all Allegiance to the Republic of Mexico is forever renounced.

WM. WALKER

President of Lower California.<sup>4</sup>

Next day the passengers were permitted to land as Col. Walker entered upon his duties as President of Lower California. He appointed Frederick Emory, Secretary of State; John M. Jernagin, Secretary of War; Howard A. Snow, Secretary of Navy. He organized the Military: John Chapman, Major of Battalion; Chas. H. Gilman, Captain; John McKibben, Timothy Crocker and Samuel Ruland, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lieutenants, respectively. And he organized the Navy: William T. Mann, A. Williams and John Grandell, Captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenant, respectively.

Men, provisions, and munitions of war were landed, and Walker began to fortify the town. He released from jail an Englishman named Star, in prison for murder. He took some dozen horses and formed a ranger squad. During Friday and Saturday his men had several skirmishes with Mexican patriots and captured some lances and muskets, but up to Saturday night the filibusters suffered no losses.

Early Sunday morning, Walker re-embarked in a great hurry, carrying with him all the Mexican Government and Custom House papers, archives, etc., after Star informed him that two hundred men from the Interior would attack at any moment. Indeed, that afternoon a detachment of cavalry and some of the former *Caroline* passengers attacked a party of filibusters sent ashore to gather wood, driving them back to the vessel under a barrage of musketry.

Walker ordered forty men to the boats and led them to battle. They landed under cover of a sharp fire from the

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<sup>4</sup>Important from Lower California. *San Francisco Herald*, 12/8/1853, p.2 c.2.

ship. "with cannon grenades and canisters and round shot of some two hundred they had stolen from La Paz, tipped off of their existence by the Englishman."<sup>5</sup> Walker advanced from the beach to a plateau half a mile away, through a thick chaparral composed principally of cactus, with very sharp thorns. In his first battle, he became a colonel: "The Colonel, with his party, drove those before him out into the road to the ranchos, but our adversaries took to a hill and hid behind it. Night coming on, we returned towards the boats."<sup>6</sup>

Probably seven Mexicans and four Americans lost their lives in the "Battle of La Paz," but the number of casualties vary from one account to another. The four Americans perished when their boat capsized on returning to the bark after the battle. At noon on Sunday, before the fight started, a sail was seen, which proved to be the Neptune from Mazatlán, bringing Col. Climaco Rebolledo, the new Governor of Lower California. Walker promptly took him prisoner aboard the *Caroline*, where he joined former Governor Espinosa in captivity.

Precipitately driven out of La Paz by the Mexican patriots, Walker retreated to Cape St. Lucas, carrying the entire "Republic of Lower California" on his ship. On Monday, November 7, he issued at sea two decrees:

DECREE — All duties, whether exports or imports, are hereby abolished.

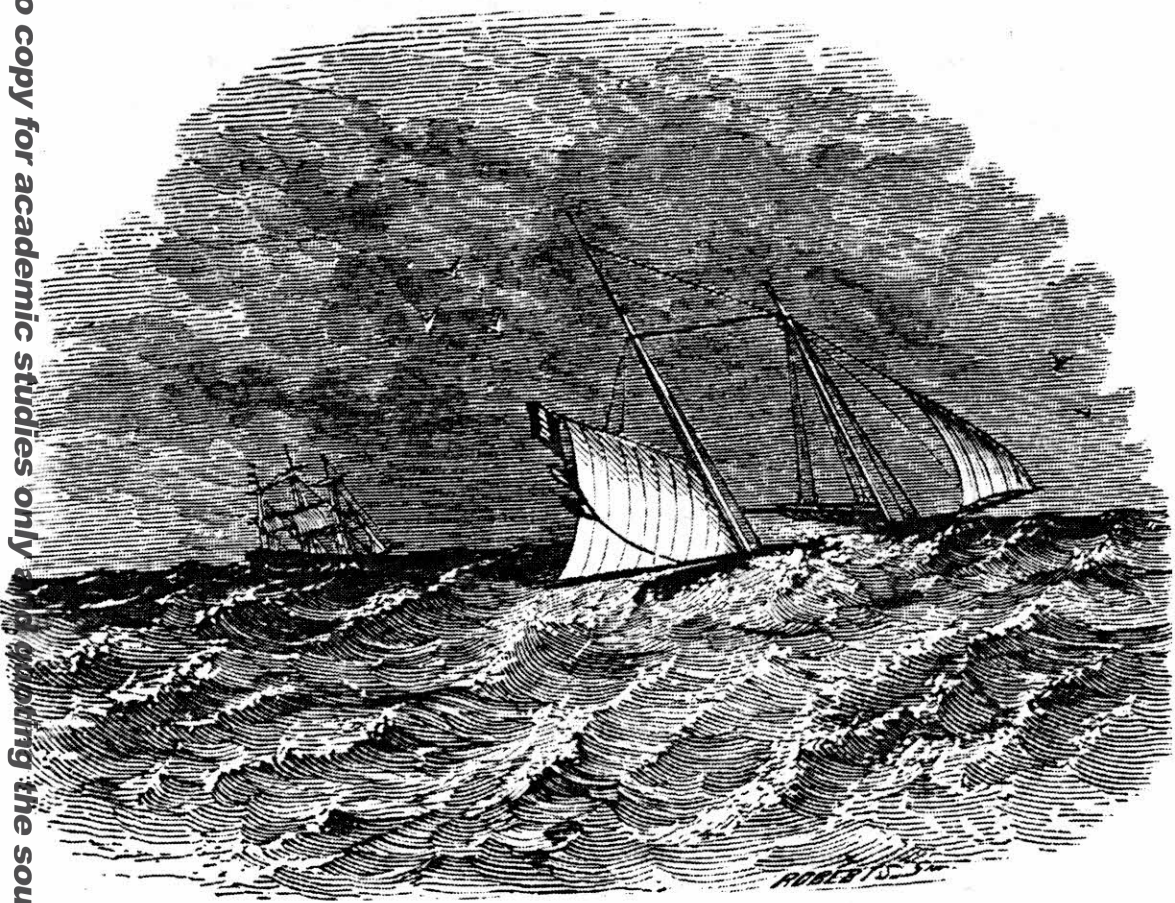
DECREE No. 2 — From and after this date, the Civil Code, and Code of Practice of the State of Louisiana shall be the rule of decision and the Law of the land in all the Courts of the Republic to be hereafter organized. Nothing, however, in this Decree shall be construed so as to make it an orga-

<sup>5</sup>Entre las declaraciones," *El Nacional*, 12/2/1853, p.4 c.1.

<sup>6</sup>Further from the New Republic," *San Francisco Herald*, 12/9/1853, p.2 c.2.

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THE "CAROLINE" (LEFT)  
PORTABLE PHANTON REPUBLIC

nization of the Courts of the Republic.<sup>7</sup>

As Louisiana was a slave state, Walker had skillfully introduced slavery into his "Republic of Lower California."

The filibusters landed at Cape St. Lucas on November 8, added some mules and cattle to their domain, and announced that the capital would be established in all solemnity the following day. But having observed a ship approaching which they mistook for the Mexican cutter *Guerrero*, the intended declaration was suspended. As soon as the ship disappeared from view, Walker re-embarked his "republic," planning to land his "new nation" at Magdalena Bay.

South of Magdalena, on November 20, the *Caroline* ran across the steamship *John L. Stephens*, on its way from San Francisco to Panama. The filibusters handed "the official record" of their operations to the steamship's captain, and the *New York Herald* published the documents under banner headlines on December 13, announcing the birth of the new nation.

On learning from the steamer that no reinforcements had left San Francisco, Walker decided to move closer to San Diego. Bypassing Magdalena Bay, the *Caroline* headed north for Ensenada, a cove about 30 leagues below the U.S. border, where the filibusters landed on November 29. They promptly hoisted their new flag on shore and established their republic in the lonely adobe house at the harbor.

From the adobe household, Walker obtained what information he could on local matters, so he could plan his next moves. The next day he sent a foraging party to *Rancho Guadalupe*, a farm belonging to San Diego resident Don Juan Bandini. There they procured fifteen horses and saddles, paying for them with an I.O.U. Some of the men returned to Ensenada while "Secretary of State" Frederick Emory continued with the rest towards the border, bearing the official documents from the "Lower California Republic" and an *Address of President Walker to the People of the United States*.

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<sup>7</sup>Important from Lower California." *San Francisco Herald*, 12/8/1853, p.2 c.2.



The San Diego *Herald* published the startling news brought by Emory on December 3, and the San Francisco papers on the 8th, rekindling the excitement of the Sonora expedition that had abated after Walker's departure in October. The following are excerpts from Walker's address:

November 30, 1853.

In declaring the Republic of Lower California Free, Sovereign and Independent, I deem it proper to give the People of the United States the reasons for the course I have taken. It is due to the nationality which has most jealously guarded the independence of American States, to declare why another Republic is created on the immediate confines of the Great Union.

The Mexican Government has for a long time failed to perform its duties to the Province of Lower California . . .

The mineral and pastoral wealth of Lower California is naturally great; but to properly develop it there must be good government and sure protection to labor and property. Mexico is unable to furnish these requisites for the growth and prosperity of the Peninsula . . .

Mexico has not performed any of the ordinary duties of a government towards the people of Lower California . . . Thus abandoning the Peninsula, and leaving it, as it were, a waif on the waters, Mexico cannot complain if others take it and make it valuable.

On such considerations have I and my companions in arms acted in the course we have pursued. And for the success of our enterprise, we put our trust in Him who controls the destiny of nations, and guides them in the ways of progress and improvement.

WILLIAM WALKER, Colonel,  
President of Lower California.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>ibid.

That address and its accompanying documents showed William Walker's manifest destiny in clear focus. The address presented all the pretexts, except the Apaches, for there were no Apaches in Lower California. Decree No. 2 exposed the covert Southern connection of his expedition, wrapped in the Civil Code and Code of Practice of the State of Louisiana. "I and my companions" stood for Colonel Dick Dobs and his helpers in the Inner Crescent City. The ludicrous tragedy that Dobs had begun to enact at La Paz was then unfolding at Ensenada de Todos Santos in the Lower California frontier.

When the foraging party returned to headquarters, Walker ordered Lieut. John McKibben to take another party to La Grulla, a hamlet twenty odd miles south of Ensenada and four miles north of Santo Tomás, site of the regional government. Walker sent McKibben in search of a young rebel leader named Antonio María Melendrez.

The Melendrez brothers from La Grulla had led a revolution in 1852. Antonio was a close friend of the prefect of the district, Lieut. Col. Francisco Xavier del Castillo Negrete, who appointed him to command the National Guard in September 1853, but by December he had been deposed, his farm had been confiscated, and he was in hiding at La Grulla plotting a revolution.<sup>9</sup> On learning this at Ensenada, Walker naturally thought that Melendrez would be happy to join him and provide his "republic" the indispensable native element it lacked.

McKibben's party arrived at La Grulla shortly before day-break on December 2. They surrounded the houses, forced all the men to get up, arrested them, and conducted them to the home of Melendrez's father. They then proceeded to search the houses, but they could not find Antonio María, even though he was hiding in his own home. When they left, they took two captives (McKibben apparently thinking that one of

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<sup>9</sup>Robert G. Cleland, "Bandini's Account of William Walker's Invasion of Lower California," *Huntington Library Quarterly* VII, 1944, p. 158; "Another Revolution in Baja California," *Daily Alta California*, 5/23/1852, p.2 c.2; "Baja California," *Ibid.*, 6/8/1852, p.2 c.3; "Letter from Los Angeles," *Ibid.*, 9/5/1853, p.2 c.2; "Últimas Noticias Sobre Invasión," *El Nacional*, 1/27/1854, p.4 c.1; "Arrival of the Southerner," *San Francisco Herald*, 1/10/1854, p.1 c.1.

them might be the young Melendrez Walker wished to see), and returned to Ensenada.

As soon as the filibusters departed, Antonio María came out of hiding and rode to Santo Tomás to report the incident to Castillo Negrete. A posse was organized and they caught up with McKibben at El Ciprés, two leagues from Ensenada. After a light skirmish, the filibusters fled, leaving one dead on the field. The captives were liberated, and two Americans were captured, one of them wounded. Upon interrogation, they told Castillo Negrete at Santo Tomás all they knew about Walker's expedition.

Next day, Lieut. Col. Francisco Xavier Castillo Negrete marched at the head of 58 men, with one four-pounder field piece mounted on an old pair of carriage wheels and only six shots (his entire supply at Santo Tomás). At dawn on December 5, he attacked Walker's camp at Ensenada. Walker had 35 men fit for duty.

After a three hour battle through the chaparral, Castillo Negrete forced the filibusters to retreat into the adobe house and began to lay siege. He cut off their water supply and captured and disabled a boat, severing their only communication with the *Caroline* laying at anchor a mile away. Walker had suffered a dozen casualties. Capt. Gilman, in command at the north end of the house, was wounded. Lieut. McKibben, in command at the south wing, had been killed; thereupon, the adobe house became known as "Fort McKibben." Captain Chapman had fallen earlier, probably at the "Battle of La Paz."<sup>10</sup>

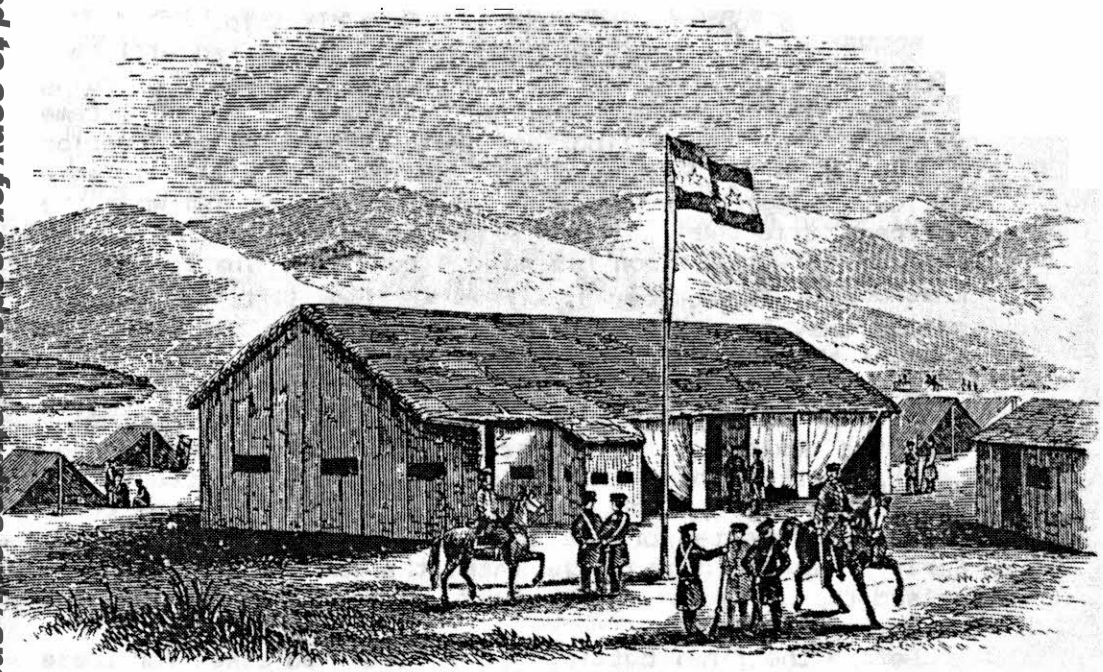
On December 6, Castillo Negrete returned to Santo Tomás to gather reinforcements for the final push, leaving Melendrez in command of his forces. The fight continued for several days. On three occasions, Melendrez sent a flag of truce asking Walker to surrender, but the latter returned

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<sup>10</sup>The filibusters' official despatches told of no casualties at the "Battle of La Paz," but an eyewitness unconnected with the expedition reported that four of the filibusters were killed in the boat as they were going off to the vessel after the battle. ("From Mazatlan and La Paz," *Daily Alta California*, 1/3/1854, p2 c3). Their names were not given, but Captain Chapman's name had been removed from the list of officers that Emory took to San Diego on November 30, and I have found no reference to him thereafter.



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FORT MCKIBBEN, EONSENADA

them unanswered. Inside the fort, Mrs. Chapman attended the sick and wounded and "was constantly at the post of danger, loading and passing the arms to the men, and repeatedly firing upon the enemy through the loopholes."<sup>11</sup> "Admiral" Snow had become a foot soldier, cut off from his ship.

The *Caroline's* mate, an Englishman named Alfred Williams, with a crew of five, was in charge of the vessel, guarding the two governors held captive on board. When it became apparent that the filibusters were surrounded by superior forces on shore, Rebolledo and Espinosa gave Williams "some delicate suggestions" as what would happen to him when the Mexicans triumphed. "These suggestions, and other special ones which worked upon his mind," convinced him to abandon Ensenada.<sup>12</sup> On December 9, Alfred Williams lifted anchor and sailed away to release the governors at Cape San Lucas and deliver the vessel to its owner at Guaymas.

At 2 A.M. the same morning, Lieut. Brewster crawled to the top of an adjoining hill south of the house, reconnoitered the Mexican camp, and returned without injury. He and Lieut. Crocker then led a squad on a surprise attack that routed the Mexicans on the hill. Two days later, the operation was repeated on the camp to the north of the house. Early on the morning of the 14th, the same squad again surprised the enemy concentrated upon another hill fronting the house.

Before the final battle, "our colonel had asked for these twenty men (as volunteers,) with the intention of commanding them in person, but was dissuaded from doing so by the men, who considered his services necessary to the defense of our temporary Fort."<sup>13</sup> According to the filibusters' estimate, the Mexicans lost eighteen to twenty killed and as many wounded during the three engagements, against only one filibuster wounded. Although those figures may be inflated, Melendrez was forced to lift the siege on December 14. Mean-

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<sup>11</sup>"Arrival of the Southerner," *San Francisco Herald*, 1/10/1854, p.1 c.1.

<sup>12</sup>"Intelligence from Mexico," *New York Herald*, 1/22/1854, p.2 c.1.

<sup>13</sup>"Special Express from Ensenada!!!" *San Diego Herald*, 12/24/1853, p.2 c.3.

while. Castillo Negrete, without resources, had been unable to raise additional troops in the sparsely populated Frontier.

Two months to the day after the *Forty Five Immortals* had left San Francisco, the flag of the "Two Stars" waved triumphantly over Fort McKibben at Ensenada. The "Republic of Lower California" had finally "settled on solid ground." Her navy had vanished with the *Caroline*, carrying away all the military stores and provisions. Her entire population: thirty able-bodied men, one woman, and six wounded filibusters, resided in one adobe house. But all of them had full confidence in Colonel Walker, who had proven a brave leader in battle. And they all pinned their hopes on Secretary of State Frederick Emory's mission to the sister Republic of the North, due to bear fruit at any moment.

# IMPORTANT NEWS FROM LOWER CALIFORNIA!

GREAT EXCITEMENT

BATTLE OF LA PAZ!!!!

LOWER CALIFORNIA DECLARED  
A REPUBLIC!

COL. WM. WALKER,  
DECLARED  
PRESIDENT!!

The *Goliath* arrived last night from San Diego, bringing us the *Herald* of the 3d inst., containing the most important and interesting news that has ever been received from that part of the country, and which is now absorbing the attention of every individual who has heard it.

The intelligence of the battle of La Paz, and the declaration of the independence of the Filibusters and the establishment of a Republic, was brought to San Diego by Mr. Emery, Secretary of State of the new Government. It was received there, says our correspondent, by the American population, with the wildest expressions of joy and delight. Referring to his letter in another part of the paper for further particulars, we present the official documents of the young Republic as published in the *San Diego Herald*. They give a succinct history of the whole movement.

NATION MAKERS, ONWARD GO!  
Alta, December 8, 1853

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## 20. President of Sonora

After Walker sailed on the *Caroline* from San Francisco, U.S. District Attorney S. W. Inge, a "custom-house party" appointee of President Pierce and former U.S. Congressman from Alabama, ignoring the evidence accumulated by Gen. Hitchcock and without his consent dismissed the suits against the *Arrow*.<sup>1</sup> The vessel then cleared for Sydney, as Crabb & associates made no efforts to reinforce Walker's forty-five immortals, obviously believing them doomed to fail.

In November 1853, the slavery propagandists in California were instead advancing a new plan to conquer Sonora. They were organizing two joint stock companies, the *Gila Steam Navigation Company* and the *Gila Mining & Manufacturing Company*, "with a capital of two million and a half dollars, to establish steam navigation on the Gila -- develop the mines in its vicinity, as well in Sonora as on the American side, and engage in the cultivation of the soil for the support of the miners and immigrants."<sup>2</sup>

When Frederick Emory arrived from Ensenada, no attempt had been made in California to supply or reinforce the forty-five immortals. The startling news he brought to San Francisco on December 7, produced a sudden surge of popular support for Walker. Within a few days, his backers organized four companies of fifty men each, officered by Mexican War veterans, openly recruited, armed and equipped without interference from the authorities. "Loafers, drunkards and

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<sup>1</sup>"Brig Arrow and Gen. Hitchcock," *San Francisco Herald*, 11/11/1853, p.2 c.3; "The Affair of the Arrow," *Alta*, 11/13/1853, p.2 c.2.

<sup>2</sup>"Topics of the Day," *San Francisco Herald*, 11/11/1853, p.2 c.1; "San Francisco," *Alta*, 11/16/1853, p.1 c.6; "The Main Purpose of the Fillibustering Expedition," *ibid.*, 12/26/1853, p.2 c.2.

rowdies of every description" made up most of the ranks.<sup>3</sup>

Simultaneously, Henry P. Watkins bought an old 235 tons bark, christened her *Anita*, placed her under the British flag, filled her with abundant provisions and ammunition, and had her ready for sailing in less than a week. The steamer *Thomas Hunt* towed the vessel out to sea from the foot of Clay street wharf at 1:15 A.M. on December 13, her decks crowded with at least 150 (some say 230) filibusters armed with rifles, Colt revolvers, and bowie knives. Almost all on board were more or less drunk.

When the steamer left the *Anita* at sea, it accidentally tore away the best part of the port bulwarks. A stiff breeze was blowing, which soon increased to a gale, tearing the foretopsail and jib into ribbons, as there were not sober men to furl them. In consequence of the loss of her bulwarks, the sea washed the deck fore and aft. The greater part of the stores being on deck, and being poorly secured, the casks, barrels, and boxes slid about and tumbled overboard, carrying with them two or three men, many others narrowly escaping. Nothing could be done to save them, for the lifeboats were also washed away.

Cruising at an average speed of 100 miles daily, the *Anita* arrived at Ensenada on December 18 and immediately landed her troops. The next day Walker ordered sixty-five men to Santo Tomás, which they took without a fight. Castillo-Negrete fled to San Diego, while Melendrez retreated south. Walker promptly declared them outlaws and confiscated their property, mainly their horses and cattle at La Grulla. Other residents fled to San Vicente, where they met on December 23 and addressed a Memorial to "Col. Don Wm. Walker," soliciting from him full protection and guarantees for their persons and properties "in the critical state in which this frontier is now placed." In return they pledged "not to take any part in the present political affairs of

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<sup>3</sup>The Republic Excitement." *Aita*, 12/16/1853, p.2 c.2.

the said frontier."<sup>4</sup>

Colonel William Walker. "President of Lower California." promptly issued a "Proclamation to the People" which, among other things, promised that:

Under the New Republic, no bandit will be permitted to disgrace our flag by placing it at the head of his plundering band; and the severest punishment will be reserved for those who seek impunity for rapine and crime under the pretences of loyalty and patriotism. . . .

Under the new Government all well-disposed persons will be protected in liberty of person and enjoyment of property. Religion will be respected and all will be encouraged in their reverence for and worship of the Great Being, without whose aid all earthly purposes fail, and under whose protection all national improvements are accomplished. And we call upon you as good citizens to assist us in carrying out the principles we recognize as the foundation of all our rights and all our means.<sup>5</sup>

Walker then made a call upon the inhabitants to unite in a convention, for the purpose of adopting a constitution. On Christmas eve, he issued a decree establishing the pay scale of the officers and soldiers of the Republic, ranging from \$10 per diem for Colonels to \$4 per diem for Privates. He then reorganized the "officers of government" in the New Republic: H. P. Watkins became Vice-President and "Admiral" Snow was made "Collector of Customs." Since all import and export duties had been abolished by presidential decree in November, what Snow would collect was fantasmal, befitting his "navy" and the entire "Republic of Lower California."

On December 29, Vice-President Henry P. Watkins, Quartermaster-General Oliver T. Baird, and three assistants, sailed on the Anita from Ensenada for San Francisco to procure sup-

<sup>4</sup>Memorial from Residents. \*San Francisco Herald, 1/13/1854, p.2 c.4.

<sup>5</sup>William Walker, \*Proclamation to the People of Lower California.\* Ibid.





ADJUTANT RULAND WRITING DISPATCHES

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plies, reinforcements, and a steamer for the filibusters. A few days later, Secretary of State Frederick Emory left headquarters on an exploring expedition of the overland route to the Colorado river and Sonora. He was well qualified for the mission, having served as the official surveyor of Yuba county in 1851; and his brother, U.S. Army Major William H. Emory, was the Principal Surveyor and Chief Astronomer for the American Boundary Commission along the Sonora frontier.

While waiting for the results of Watkins' and Emory's missions, Adjutant Samuel Ruland and fellow filibusters kept the San Diego and San Francisco papers well informed with glowing propaganda from the New Republic:

At Ensenada all remained quiet . . . nothing whatever to take place except the satisfying of animal wants, which are supplied by the numbers of cattle in possession of the expedition. . . . letters have been received . . . from the wealthiest and most influential rancheros in the country, offering to aid the expedition in any desired way.

The inhabitants are free in the intercourse with the officers and soldiers of the command, and all express a willingness to unite with the liberators in sustaining the new Government . . . Military posts are established at San Domingo and La Grulla . . . industriously engaged, with the help of a large number of Indians, in constructing durable fortifications . . . The supplies for the troops are abundant, and are well protected, . . . the men are in the highest spirits . . . The President is indefatigable in his devotion to the welfare of the people and his army . . . The soldiers are constantly drilled in camp under the able tuition of commanders of companies, who are all, without exception, officers of experience . . .<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"Later from Lower California," *Alta*, 1/10/1854, p.2 c.4.

President Walker . . . has just gone with a party as escort, towards San Rafael, — on an excursion the nature of which none of us know. In fact, the Colonel does not talk much to any of us, but with all his quietness, has more goaheadness in him than any man of this age. Where is the other man who would have attempted what he has? And where, above all, is the other man who would have succeeded as he has done?

The only fault about him is, that the men of the Battalion have *too much* confidence in him: it is not possible to make them believe that any sized party can whip us if we have him with us, — and perhaps it is so: for we have tried our leader and think we know him.<sup>7</sup>

But Adjutant Ruland failed to mention that the *Caroline* had departed with all the provisions and that the *Anita's* supplies had been washed away in the ocean. The first inkling of the true state of affairs in the New Republic appeared in the *San Diego Herald* on January 7, 1854, when it reported that "The Special Express from Ensenada" had been hotly pursued just south of the border "by a party of 15 mounted Spaniards and Indians," and barely managed to escape across the line.<sup>8</sup>

Don Juan Bandini then returned to San Diego after spending several weeks in the New Republic and told how Walker's men had made several forays on La Grulla and Santo Tomás, appropriating the people's horses, saddles, and what little corn they had. He cited the case of Don José Sáez, who refused to comply, offered resistance, and was shot on the spot:

. . . Fortunately, the bullet, which struck him on the forehead, glanced off, only grazing the skull without penetrating the bone. The shot stunned him,

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<sup>7</sup>"From Lower California," *Ibid.*, 1/24/1854, p.2 c.3.

<sup>8</sup>"The Special Express for Ensenada," *San Diego Herald*, 1/7/1854, p.2 c.1.

however, so that he fell to the ground. Walker's men therefore tied him up, filled a cart with his corn and other loot, and climaxed their foray by proudly taking their victim along to show to Walker, their president, as proof of their heroic deeds.

Sáez's appearance, after travelling for ten leagues, in his wounded and wretchedly cramped position, would have aroused the pity of anyone. The president accordingly showed his indulgence by pardoning the *crime of the victim* and setting him free.<sup>9</sup>

The incident led to a duel between two of Walker's men, Major Timothy Crocker and Lieut. Joseph Ruddach, one of whom was for, and the other against Sáez. They fought at ten paces, with Colt's navy revolvers, and both wound up in the "Military Hospital," seriously wounded. The Sáez incident illustrates the importance of corn and cattle in the filibusters' monotonous diet at the moment. One deserter reported scarcities:

. . . Provisions, moreover, soon began to be scarce, and in a little while we had nothing but corn and cattle. Our bread (ship biscuit) lasted but the first two or three weeks, and everything else soon followed 'en suite.' At last we buckled to the beef and corn, and out of these two articles made quite a variety of dishes. Fried beef for breakfast, stewed beef for dinner, boiled beef for supper, burnt corn for coffee, parched corn for bread, ground parched corn made excellent 'flap jacks,' and parched corn with some boiled sugar poured over it made first rate candy.

Then there were other dishes made by the combination of beef and corn, for which we had no names, and some which deserved none, but any how they went

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<sup>9</sup>From San Diego. \*Alta, 1/15/1854, p.2 c.2; Robert G. Cleland. "Bandini's Account of William Walker's Invasion of Lower California." Huntington Library Quarterly Vol. 1944. p. 160.

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down; and the principal occupation of the camp from sunrise to sunset was cooking beef and corn and corn and beef. The officers, however, having been caught regaling themselves on soft bread while the men had none — somebody or bodies, to the officers unknown, varied the monotony of the camp by secretly tearing down the oven.<sup>10</sup>

Those conditions produced much dissatisfaction and increased desertions from the New Republic. But for the ruling trio in Walker's Inner Crescent City, such hardships were insignificant and temporary, and would end upon the arrival of Vice-President Watkins with the steamer, supplies, and reinforcements from San Francisco for the descent on Sonora. In preparation for that movement, and upon receipt of advices by courier from San Diego which assured Walker that the expected "material aid" would arrive soon, on January 18 he issued four more decrees:

DECREE No. 1 — All Decrees of a general nature heretofore published as Decrees of the Republic of Lower California, are hereby republished as Decrees of the Republic of Sonora.

DECREE No. 2 — The Republic of Sonora is hereby divided into two States, to be styled respectively, the "State of Sonora" and the "State of Lower California." . . . [Boundaries defined]

DECREE No. 3 — The name of the Republic is hereby changed, and henceforth all Decrees, Laws and Processes issued, shall run in the name of the "Republic of Sonora."

DECREE No. 4 — The State of Sonora . . . is hereby constituted a portion of the Republic of Lower California.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>J. H. Reid, "The Ensenada," *National Magazine* Vol. 4 (Jan.-June, 1854), p. 505.

<sup>11</sup>"Proclamations of President Walker," *San Francisco Herald*, 1/30/1854, p.2 c.2.

Each closed with the phrase "Given under my hand, at Fort McKibben, this eighteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four." Nos. 1 and 2 were signed by "Wm. Walker, President of Sonora"; Nos. 3 and 4, by "Wm. Walker, President of Lower California." The outside world received these decrees with unanimous disapproval. Even Adjutant Ruland was left speechless by Walker's behavior, for he transmitted the decrees to the Sister Republic of the North without comment. Others, like the *Alta*, ridiculed Walker's bizarre behavior:

The news from the lower country which we publish this morning is the richest which has astonished the world since the days of Mungo Park. When the petty prince of a handful of sable Ethiopians, after filling himself with camel's milk and hominy, gave orders to his prime minister to go out and give a loud blast upon his horn and announce that all the world could go to dinner, it was thought by the traveler that the climax of the ridiculous was reached. But President Walker has got ahead of Prince Gumbo. He is a veritable Napoleon, of whom it may be said as of the mighty Corsican, "he disposes of courts and crowns and camps and cabinets as mere titular dignitaries of the chess board."

Santa Anna must feel obliged to the new President that he has annexed any more of his territory than Sonora. It would have been just as cheap and easy to have annexed the whole of Mexico at once, and would have saved the trouble of making future proclamations . . .<sup>12</sup>

Of course, the *Alta* editorialist had no way of knowing that his felicitous comparison with Prince Gumbo was appropriately pertinent to the "Gabriel Gumbo" in Walker's shadow. He also ignored the special significance of "this eighteenth day" in each decree -- the day that Ellen died.

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<sup>12</sup>The news from the lower country," *Alta*, 1/30/1854, p.2 c.1.

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He correctly called Walker "a veritable Napoleon." but was unaware of the military genius of Dick Dobs and of the Oedipal flames that raged in Walker's Inner Crescent City. These internal flames became external on January 20, 1854, projected in Walker's "Address to the Army":

**SOLDIERS OF SONORA:** You are about to undertake a most glorious enterprise. You start to cross the Colorado in order to defend a helpless people from the attacks of merciless savages. For years the population of Sonora has been the prey of the Apache Indians. Their property has been taken from them — their wives and children have been massacred, or consigned to a captivity worse than death, by the torturing fire of a ruthless foe.

The men of Sonora have been forced to see their wives and daughters ravished; and babes at the breast have been torn from their mothers, and murdered before the eyes of captive parents. All these outrages, at which the civilization of the whole continent blushes, have been permitted by the government which pretends to control the people of Sonora. Mexico has stood by, and her silence and inactivity have so encouraged the Apache, that he now threatens to ride into Guaymas, and render the whole country from mountains to sea, subject to the savage will, and tributary to his bestial desires.

You, soldiers! are now called upon to wrest the country from the rule of the Apache, and make it the abode of order and civilization. It is possible that in your chivalrous efforts you may be opposed by the Mexican Government. If you are, when you meet the enemy, let the holiness of your cause move your arms and strengthen your souls.

When you strike at a Mexican foe, remember that you strike at an auxiliary of the Apache — at an accessory to the murder of innocent children, and the rape of helpless women. Fill your mind with these ideas, and victory will follow you in the plains of Sonora. In such a cause failure is impossible, and triumph certain. The God of battles is

with you, and you will be strong, and prevail against a host of enemies.

(Signed) WM. WALKER, Commander in-Chief of the Army of Sonora.<sup>13</sup>

Naturally, the outside world considered Walker's proclamation, "the very climax of the ridiculous." and the *Alta* again ridiculed his megalomaniac behavior:

He is the champion of the oppressed of every land, and when he has set free the poor Mexicans he will go over and help the Turks. He is the veritable Don Quixotte of the age; the knight who will avenge the wrongs of "all the world and the rest of mankind."<sup>14</sup>

But Col. Dick Dobs, Commander in-Chief of the Army of Sonora, was in earnest. As discontent mounted and defections continued, Walker paraded all the Companies on the morning of the 24th of January, "and made a very powerful and animated address to his troops." He concluded by administering an oath of allegiance to his men: He requested them to hold up their right hand and swear "before Almighty God, to stand by him through weal or woe, until his flag was planted upon the walls of Sonora."<sup>15</sup>

Most of the men raised their hands and took the oath. Several of them, as they afterwards stated, were so carried away by the excitement of Walker's address, that they scarcely knew the effect of the solemn oath they were taking. Others of the party refused to raise their hands or take the oath. Walker, thereupon, very excited, proclaimed that all such were at liberty to leave. As a result, forty-six men started off on foot from Fort McKibben towards San Diego, taking with them their rifles and a little boiled

<sup>13</sup>William Walker, "Address to the Army," *San Francisco Herald*, 2/4/1854, p.2 c.4.

<sup>14</sup>"The Latest News," *Alta*, 2/4/1854, p.2 c.1.

<sup>15</sup>"The Other Side of the Story," *San Francisco Herald*, 2/4/1854, p.2 c.4.



corn in their pockets.

One hundred and forty filibusters remained loyal to Walker. Some of the more violent stood in front of the camp with a small brass piece loaded with cannister, ready to fire upon the mutineers, but Walker forbade it. Instead, he and a party of fifteen well-armed officers pursued those who had just left. As told by several defectors:

When they overtook them, Walker made a strong appeal to them, telling them how few there were left behind — about one hundred and forty we are informed — and that he did not want their arms as a gift, but as a means of defence for those who really needed them, and who without them would be exposed to the savage vengeance of the Mexicans. Capt. Cuttrell's company, it seems, had no other arms than revolvers.

Walker talked kindly to them and told them to go back and get some rations, before they started off on a long journey, if they would go. The only assault was on the part of Capt. Brewster, who knocked down an unarmed man named Jackson, with the butt of his rifle and cut his head severely.

The men refused to go back, and but two gave up their rifles, the others having either hid theirs or smashed them against the rocks. Walker's party then went back to camp and the mutineers continued on their march to San Diego.<sup>16</sup>

Under the circumstances, it is amazing that three out of four men took the oath and remained with Walker at Fort McKibben, ready to conquer Sonora for the South. Most of them were personally opposed to slavery, but the ardor of adventure inspired them while the lure of gold enticed them. Despite numerous ominous signs, the charismatic Walker held his small army together. And that charisma was but the outward expression of the everlasting Oedipal flame consuming

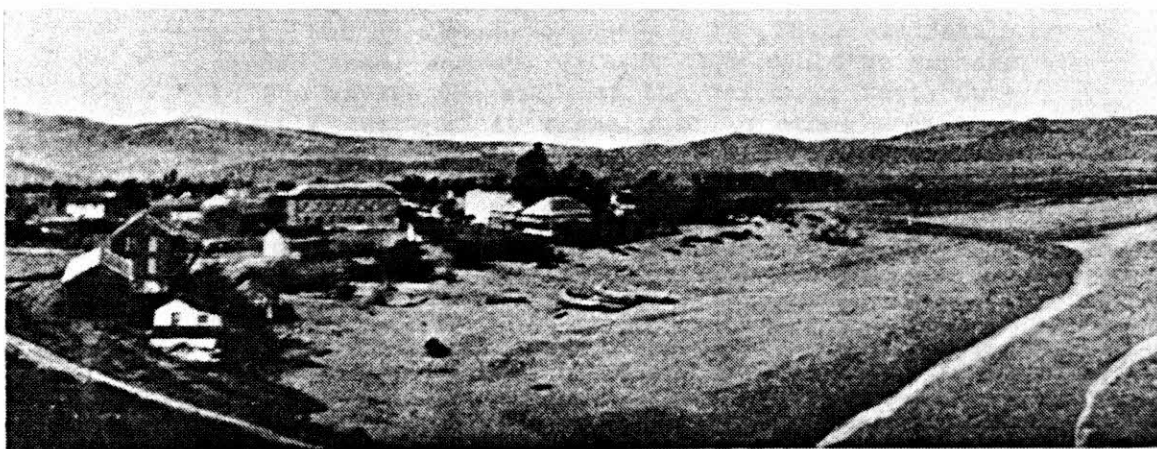
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<sup>16</sup>ibid.

Walker's Inner Crescent City.

But unknown to Walker and his men, events had already transpired that sealed their fate for certain. Precisely on January 18, the day William Walker decreed himself President of Sonora, the president of the Republic of the North, Franklin Pierce, had proclaimed the destruction of Walker's Republic. In other words, at that point in time, Walker's expedition was no longer useful for his country or for the slavery propagandists. Consequently, his Southern backers promptly discarded and disowned him, without any qualms.

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ENSENADA, CAPITAL OF THE DISTRITO NORTE.

ENSENADA  
FIFTY YEARS AFTER WALKER