Part One:
MAHOMET'S PARADISE LOST

. . . te veo en el dia Patria amada,
Como espectro de horror sumida al antro
Sin gloria ni esplendor, palida y triste
Dime ¿acaso fuiste
Del bárbaro otentote destrosada
Sin piedad, por tu luto y tu quebranto?
. . . . . .
"Los bárbaros no arrancan mis lamentos
"Ni causaron mis males", me contesta,
"Fueron mis hijos con sangrienta mano
"Que con furor insano
"Hicieron mas sensibles mis tormentos.
"Cada cual á su vez el dardo enhiesta
"E invocandome madre, cruel lacera
"A quien les sustentaba en pasada era.
"Cual la madre infeliz de Neron fiero
"Fallezco al golpe de su propio acero".

Gregorio Juárez.
A Mi Patria: Cancion elegiaca. (1845).

1. Hell on Earth

At the time when Byron Cole carried the Castellón contract to Sacramento, a new American envoy cruised down the Caribbean, fated to become entangled with the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny in Nicaragua. John Hill Wheeler, lawyer, author of a *History of North Carolina,* and Assistant Secretary to President Pierce, received his appointment as Minister Resident of the United States near the Republic of Nicaragua on August 2, 1854, and in November he was on his way to the new post.

During the ensuing two years, official duties brought him in intimate contact with Walker as one of the leading actors on the stage. A natural proclivity for history compelled him to record events for posterity. In 1856 Wheeler prepared a manuscript for publication, which he titled "Nicaragua, the Centre of Central America." In it he traced "the History of Nicaragua, from the most remote period, to the present time; its Topography, Products, Resources, Mines and Minerals; its Revolutions, their causes, progress and terminations, especially a faithful account of the late spirit-stirring occurrences, with truthful sketches of the prominent actors therein, native and American, collated from official documents and actual observation."[1]

The turn of events prevented the publication of his book, and Wheeler's manuscript today gathers the dust of another century on a shelf at the Library on Congress in Washington. The epigraph he inscribed under the title, aptly synthesized the Nicaragua he saw in the 1850's:

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[1]John Hill Wheeler, "Nicaragua," The Papers of John Hill Wheeler, vol. 21, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 1.

" -- Quaeque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars [magna] fui"
Virgil.

"This region surely is not of [the] earth;
Was it not dropt from Heaven? Not a grove,
Citron, or pine or cedar; not a grot,
Sea-worn and mantled, with the gadding vine;
But breathes enchantment."
Rogers.

Wheeler described in detail the enchanted region, which in times gone by the Spaniards had called Mahomet's Paradise: "A most lovely country, redolent with sweet scented flowers, overhung with orange trees, lemons, cocoa nuts and every kind of tropical fruits."[2] In the seventeenth century, Thomas Gage, an English traveller, had also noted the paradisaical Nicaraguan landscape and commented on its Spanish denomination:

> [In the city of León] the chief delight of the inhabitants consisteth in their houses, and in the pleasure of the country adjoining, and in the abundance of all things for the life of man more than in any extraordinary riches, which there are not so much enjoyed as in other parts of America. They are contented with fine gardens, with variety of singing birds, and parrots, with plenty of fish and flesh, which is cheap, and with gay houses, and so lead a delicious, lazy, and idle life, not aspiring much to trade and traffic, though they have near unto them the lake . . . And specially from the pleasure of this city is all that province of Nicaragua called by the Spaniards, Mahomet's Paradise.[3]

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[2] Ibid., p. 33.

[3] Thomas Gage, *A New Survey of the West Indies, 1648* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928), p. 340.

But Nicaragua was, in fact, Paradise Lost. When Wheeler landed at San Juan del Norte on December 20th, 1854, the town was slowly rising from the ashes to which it had been reduced six months earlier, bombarded on July 13th by the U.S. sloop-of-war *Cyane.* The Mosquito flag--blue and white stripes, with a Union jack in the corner--waved on Nicaraguan soil under the protection of English battleships. As Wheeler entered the country, he found its internal conditions "deplorable, torn to pieces by wars."[4]

He landed at an island on the San Juan river, "which is a perfect gem. This lovely spot rivals all I have dreamed of romance or tropical beauty. It is a place where Calypso and her nymphs might have luxuriated, and spent 'one long summer's day in innocence and mirth.'"[5] But a few miles up river, on the summit of a high hill, an old fort, *El Castillo Viejo,* stood in gloomy grandeur:

> [It was] . . . constructed in 1747 [actually 1675] by the Spanish Government, and it bore evidences of great strength and skill of construction, and seems to defy alike the vicissitudes of war and the ravages of Time.
>
> . . . This place has again very recently been the scene of bloody conflict. On Saturday, 16 inst. the forces of the Democratic party, under Col. L. Zelaya, were attacked by General Corral, and after a sharp conflict, it was taken by the latter, who had three killed and thirteen wounded. Eleven of the other party were killed, and among them, the Colonel.
>
> The stains of war were still fresh on the wharf, and other places where they fought. This was the first sight I had of blood in Central America, and trust that it may be the last. The war is waged with ferocity, and prison-

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[4]John Hill Wheeler, "Diary," The Papers of John Hill Wheeler, box 1, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 26 (Dec. 23, 1854).

[5]Wheeler, "Nicaragua," p. 25.

ers were mercilessly murdered on this occasion.[6]

The government forces under Corral and the rebels under Zelaya represented, respectively, the Conservatives and Liberals, the two traditional parties who fought for power and domination in Nicaragua. When traversing the isthmus of Rivas, Wheeler passed through one continual garden *(huertas)* of fruits and flowers, yet he saw not a plough, spade, or a hoe in all the country, and he had experienced problems in securing provisions for his party. Along the road, "the men were all gone to the Army," and the women he met "had nothing for either man or horse and *'muy pobre'* very poor."[7]

Upon arriving at the capital and crossing the lines of the Leonese army besieging Granada, Wheeler and his men were attacked: "the forces in town seeing a number of persons enter the quarters of their invading enemy, fired a 24 pounder at us, the ball of which struck within six feet of me, wheezing and tearing everything before it, and buried itself in a wall on the opposite side of the yard."[8] Wheeler recorded in his diary what he saw as Nicaragua's tragedy:

> This lovely country equal in climate and productions to Cuba is thus devastated by the ferocious passions of man. Like Rosse of Scotland, Nicaragua may say--
>
> *Alas, poor country!*
> *Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot*
> *Be called our mother but our grave, where nothing*
> *But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;*
> *Where sighs and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,*
> *Are made!* *Macbeth*, Act IV.iii.[9]

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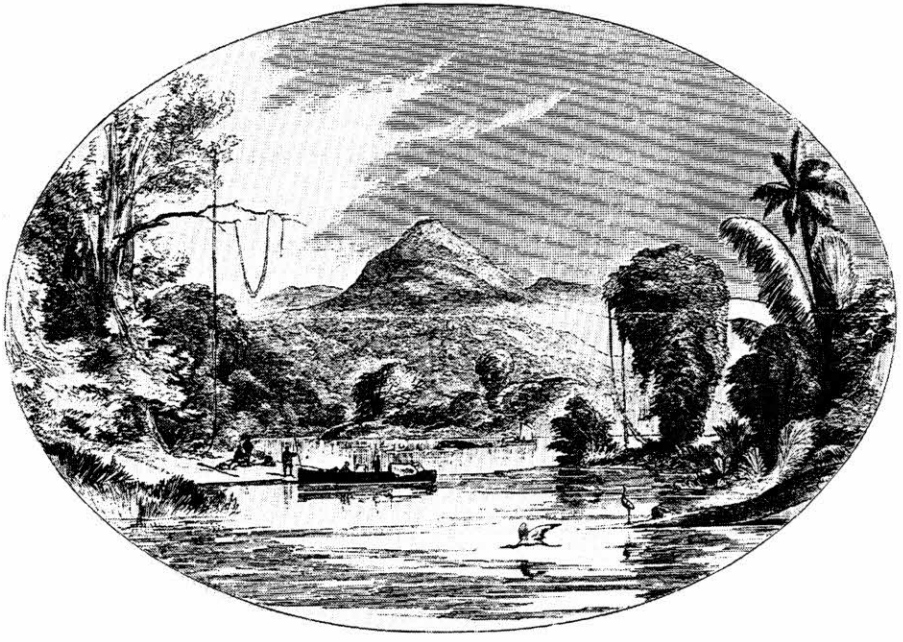
[6] Ibid., p. 27.

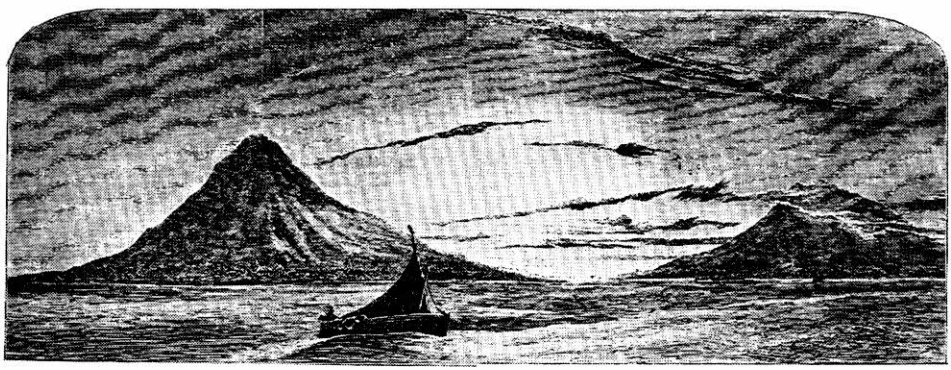
[7] Ibid., p. 38.

[8] Ibid., p. 43.

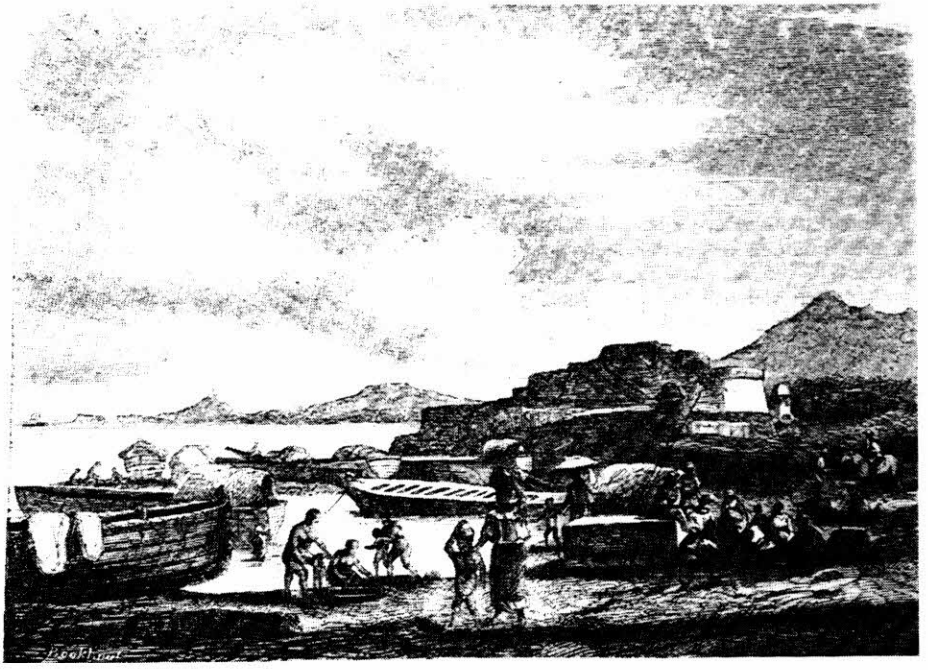
[9] Wheeler, "Diary," p. 26.



San Juan River
San Carlos River Junction



Ometepe Island, Lake Nicaragua
Concepción and Maderas volcanoes



Lakeshore, Granada

"a delicious, lazy, and idle life, not aspiring much to trade and traffic, though they have near unto them the lake" (p. 5)

Indigo works
"the men were all gone to the Army . . . " (p. 5)

That particular revolution had begun on the 5th of May, 1854, marking but a link in a lengthening chain of political turmoil that had continually afflicted Nicaragua after its independence from Spain in 1821. But the particular tragedy of that lovely country predated its recent turmoil and hence an historical review will place Nicaragua's tragedy in perspective.

There is, to begin, no record of the time, the place, or the people who originally settled in Nicaragua. The remnants of idols mutely suggest that the land was early inhabited by Indian tribes who made human sacrifices to their various gods. The earliest recorded eyewitness accounts establish that slavery and cannibalism were common among the aborigines at the time of the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century:

> . . . This reverend friar [Fry Francisco de Bobadilla] then had thirteen Indian chiefs and priests from their infernal temples gathered together, and began by asking them if they were originally from that land of Nicaragua, or where did they come from?
>
> *A.*-- We are not originally from this land, and long ago our ancestors came to it, and we do not remember how long ago because it was not in our time.
>
> *Q.*-- What land did your ancestors come from . . . and why did they come here and abandoned it?
>
> *A.*-- Our ancestors came from a land called Ticomega and Maguatega, towards the side where the sun sets; and they came because they had masters whom they served, and who mistreated them.
>
> *Q.*-- Were those masters, Christians, or Indians?
>
> *A.*-- Indians they were.
>
> *Q.*-- How did they serve them? Why did they come?
>
> *A.*-- They ploughed, and planted, and served, as we now serve the Christians, and their masters kept them for this, and to eat them, and that is why they left their homes frightened and came to Nicaragua. . . .
>
> *Q.*-- Who makes rain and sends everything to you?

A.-- Water is sent by Quiateot, who is a man, and has a father and a mother, and his father's name is Omeyateite, and his mother Omeyatecigoat; and they are at one end of the world, where the sun rises in the heavens.

Q.-- Where and how do you ask for water to him who you say sends it?

A.-- To ask for water we go to a temple that we have for him, and therein boys and girls are killed and sacrificed; upon cutting off their heads, we pour the blood for the idols and stone figures that we have in that house of prayer of these gods, which in our tongue we call teoba.

Q.-- What do you do with the bodies of those so killed and sacrificed?

A.-- The little ones are buried, and the bodies of big Indians are eaten by the chief caciques, and nobody else partakes of them.

. . . . . .

Q.-- When somebody comes to poverty, what does he do? How does he support himself?

A.-- When people have sold everything they own and come to extreme necessity, the parents sell their children, and anybody may sell himself, if he desires, and for any amount he may desire; and they may ransom each other if the master of the slave wills it, but not otherwise.

Q.-- This human flesh you eat, how do you do it? Is it because of lack of food, or why?

A.-- The way we do it is by cutting off the head of the victim who is to die, slicing the body in small pieces, and boiling them in large pots, with salt, and garlic, and whatever is required for cooking. . . .[10]

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[10] Eduardo Pérez Valle, ed., *Nicaragua en los Cronistas de Indias: Oviedo* (Managua: Fondo de Promoción Cultural del Banco de América, 1976), pp. 310-342.

Human life had little value among the aborigines. Slaves were sold at market for one hundred cocoa beans, which was the price of ten rabbits. Parents peddled their children, knowing full well that whoever bought them "would eat them, if he wished."[11] Thus there was a native tradition of violence coupled with the cruelty of the Spanish Conquest in the sixteenth century that made life nasty, brutish, and short. A revealing episode shows how the Spanish contributed to and accelerated this oppressive violence.

In 1528, some Indians killed six Spaniards and ate them, horses and all. The Spanish governor forthwith rounded up eighteen Indian chiefs and put them to death at the public square in León. On Tuesday, June 16th, in a sort of Roman circus, he unleashed a pack of dogs on them:

> Each Indian was provided with a stick, and was told through an interpreter to defend himself . . . and each Indian was confronted with five or six pups . . . and he managed to whack some on the head. And when he thought he had gained victory with his stick, they let loose one or two older and experienced wolfhounds that instantly dragged the Indian to the ground, tore him to pieces, and all the dogs would then charge and devour of him as they pleased.[12]

The eighteen corpses were left on the square to serve as example, until the Governor gave permission to remove the bodies when the stench was unbearable on the fourth day. "No sooner the proclamation had been issued when the Indians of the district, who daily come to the *tianguez* or market in the same square, sliced the bodies into many pieces and gleefully took every last bit home, feigning to throw them away at the countryside, for they knew that the Christians

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[11] Ibid. p. 445.

[12] Ibid., p. 442.

disapproved of that dish and had warned them not to eat it. But they thought that God had sent them a very good dinner with the last proclamation."[13]

Beginning in 1522, two hundred Spaniards had invaded Nicaragua, whose population exceeded half a million Indians. The Europeans rapidly conquered the many tribes that were in perpetual strife with each other in the western and central parts of the country, and shipped them away as slaves. They simply rounded up the Indians and marched them down to the Pacific coast, where they were herded into small ships and taken to the markets in Panama and Peru, often without even taking the trouble to brand them.

By 1535, one third of the Nicaraguan population had been disposed of in this fashion. A pneumonic plague pandemic in 1529-31, followed by measles in 1532-34, wiped out another third. Battles and other famines did the rest. When the first great census was taken in 1548, only 11,137 Indians remained of the 600,000 people estimated to have resided there in 1520.

The devastation of three short decades was not repaired in the three subsequent centuries. At the declaration of Independence in 1821, ending three hundred years of colonial rule, Nicaragua had 175,000 inhabitants: 2/5 Indians, 2/5 mixed, and less than 1/5 whites. From the beginning, the division of parties between *fiebres* (liberals) and *serviles* (conservatives) was very marked, and a general conflagration exploded in 1824. But the exorbitant excesses committed in the first massacres after Independence, were not merely a reflection of party strife:

> The war of 1824 pitted town against town, family against family, relatives and neighbors against each other, for no other reason than an insane craving of mutual destruction. The country was left in ruins, farms abandoned, and formerly wealthy people deprived of shelter, begging charity at the roadside.

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[13] Ibid., p. 444.

> Since criminals could not be punished during the war, crimes multiplied dreadfully with impunity; murder, robbery, and rape, were committed without restrictions of any kind.
>
> Such a war could never be the expression of political parties, and much less an overflow of exaggerated patriotism; such a war was just a running riot of vile passions.[14]

During 14 days of siege, battles raged daily at León, where some districts were reduced to ashes, causing the death of many innocent people. And such a war was just a prelude of things to come. Its cost was quite high in another sense, too, for Nicaragua lost a valuable portion of its territory. The southern district of Nicoya or Guanacaste preferred peace and progress instead of war and desolation, and hence the people there incorporated themselves and their land into neighboring Costa Rica. The succeeding revolutions kept Nicaragua from ever recovering it.

The next blood bath, known as the war of Cerda and Argüello, after two opposing leaders, lasted two years. It began in February, 1827, with the murder of political prisoners in the jail of Granada; it ended in December, 1828, with the murder of more political prisoners on a desert island called *La Pelona,* in Lake Nicaragua. The bodies, thrown into the lake with large rocks tied to their feet, were carried many miles under water by capricious currents and dislodged on shore, rocks and all, right in front of Granada. The Nicaraguan historian, José Dolores Gámez, notes that "torrents of blood were shed, devastation and death hovered everywhere, and a frightful anarchy seemed to go on forever."[15]

During this time, one of Cerda's men, nicknamed *el*

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[14] José Dolores Gámez, *Historia de Nicaragua* (Managua: Tipografía de "El País," 1889), P. 369.

[15] Ibid., p. 389.

desorejador (the ear cropper), presented his chief with collections of enemy ears, cropped from prisoners, strung through his sword. In turn, Argüello's routine consisted in cropping off noses from those whom he had pardoned. Although Manuel Antonio de la Cerda, the first head of state elected by the Constituent Assembly of Nicaragua, did not lose his nose, he did lose his life and was executed by an Argüello-faction firing squad.

Then came the war of 1833, with large scale battles near León and Masaya, and a vicious assault on Managua by the combined forces of Granada and León. Colonel Cándido Flores led the next revolt in 1834, pitting the former allies against each other, until the rebel leaders were captured and shot. Colonels Bernardo Méndez and Casto Fonseca overthrew the government in 1837, ruthlessly murdering head of state Don José Zepeda and other functionaries. January, 1838, witnessed a new insurrection which was swiftly crushed.

Anarchy in Mahomet's Paradise was compounded by the fierce struggle raging in Central America between the liberal forces of Francisco Morazán and the conservatives represented on the battlefield by Guatemalan President Rafael Carrera. Nicaragua had seceded from the Central American Federation on April 30, 1838, when it was quite evident that the Union was already irretrievably shattered. Allied with Honduras, Nicaragua then waged war against Morazán at El Salvador.

At that juncture, the first U. S. diplomatic agent to Central America, John L. Stephens, arrived in the region but was unable to present credentials to a Federal Government that no longer existed. He explored Mayan ruins instead, and returned home to publish his *Incidents of Travel* in which he recorded his impressions of Nicaragua during his visit in February-March, 1840:

> Though the richest state in the [Central American] confederacy in natural gifts, the population [of Nicaragua] is the most miserable.
>
> . . . The troops of Nicaragua, fourteen hundred strong, had marched into Honduras, and uniting with

those of the latter state, had routed, with great slaughter, the troops of Morazan . . . and the records of civil wars among Christian people nowhere present a bloodier page.

No quarter was given or asked. After the battle, fourteen officers were shot in cold blood, and not a single prisoner lived as a monument of mercy. . . . The Nicaraguans returned to León in triumph, with three hundred and fifty muskets, several stands of colours, and as a proof of the way in which they had done their work, without a single prisoner.

. . . [At León] in walking through its streets I saw palaces in which nobles had lived dismantled and roofless, and occupied by half-starved wretches, pictures of misery and want; and on one side an immense field of ruins, covering half the city.

. . . At about eight o'clock we heard the tramp of cavalry in the streets, and gathering inside the doorway, saw about six hundred men taking up their line of march. There was no music, no shouting, no waving of handkerchiefs, to cheer them as defenders of their country or as adventurers in the road to glory; but in the dark, and barefooted, their tread seemed stealthy; people looked at them with fear; and it seemed rather the sally of a band of conspirators than a march by the soldiers of a republic.[16]

The Leonese troops were overtly destined for El Salvador, and they actually marched out on the San Salvador road; but at midnight they made a circuit, and took the route for Granada, in order to catch the city unawares and compel it to pay by bayonets, monies that by the Constitution, it was not bound to pay.

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[16]John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), vol. I pp. 405, 422-423; vol. II pp. 24-27.

Great Marshal Casto Fonseca then gained power at León, a military dictator masquerading as a Liberal head of state. He imposed onerous contributions at whim; tortures and floggings were commonplace; death sentences and deportations were carried out without the formality of legal proceedings:

> . . . it thwarted the growth and progress of all elements of civilization and general happiness; the press was silent; and the entire State, with everybody under arms, had been transformed into a vast military camp, each village turned into an anarchical barracks by the insolent excesses of subordinate officers who became politically omnipotent under a negligent administration. Classrooms and public schools were closed; farmfields and workshops were deserted; commerce sank into a profound lethargy, and all sources of public wealth were exhausted.[17]

Granada revolted August 29, 1844, simultaneous with the breaking of hostilities between Nicaragua and Honduras. General Santos Guardiola defeated the Nicaraguan forces in Choluteca, and in November the allied armies of El Salvador and Honduras invaded Nicaragua. When Salvadoran general Francisco Malespín laid siege to León, Granada supported the invaders. Contingents from Rivas, with muskets, and 400 Indians from Matagalpa with bows and arrows, also joined Malespín's *Ejército Protector de la Paz* (Guardian Army of Peace) in the siege of the Nicaraguan capital. Fonseca's defenders, in turn, were helped by General Trinidad Cabañas and his party of exiled liberals from El Salvador and Honduras:

> After fifty-nine days of heroic resistance, the town

[17] Pedro Francisco de la Rocha, *Revista Política sobre la Historia de la Revolución de Nicaragua* (Granada: Impr. de la Concepción, 1847), p.6.

> [León] was conquered by force of arms on January 24th, 1845, most of its inhabitants slain by the knife, and their homes given up to plunder and the torch.
>
> The triumph inflamed the sanguinary instincts of the conqueror, who under the influence of liquor had many people executed by firing squad, among them twenty-four of León's most prominent citizens.
>
> Senator Madriz, acting head of State, the Grand Marshal, and Cabinet Minister Don Crescencio Navas, also met the fate assigned by Malespín to the vanquished. The caudillo's ferocity was akin to madness. Father Crespín, virtuous chaplain of San Juan de Dios Hospital, went to him to beg mercy for the poor patients being murdered on their hospital cots, but Malespín's only answer consisted in ordering the immediate execution of the priest.[18]

José León Sandoval was inaugurated Head of State on April 4, 1845, and two months later he nipped in the bud a revolution led by José María *(Chelón)* Valle, putting him in prison. Valle promptly escaped, gathered resources in El Salvador, and returned to capture Chinandega on July 24th. Skirmishes and battles ensued, staining with blood the soil of Subtiaba, Managua, Chichigalpa, Chinandega, Somoto, and Matagalpa. "Anarchy in the northern department reached such proportions, that the very existence of society was believed doomed."[19]

Valle was routed by the government forces under General José Trinidad Muñoz, but the process was repeated in 1846 when Bernabé Somoza, a comrade of *Chelón,* crossed over the Gulf from El Salvador and captured Chinandega in April. "Somoza's standard meant extermination; he celebrated his arrival by murdering a number of people, among them four of

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[18] Gámez, *Historia*, p. 515.

[19] Ibid., p. 523.

the most prominent local citizens."[20]

Savage Indians, instigated and led by the Alvarez brothers in Matagalpa, massacred entire villages with their machetes, and generally terrorized everyone else. Natividad Gallardo in León, *Siete Pañuelos* in Segovia, Francisco Sancho in Somoto, and other gangs of bandits, "without God and without banner," additionally accelerated Nicaragua's anarchy and exhaustion as they plundered the country.

But it was not only Nicaraguans who were plundering. Small Costa Rica, blessed by peace and prosperity, busily absorbed the Nicaraguan district of Guanacaste, which after 1824 remained permanently part of that country. In addition, England held sway over eastern Nicaragua, claiming that it was the "Protectress of the Mosquito Kingdom." Armed with that pretext, British warships, on January 1st, 1848, took possession of the harbor of San Juan del Norte, the Atlantic terminal of the proposed interoceanic canal. That act of aggression was only the latest episode in an ancient conflict raging along the Nicaraguan frontier since early colonial times.

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[20] Ibid.

2. Fabulous Mosquito Kingdom

The eastern slope or Mosquito Shore was a different country altogether from the rest of Mahomet's Paradise. The tropical savanna and rain forests extending from the cordillera in central Nicaragua to the Caribbean Sea, was the abode of Sumu tribes who lived by hunting and fishing in the wild and harsh environment which the conquistadores were inclined to by-pass. Along the coast and river mouths, the Sumus came in contact with English traders and settlers, as well as African slaves, and hence by the last half of the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of northeastern Nicaragua were Sambo-Miskitos, a distinctive Afro-Sumo mixed race.

Throughout the colonial period, the Sambo-Miskitos were allies of the Anglo-Saxon and other buccaneers in their raids against the Spanish Main. And such raids were numerous in Nicaragua:

A combined buccaneer-Miskito band led by Captain John Morris surprised and plundered Granada on June 30, 1665, in broad daylight. In 1670, a pirate called Prince Lubborough ascended the San Juan river with 200 men, routed a 37-man stockade styled "Fort San Carlos" along the way, and again sacked Granada.

The erection of *El Castillo de la Inmaculada (Castillo Viejo)* in 1675 stopped further incursions by way of the San Juan river, but the pirates shifted their operations to the unprotected Pacific coast and for the third time in twenty years caught Granada off-guard and looted it in April, 1685. Eight months later, 400 buccaneers landed at Realejo, marched to the capital city, León, overpowered a weak defense, and settled down for a leisurely sacking and torching of the town.

In 1689 the buccaneers raided several mining towns in

northern Nicaragua. Thereafter the Sambo-Miskitos terrorized the frontier towns and villages with numerous raids, usually at night, coming by way of the Wanks (Coco), Río Grande, and the Rama river systems. From their bases at the Cabo, Tuapí Lagoon, Pearl Lagoon, and Bluefields, they foraged into Nueva Segovia, Jinotega, Muy Muy, Lóvago, Camoapa, Boaco, Juigalpa, Lovigüisca, and even Ometepe Island on Lake Nicaragua. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Sambo-Miskitos became the "scourge of the coast," dreaded barbarians who "snatched infants from the breasts of their mothers and hurled them into the rivers."[1]

But the greatest threat to Nicaragua came from expeditions involving regular English forces aided by their Sambo-Miskito allies. As a part of the colonial campaign during the Seven Years' War (1756-63), the British captured Manila, Havana, Martinique, Grenada, and St. Lucia. They also invaded Nicaragua by the San Juan river --two thousand English and Sambo-Miskitos, but were repulsed at *Castillo Viejo* in 1762. The commander of the fortress, Don Pedro Herrera, had died shortly before the siege. The sergeant in charge started to hand over the keys of the fort to the British when his hand was stayed by Don Pedro's young daughter, Rafaela. She took charge of one of the cannon, and killed the English commander with the third shot. Young Rafaela Herrera thus became the heroine of Nicaraguan colonial history.

England tried again in 1780. The plan approved by the British Cabinet called for the conquest of Nicaragua, from San Juan del Norte to Realejo, "thus cutting off the communication between the northern and southern Spanish American territories, and taking possession of the whole region, the only one through which the two oceans could be united by a canal."[2] Over two thousand British troops and

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[1]Troy S. Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1967), p. 65.

[2]Stephen Kemble, *The Kemble Papers* vol. 2 (1780-1781) (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1885), p. vii.

several hundred Sambo-Miskitos entered by the San Juan river on March 14, and 520 reinforcements arrived from Jamaica a month later.

Captain Horatio Nelson, in command of the frigate *Hinchinbrook,* faced death as coolly on the San Juan, his first campaign, as he did years later at Trafalgar, his last. *Castillo Viejo* fell on April 29th, but 500 Spanish soldiers in a large stockade called Fort San Carlos blocked the way at the entrance of the Lake. Decimated by tropical diseases, the remnants of the expedition withdrew without accomplishing it mission.

By the Treaty of Paris (1783) and the Anglo-Spanish Convention (1786), Great Britain acknowledged the sovereignty of Spain over the Mosquito Coast, and English settlers abandoned the region. They left behind a Sambo-Miskito dynasty which started in 1687 when they took the most powerful chieftain to Jamaica and dubbed him king. King Jeremy I was crowned with a "laced hat," and the British presented him with "a ridiculous piece of writing, purporting that he should kindly use and receive such straggling Englishmen as should chance to come that way, with plantains, fish, and turtle."[3] This piece of paper amounted to the first Anglo-Miskito "treaty of friendship."

Jeremy's dynasty in due time begot George II, who fought at the side of Captain Horatio Nelson on the San Juan river in 1780. The line of succession remains obscure, but it was later said that the British authorities at Belize crowned George Frederick Augustus "King of the Mosquito Shore and Nation" in 1815; Robert Charles Frederick in 1825; and following a six-year "regency" by British "guardians," George William Clarence assumed power on the 10th of May, 1845. The Mosquito Nation's ensign and standard were sent from England, and the king, a young man of 15, resided with his English tutor or guardian over whose residence floated the British flag.

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[3]Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia,* p. 62.

His loyal subjects didn't exceed two thousand, and they had no settlements except immediately upon the coast. His capital, Bluefields, and its dependencies, had less than 600 inhabitants in December 1847, counting all children and 110 Prussians bound for Texas, marooned off the coast. Pure Sumus --the Towkas, Cookra, Woolva, Rama, and other tribes which intervened between the coast and the Spanish settlements-- did not recognize what the British called "Mosquito authority," and were in a state of hostility with the Sambos.

The British were apparently interested in the extensive mahogany lands of the region, but their behavior soon showed that their principal aim was to take possession over what was then considered "the only feasible ship or water communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, within the tropics."[4] In fact, this is precisely what England set out to accomplish, while acting as the benevolent "protectress" of a fictitious Mosquito Kingdom.

In 1832, the H.M.S. *Hyacinth* accurately sounded the "San Juan de Nicaragua" [San Juan del Norte] bay, and her master, Mr. John Peacock, drew "a chart with instructions for steering into the harbour, with two views of landmarks."[5] The H.M.S. *Thunder,* Commanded by Richard Owen, completed another survey of the harbor in September, 1834. Mr. John Baily, R.M., "a half-pay officer in the British navy" employed by the government of Central America, surveyed the entire Nicaraguan canal route in 1837-38. He proposed a plan for cutting a canal through the isthmus of Rivas, lake and river, roughly estimating its cost at 20 to 25 million dollars. His detailed map was printed in London in 1840.

On August 12, 1841, Col. Alexander Archibald MacDonald, Superintendent of British Honduras [Belize], showed up with the Mosquito King at San Juan de Nicaragua, backed by the

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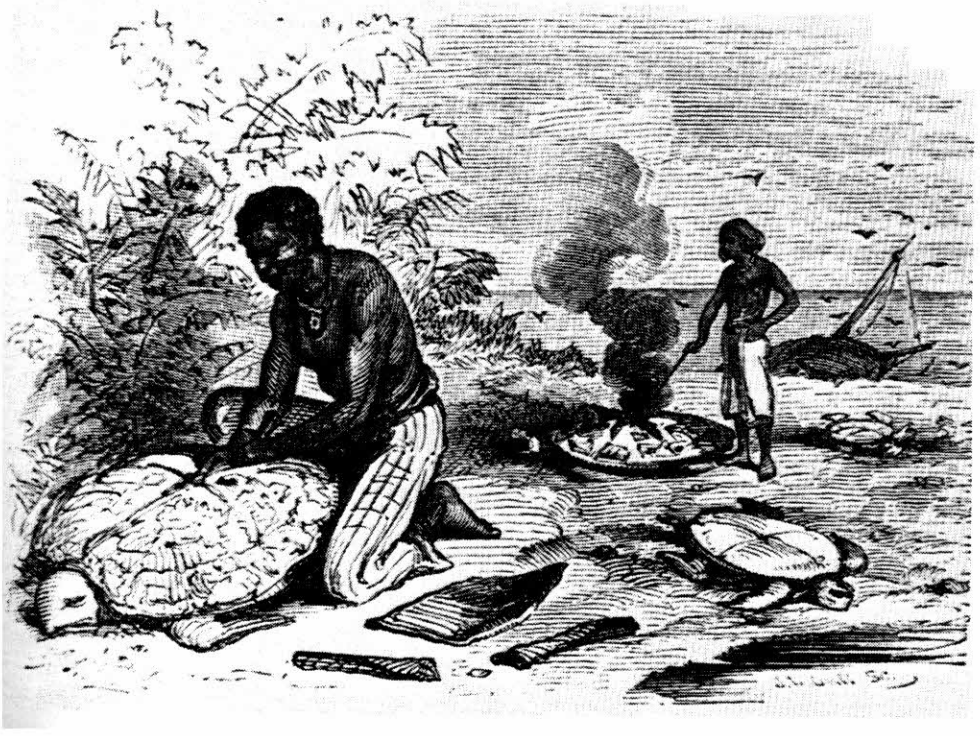
[4]"Central America and the British Government," *New York Herald,* 2/24/1848, p. 2, c. 1.

[5]"San Juan del Norte," Admiralty Chart 519, F.O. 925-1527, Public Record Office, London.

A Mosquito burial
"The inhabitants of northeastern Nicaragua were . . .



Shelling turtles
Sambo-Miskitos, a distinctive Afro-Sumo mixed race" (p. 20)

Captain Drummer, Mosquito Army
"50 Mosquito warriors, and 20 British sailors . . . " (p. 28)

guns of the H.M.S. *Tweed.* Through his secretary Patrick Walker, he informed Col. Manuel Quijano, Administrator of Customs and Commander at the port, that "the object of his visit to this coast is to communicate a message from Her Britannic Majesty to her Ally the King of the Mosquito Nation, and to ascertain for his own information the proper limits of the Mosquito dominions, on which subject he was hopeful of having your opinion."[6]

Upon Quijano's refusal to acknowledge any Mosquito sovereignty, MacDonald took him prisoner aboard the *Tweed,* and held him for over two weeks before releasing him many miles up the coast. To regain freedom, Quijano had to sign a paper attesting that the Mosquito King collected tribute from the inhabitants of Costa Rica, below San Juan, during the colonial period. With this "documentary evidence" in hand, England was then ready to claim San Juan de Nicaragua for the Mosquito Nation.

MacDonald pushed the claim immediately before U.S. Special Agent to Central America, William S. Murphy, and the latter transmitted it to the State Department on December 7, 1841. England therein claimed that the Mosquito Kingdom extended along the Atlantic coast from Cape Honduras, near Truxillo, to Boca del Toro, New Granada, and therefore included the harbor of San Juan de Nicaragua. When Murphy inquired how far inland the kingdom extended, MacDonald replied "that it was about 3 or 400 miles, he supposed; but he spoke of it, as indefinite and unknown."[7]

That left the door open, and plenty of room, for the fabulous kingdom to expand and annex the entire canal route in the future. To start with, it had to annex the Atlantic terminal. Frederick Chatfield, British Consul General in

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[6]Patrick Walker to Manuel Quijano (St. John's 13th August, 1841), *Belize Gazette,* 10/9/1841, p.123, c.2.

[7]William S. Murphy, "Policy and Views of the British Government, in Relation to the Musqueto *[sic]* Kingdom," despatch to Secretary of State Daniel Webster, Belize, 12/7/1841, Microfilm Publication M-219-3, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Guatemala, addressed a note to the Nicaraguan Government on September 10, 1847:

> . . . the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, after carefully examining the several documents and historical records which exist on the subject, is of the opinion that the right of the King of Mosquito should be maintained as extending from the Cape of Honduras to the Mouth of the San Juan River; and therefore, I am instructed to advise the Supreme Governments of the States of Honduras and Nicaragua, as I now have the honor to do, that the Government of Her Britannic Majesty considers that the King of Mosquito has claim to this extent of coast without prejudice to the right which said King may have to any territory to the South of the San Juan River; and that the Government of Her Britannic Majesty cannot view with indifference any attempt to usurp the territorial rights of the King of Mosquito, who is under the protection of the British Crown.[8]

Patrick Walker, British agent in Bluefields, received orders from Jamaica to occupy the port of San Juan. He performed the job on schedule on January 1st, 1848, with Her Majesty's war steamer *Vixen* and the Mosquito cutter *Sun*. Walker, along with the "king" and retinue, 20 Prussian soldiers, 50 Mosquito warriors, and 20 British sailors, all fully armed, met no resistance. They marched in front of the flag staff, hauled down the Nicaraguan flag, and raised the Mosquito flag, while the band played "God Save the King." Mr. Walker then ordered the Commander in Chief of the Port, Don Patricio Rivas, to pack up and leave for the interior. Next day, the entire force returned to Bluefields, leaving only seven new Mosquito authorities and soldiers at San Juan.

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[8]Frederick Chatfield, letter to The Principal Secretary of the Supreme Government of the State of Nicaragua (Guatemala, September 10, 1847), Microfilm Publication M-219-4, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

All Nicaraguans--men, women and children, evacuated the port on the 11th, in four bungos that arrived with cargo from Granada. They took with them two prisoners, "Captain George Hodgson, Governor of the Port, and Mr. Little, the Collector of the Customs House."[9] The other five Mosquitos "made their escape in the bush." Before sailing upriver, the Nicaraguans hauled down the Mosquito flag and cut down the flag staff. Only Captain Shepherd and family, and two other Americans, remained in the town.

The British then brought additional troops from Jamaica on the frigate *Alarm,* the steamer *Vixen,* and the brig *Daring.* On February 8th, 260 men in twelve boats sailed up the San Juan river, and on the 10th they overran the first Nicaraguan defense post on the river. The defenders' losses: "twelve dead were buried by our troops, and several found wounded afterwards died."[10] The attackers suffered four dead and thirteen wounded; among them, Mr. Patrick Walker and a companion, drowned when knocked overboard in a collision.

Nicaraguan resistance crumbled after a ninety-minute battle on February 12 at the Sarapiquí junction. The British captured Castillo Viejo and Fort San Carlos, and then cruised into the Lake towards Granada. On February 20th, Commander Granville G. Loch, "in command of Her Britannic Majesty's united forces," sent a messenger to the Nicaraguan government demanding the release of the prisoners Hodgson and Little. Nicaragua surrendered. On March 7, an armistice was signed at the tiny island of Cuba, on the Lake, by which Nicaragua solemnly promised not to molest the Mosquitos in possession of San Juan del Norte, and thus the British withdrew.

The British Foreign Office left no doubt that England meant to permanently occupy San Juan de Nicaragua. On March 24th, Viscount Palmerston wrote to the British

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[9]"Important from Central America," *N. Y. Herald,* 2/23/1848, p.2, c.5.

[10]"Arrival of the West India Steamer," *New Orleans Picayune,* 4/4/1848, p.2, c.4.

vice-consul in León:

> . . . And I have to instruct you to inform the Government of Nicaragua, that a British ship of war will be directed to visit St. John's from time to time, and to expel from thence any troops or officers, civil or military, belonging to Nicaragua, who may be found at St. John's; and you will add that, if the Nicaraguan authorities persist in intruding themselves there, measures of an unfriendly character will be resorted to upon parts of their own coast, as Her Majesty's Government must support and maintain the right of the King of Mosquito to the port of St. John's.[11]

At the same time, Viscount Palmerston unexpectedly and gratuitously renounced any Mosquito claims over the Costa Rican Atlantic coast:

> With respect to the southern boundary of Mosquito, there are certain strong grounds upon which the King of Mosquito might claim the sea coast as far as the spot called "King Buppan's Landing," which is opposite to the island called Escudo de Veragua; but Her Majesty's Government have recommended the Mosquito Government to confine its claim in a southerly direction to the southern branch of the River St. John.[12]

The reason for such unusual magnanimity was later explained by American Minister E. G. Squier in a despatch to Secretary of State John M. Clayton: "On the 24th of February, 1848, . . . Mr. Chatfield [British Consul General in Central America] had concluded the terms of a treaty with Costa Rica,

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[11] Viscount Palmerston to Vice Consul Foster (Foreign Office, March 24, 1848), FO 53-39, Public Record Office, London, p. 277.

[12] Viscount Palmerston to M. Mosquera (Foreign Office, May 4, 1848), Ibid., p. 278.

by which that State was secured certain rights in San Juan, besides being recognized as an independent State, and placed if not directly, at least indirectly under British Protection! England very soon saw, that as the Protector of Costa-Rica, she would be likely to get a better hold on the important isthmus south of the San Juan, than she could well secure as protector of 'His Majesty the King of the Mosquitos.'"[13]

Upon the death of Patrick Walker in the San Juan river, England appointed W. D. Christie to succeed him as *de facto* ruler of the Mosquito territory. Christie arrived at Jamaica in July, 1848, promptly dismissed the phantom King's Council created by Walker in Bluefields, and proceeded to San José, Costa Rica, where the government received him as Queen Victoria's official representative to the "Mosquito Kingdom," thereby recognizing that fictitious nation as real. The press in San José published articles applauding the British usurpation of San Juan, because of "the immediate advantages accruing to Costa Rica from the occupation of San Juan by an enlightened government," as explained by Costa Rican diplomatist Felipe Molina.[14]

From San José, Christie travelled to León, but the Nicaraguan government refused to recognize his title of "Consul to the Mosquito Nation," and he departed offended. Nicaraguan Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to London, Don Francisco Castellón, made an equally fruitless voyage when he encountered an unyielding Viscount Palmerston, whose position never budged an inch from what he told Castellón on February 17, 1849:

> . . . And I have to state to you in reply, that Her Majesty's Government are desirous of cultivating the

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[13] Ephraim George Squier to John M. Clayton (León, December 27, 1849), Microfilm Publication M-219-5, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Despatch #15, pp. 41, 63.

[14] Felipe Molina, *Memoir on the Boundary Question pending between the Republic of Costa Rica and the State of Nicaragua* (Washington: Gideon and Co., 1851), p. 25.

> most friendly relations with the State of Nicaragua, but that Her Majesty's Government cannot do anything which can be interpreted as admitting any doubt that Grey Town belongs exclusively to the Mosquito Territory.[15]

Greytown was the new name given to San Juan by the British, honoring Sir Charles Grey, Governor of Jamaica. Palmerston refused to compromise; no negotiation or arbitration was possible. At a loss on how to proceed, Castellón sought the *good* offices of Don Felipe Molina, Costa Rican envoy in London, but his Central American colleague refused to help. Molina later explained: "Is there a person endowed with common sense, who, aware of these premises [the Guanacaste dispute], could expect that the representative of Costa Rica would second that of Nicaragua in its claims with reference to the Mosquito coast?"[16]

In fact, Molina would not help Castellón for the simple reason that the British possession of San Juan was advantageous to Costa Rica. Molina was in fact, arranging a number of contracts in London. One of these was for a canal by way of the river San Juan, Lake Nicaragua, and the river Sapoá --"proceeding upon the assumption, it would seem," said Squier, "that Costa Rica has the right of controlling the waters, as well as the territories involved."[17] Next, a contract for improving navigation on the Sarapiquí river --"as if Costa Rica had absolute proprietorship over it!" Also a plan of colonization on land bordering on Lake Nicaragua and the San Juan river --"as if Costa Rica had an undisputed title to those territories!" Finally, a loan of one million pesos for Costa Rica, all of which Molina concluded and signed in

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[15] Francisco Castellón, *Documentos Relativos a la Legación de los Estados de Nicaragua y Honduras cerca del Gabinete Británico sobre el Territorio de Mosquitos y Puerto de San Juan del Norte* (Granada: Imprenta del Orden, 1851), p. 15.

[16] Molina, *Memoir on the Boundary Question*, p. 30.

[17] Squier to Clayton, León, December 27, 1849.

London on July 11, 1849.

Enterprising Costa Rica and powerful England hence helped each other in their efforts to rob Nicaragua of the entire canal route. Meanwhile, the Nicaraguans themselves persisted in their internecine behavior, making them easy prey for all comers. British Consul General Frederick Chatfield knew Nicaragua well, having resided in the region since 1832; here is his appraisal of the internal situation in his June 18, 1849 dispatch to Palmerston:

> My Lord: I have received several letters from Acting Vice Consul Manning, indicative of alarm at the possible consequences of the irritation which the Government Party in León promote against British subjects . . . As a set off to the unfriendliness of León, it appears that Granada which opposes as it were systematically every thing that emanates from the León rulers, is well inclined to English influence, and seeks an alliance with Costarica *[sic]* whose policy towards England it seems to approve. However no great reliance is to be placed on this, for if León were tomorrow to adopt English views Granada would instantly oppose them.[18]

Prolonged anarchy had left Nicaragua exhausted, divided, and dismembered. Having lost both its southern district and its Atlantic port, its vital river and lake were now in jeopardy. And precisely at this moment, the gold rush in California began a series of events that would end in yet another invasion --the 1855-57 Walker catastrophe-- although in 1849 it seemed that Nicaragua's fortunes would change at the end of a golden yet illusory rainbow.

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[18] Frederick Chatfield to Viscount Palmerston (Guatemala, June 18, 1849), F.O. 15-58 ERD/4350, Public Record Office, London, p. 199.

3. Fleeting Rainbow of Hope

The British occupation of San Juan de Nicaragua in January, 1848, aroused no reaction from Washington, preoccupied with the terminal episodes of the Mexican War. Urgent messages from León to Henry Savage, the U.S. Consul in charge of Legation at Guatemala City, elicited his sympathy and moral support, but nothing else. In a letter to Savage on December 15, 1847, Norberto Ramírez, soon-to-become Nicaraguan head of State, seeking U.S. protection went as far as to say "I do not even consider remote the possibility of Nicaragua's adopting union with the North American Republic which may be presented under very attractive and interesting conditions . . . But the meagre resources of all kinds in this country render it difficult to send a diplomatic agent at this time to Washington."[1]

The Constituent Assembly at Managua instructed Foreign Minister Sebastián Salinas on January 24, 1848, to request the "armed mediation" of the United States "to uphold the Continental Cause."[2] Savage dutifully transmitted Nicaragua's pleas to Washington, to no avail. Secretary of State James Buchanan merely acknowledged to Savage on June 3, 1848, that his letters and enclosures "have furnished the Department with most acceptable information upon the affairs of Central America within the periods mentioned for which I

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[1] Norberto Ramírez to Henry Savage (León, Dec. 15, 1847), enclosure #3 with H. Savage's letter of Jan. 14, 1848, Microfilm Publication M-219-4, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[2] Sebastián Salinas to Henry Savage (León, Jan. 24, 1848), enclosure #1 with H. Savage's letter of Feb. 12, 1848, Ibid.

offer you my hearty thanks."[3]

On that date, Buchanan defined American policy towards Nicaragua in the General Instructions given to Elijah Hise, newly appointed U.S. charge d'affaires to Guatemala. In short, the United States would not protect Nicaragua from Great Britain, which Buchanan stated in the form of a rhetorical question: "But what can the United States do to resist such European interference whilst the Spanish American Republics continue to weaken themselves by division and civil war and deprive themselves of the ability of doing any thing for their own protection?"[4]

But the onset of the gold rush in 1849 awakened U.S. interest in Nicaragua. On March 14, Gen. José Trinidad Muñoz, commissioned by the government, signed at Managua an agreement with Dr. David Tilden Brown, representing the Nicaraguan Steam Company (owned by Ackerman, Clapp, Howard & Son, of New York), granting the company the exclusive privilege of passage through Nicaraguan rivers and lakes, etc. The company, in turn, agreed to advance the government ten thousand dollars "for the purpose of sending a legation to the Government of the United States, in order to negotiate the alliance and protection necessary to enable the State, to enter the full enjoyment of its rights over the territory and port of San Juan."[5]

On June 21st, Elijah Hise and Buenaventura Selva signed in Guatemala a Convention by which Nicaragua granted to the United States the perpetual right of way through its territory, by any means of conveyance then existing or which might thereafter be devised; the United States, in turn,

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[3]James Buchanan to Henry Savage (Washington, June 3, 1848). Reel 48, Outgoing Correspondence, James Buchanan Papers at Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

[4]James Buchanan to Elijah Hise (Washington, June 3, 1848), Ibid.

[5]"Agreement between the State of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan Steam Company of New York" (Managua, March 14, 1849), Microfilm Publication M 219-5, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

agreed to defend and protect Nicaragua, her territorial rights, her sovereignty, etc. The agreement was null, though, because Hise had no power from his government to make it.

On July 12th, Francisco Castellón, in London, addressed a confidential message to George Bancroft, American Minister before the Court of St. James. Castellón wished to know on what bases Nicaragua could be admitted as a State of the Union of North America; or, if that were not possible, how it could secure the support of the United States in defense of the territorial integrity of Central America: "and to resist the cession that the Mosquitos and Costarica may make to England? With what assistance could Nicaragua count in that case, and what would be the conditions demanded?"[6]

Bancroft replied that the United States had no designs of territorial aggrandizement in Central America, and urged Nicaragua to settle all differences with Costa Rica through negotiation and arbitration; he diplomatically evaded touching the heart of the problem: how to defend Nicaragua from Great Britain.

A new player then entered the scene: the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company, organized by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Joseph L. White, and their associates, in New York. White was a lawyer who had served a term in Congress as a Whig, and had been a presidential elector on the Clay ticket in 1844. A man of force and ability, he had political connections which he exploited when the new Whig administration of President Zachary Taylor was inaugurated on March 5 and Secretary of State John M. Clayton took charge of American foreign policy.

Clayton recalled Hise from Guatemala and appointed Ephraim George Squier to replace him. He directed Squier "to secure guarantees for the protection of the Vanderbilt canal

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[6] Francisco Castellón to George Bancroft (London, July 12, 1849), Francisco Castellón, *Documentos Relativos a la Legación de los Estados de Nicaragua y Honduras cerca del Gabinete Británico sobre el Territorio de Mosquitos y Puerto de San Juan del Norte* (Granada: Imprenta del Orden, 1851), p. 122.

group."[7] He warned the new envoy not to involve the United States in any entangling alliances or unnecessary controversy, and explained:

> We desire no monopoly of the right of way for our commerce, and we cannot submit to it if claimed for that of any other nation . . . We only ask an equal right of passage for all nations on the same terms --a passage unincumbered by oppressive restrictions, either from the local Government within whose sovereign limits it may be effected, or from the proprietors of the canal when accomplished. To this end we are willing to enter into treaty stipulations with the Government of Nicaragua, that both Governments shall protect and defend the proprietors who may succeed in cutting the canal and opening water communication between the two oceans for our commerce.[8]

Squier arrived at San Juan de Nicaragua (Greytown) on June 6, 1849, after a passage of 26 days from New York. Eight more days on a bungo placed him in Granada, which he found in the midst of another revolution, allegedly fomented by British agents. The uprising had been already suppressed there and in León, but fighting continued in Rivas, which Squier chronicled in his first despatch to Clayton from Granada:

> I am sorry to say that I have arrived in this country at a time when it is involved in serious disturbances. . . . A thousand reports are current respecting the state of affairs there, but although varying in detail, they all concur in representing the town of Rivas as nearly

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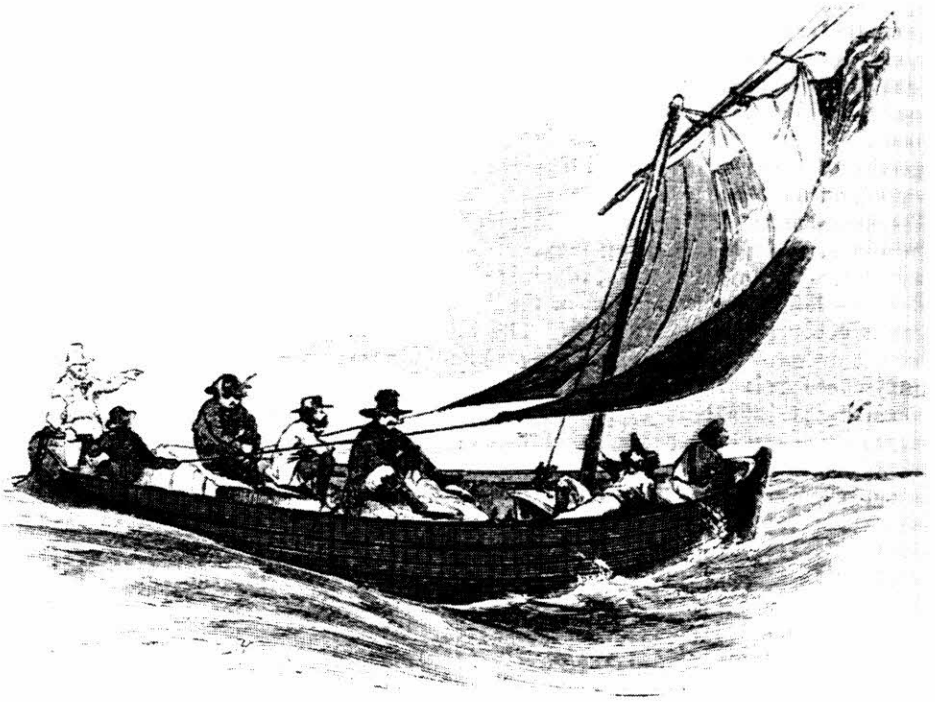
[7] Wheaton W. Lane, *Commodore Vanderbilt* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1942), p. 88.

[8] Ephraim George Squier, *Nicaragua* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1852, vol. 2), p. 266.



Squier on a bungo
"Eight more days on a bungo placed him in Granada" (p.37)

destroyed. The small band of Government troops stationed at that place was entirely cut to pieces; and the town given up to indiscriminate slaughter and pillage. Many of the inhabitants were dragged from their houses and shot in the streets; women were violated or carried off by the brutal assailants, and the wretch Somosa *[sic]* himself, rode through the streets, firing the dwellings of the citizens with his own hands.

It is said that not a single house escaped plunder, and that most of the town is now a heap of smouldering ruins, the bodies of the dead lying unburied in the streets. The body of the commander of the Government forces, (who was slain early in the conflict), was disinterred, fastened to horses and dragged naked through the town. It was afterwards mangled in the most brutal manner. Indeed the whole affair seems to have been attended with acts of atrocity unparalleled at this age in this, or any other country, and has excited feelings of the utmost horror.[9]

General Muñoz defeated the insurgents at Obraje and Rivas, leaving 50 rebels dead on the field in the final battle, July 14, 1849. Rebel chief Bernabé Somoza was caught, court-martialled, and shot. His body remained unburied for three days, hung on a post in main street. Several of his lieutenants were executed, also, "one every other day in order to prolong the sanguinary holocaust of justice."[10] When quiet was restored, Squier proceeded to León, the capital, receiving everywhere a most effusive welcome from the Nicaraguan people:

My progress from Granada here furnished abundant evidence of the friendly feelings entertained by the

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[9]Ephraim George Squier to John M. Clayton (Granada, June 23, 1849), Microfilm Publication M-219-5, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[10]José Dolores Gámez, *Historia de Nicaragua*, p. 550.

> people of this country towards the U.S. At every town, I was welcomed with every demonstration of respect, and upon approaching this city was met by the principal civil, military and ecclesiastical officers of the State, headed by the Bishop, and accompanied by a large cavalcade of the leading citizens.
>
> Almost the entire population lined the streets through which we passed, and shouted "[Long] Live the United States of North America," to the accompaniment of the bells of the Cathedral, and churches, and repeated salvos of artillery . . .[11]

There was a Ball and a Public Dinner, in which the U.S. and its Government were toasted effusively. The press in León reported that during the festivities, "the Nicaraguan and North American flags touched at the top, seeming to form a single banner . . . Mr. Squier, holding a corner of our flag in his hands, and fixing a penetrating look upon the bearer, seemed to imply that an adequate and firm protection was already decided upon in our favor . . . We now rejoice at the start of a happy era for us."[12]

Upon seeing the high hopes entertained by Nicaraguans, Squier commented in his correspondence with Washington: "These hopes are exceedingly vague, and so little is known here of the nature, constitutional powers, and the policy of our Government, that I fear many of them will be disappointed."[13] The American envoy was right on target, and under those propitious circumstances he mastered the situation to accomplish his mission in no time at all.

First, he convinced Nicaragua to annul the Brown-Muñoz

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[11] Ephraim George Squier to John M. Clayton (León, August 20, 1849), Microfilm Publication M-219-5, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[12] "Interior -- Nueva Era Para Nicaragua," *Correo del Istmo* 7/16/1849, p.1, c.3.

[13] Squier to Clayton (Granada, June 23, 1849), Microfilm Publication M-219-5, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

contract on the technicality that the company had failed to accept its provisions within the required time. He then personally intervened in the negotiations between the Nicaraguan government and Mr. David L. White, Vanderbilt's agent in León. When the canal contract was signed on August 27th, Squier had inserted in its provisions, all the suggestions made to him by the State Department.

At Squier's request, Nicaragua forfeited the Hise-Selva Convention. Instead, a new treaty was arranged that met the Clayton guidelines, which Squier delayed finalizing until after Nicaragua had signed the canal contract. He thus reported to Clayton on September 10: "I have the satisfaction of informing the Department that I have succeeded in accomplishing the objects of my mission to this Republic. The Commissioner of the 'American Atlantic and Pacific Canal Company,' has concluded his contract; and both treaty and contract are now awaiting the action of the Legislative Chambers, which have been called to meet, in special session, at Managua on the 15th of this month."[14]

By the contract, Nicaragua granted to the New York company exclusive rights to build a canal, rail or carriage road, in by far more favorable terms than any previous grant for the same object. The treaty extended the protection of the United States over the proposed canal, recognized Nicaraguan sovereignty over the canal route, and guaranteed its neutrality, so long as it remained under the control of citizens of the United States and enjoyed the privileges conceded to it by Nicaragua. Nicaragua wished the guarantee to extend over its entire territorial domain --which would include the Mosquito coast and the Guanacaste province, but Squier limited U.S. protection to the canal zone.

The Legislative Assembly promptly ratified both documents, believing that Nicaragua had secured a solemn U.S. commitment to expel the British from San Juan del Norte, the Atlantic terminal of the proposed canal. In fact, the grant

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[14]Squier to Clayton (León, September 10, 1849), Ibid.

from Nicaragua to the company was valid immediately, but U.S. protection against the British was an illusion as long as the U.S. Senate did not ratify the treaty.

While winding up his mission in León and Managua, Squier confronted British Consul Frederick Chatfield, who ordered the British navy to occupy Tigre Island in the Bay of Fonseca --of great strategic value near the Pacific terminal of the future canal. The island belonged to Honduras, and Squier hurriedly requested the Honduran government to cede it to the United States. Honduras complied, but before Squier could plant the Stars and Stripes on its soil, the H.B.M.'s steamship *Gorgon* landed British sailors who took possession of Tigre on October 16, 1849, "on behalf and in the name of H.B.M. Queen Victoria."[15] With no American men of war in the vicinity, Squier's irate protests went unheeded.

Chatfield continued on the *Gorgon* to Costa Rica, to exchange the ratifications of the treaty celebrated between that republic and Great Britain in February, 1848, at the time of the British seizure of San Juan. From San José, he addressed a note to the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister on December 1st, informing him of the treaty and warning him that Great Britain "will not permit, on the part of Nicaragua, any alteration in the actual position of Costa Rica."[16]

Squier's instant reaction came in a letter to the Costa Rican Foreign Minister, on December 19th, informing him of the latest canal contract, and warning Costa Rica that "this contract, in all of its provisions, is under the special protection and guaranty of the United States: and that no pretensions which CostaRica *[sic]* may set up to any portion of the territory of Nicaragua involved, will be recognized or permitted by the United States," etc.[17]

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[15] Commander T.A. Paynter to the Commander of the Island of Tigre (HBM's steamer *Gorgon*, Oct. 16, 1849), Ibid.

[16] Frederick Chatfield to Sebastián Salinas (San José, December 1st, 1849), Ibid.

[17] Ephraim George Squier to Bernardo Calvo (León, 12/19/1849), Ibid.

Squier on the side of Nicaragua, and Chatfield supporting Costa Rica, appeared willing to drag both their countries into a head-on collision over Central America. The former won a round when British admiral Phipps Hornby, "having disapproved of Mr. Chatfield's acts," returned the island of Tigre to Honduras on December 26, 1849.[18] On reporting it to Clayton, Squier exulted: "We have triumphed on the West, and with the firmness which right and justice entitles us to assume, we shall succeed on the East."[19] But sound and fury in the tropics actually served as a smoke screen to distract attention from the real events going on behind the scenes in Washington and London.

From the beginning, Squier expected England "to effect some arrangement with the canal company by which passage shall be granted for the proposed work upon certain conditions favorable to their interests."[20] Such arrangement became visible when Mr. David L. White arrived from Nicaragua on October 10, and told the press in New York that "no serious grounds whatever exist of any interference or interruption on the part of the British authorities" for the proposed work.[21] And upon his arrival in Washington, a few days later, the evidence mounted as correspondents reported:

> There is an obscurity and a mystery about the State Department just now, and such repeated allusions to Nicaragua among the cabinet members, as they come away from the White House, that, you may rely upon it, something is out of gear. The whole history of this Nicaragua business is one of the curiosities of diploma-

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[18] Commander T.A. Paynter to Gen. Santos Guardiola (Island of Tigre, December 26, 1849), Ibid.

[19] Squier to Clayton (León, December 31, 1849), Ibid.

[20] Squier to Clayton (León, September 10, 1849), Ibid.

[21] "Nicaragua -- The Canal to the Pacific," *New York Herald* 10/11/1849, p.2, c.2.

> cy, for which this cabinet has become so notorious.
>
> . . . The doctrine of Mr. Monroe . . . does not appear to be Mr. Clayton's doctrine. Mark it, if there is not some dodging in this business. From the present complexion of the case, I am fearful that Brother Jonathan is studying how to back out.[22]

Brother Jonathan backed out, struck a deal with England, and scuttled the Squier treaty with Nicaragua, all hand in hand with the Canal Company. Preliminary negotiations with Palmerston in London continued in Washington after the arrival of British Minister Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer at the end of the year. The result was the Clayton Bulwer Treaty, signed on April 19, 1850. The main artificer of that diplomatic effort was Joseph L. White, the Canal Company lawyer, as told by the *New York Herald* in its reports on the treaty:

> . . . We are prepared to prove that Mr. Clayton knew no more of Nicaragua than he does of the polar regions . . . As for the treaty, he had no hand whatever in its early formation. Not a clause or line of it was drawn up by him, or in the Department of State even. The treaty was concocted and drafted by Mr. Joseph L. White, of this city, who was deeply interested in its success, and by him shown to Sir Henry Bulwer, and afterwards to Mr. Secretary Clayton, and explained to him. This was the identical treaty which was signed by Mr. Clayton.[23]

Article I of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty assured that neither Great Britain nor the United States would "ever maintain or obtain for itself any exclusive control" of the canal; and neither would "erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same . . . or occupy or fortify, or colonize, or

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[22] "Our Washington Correspondence," Ibid. 10/17/1849, p.3 c.6.

[23] "The Wonderful and Terrible Diplomacy of Secretary Clayton," Ibid. 6/17/1850, p.2, c.1.

assume, or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, or the Mosquito Coast."[24] This was hailed as ending the obnoxious protectorate of Great Britain over Mosquito and San Juan de Nicaragua; the treaty was quickly rushed through the Senate in a single day, and ratifications were rapidly exchanged at Washington on July 4th. President Taylor's proclamation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was his last official act, four days before he died on July 9th.

Millard Fillmore became president, and Daniel Webster replaced Clayton as Secretary of State. Squier was recalled. His treaty with Nicaragua had been sent to the Senate, but a year after its signing, no action had been taken towards ratification. On September 4th, 1850, Squier presented a detailed exposition to the Hon. H. S. Foote, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, urging the ratification of his treaty. He pointed out, that:

> In concluding the terms of the Convention with Nicaragua, the rights and privileges secured to the United States and its citizens, and which are of the most liberal and sweeping character, were conceded, because and in consideration of the moral support which the recognition of her territorial rights gave to Nicaragua in her unequal contest with Great Britain.
>
> The same consideration influenced the concessions made in the contract with the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company, and which are infinitely more favorable than any previously made. It would, therefore, be an act of bad faith toward Nicaragua, to withdraw our recognition of her rights, and would justify her in declining to comply with the obligations which she incurred in view of it.[25]

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[24]"The Treaty of Nicaragua," Ibid. 5/26/1850, p.3 c.1.

[25]"The Treaty with Nicaragua," Ibid. 9/20/1850, p.6, c.4.

The State Department advised against it, and the Senate rejected the Squier treaty. Meanwhile, Great Britain not only continued to occupy San Juan de Nicaragua, but had stationed two additional vessels of war in the bay, which subjected the commerce of the country to vexations and exactions of every kind. When Nicaragua duly protested, the British simply explained that "the treaty of Messrs. Clayton and Bulwer . . . expressly recognizes the Mosquito Kingdom, and sets aside the rights which you pretend Nicaragua has on that coast."[26]

In the fall of 1850, Nicaraguans suddenly began to suspect the United States of both cowardice and bad faith. The fleeting rainbow of hope brought by Ephraim George Squier in 1849, had crumbled. And when the illusion faded away, the new reality contributed to the tragic projection of Nicaraguan history.

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[26] Ephraim George Squier, *Nicaragua* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1852), vol. 2, p. 277.

4. A Great Change Has Come

The vanguard of the Forty-Niners via San Juan de Nicaragua --two passengers-- sailed from New York aboard the brig *Frances* on January 4th, 1849. The next contingent, 116 strong, left New York on the brig *Mary* on February 18, and landed at San Juan on March 11. By the fall of 1850, two-thousand travellers had crossed Nicaragua, to and from California, and ever larger numbers kept coming.

From San Juan, the argonauts sailed in native bungos one hundred and eighty miles up the San Juan river and Lake Nicaragua to Granada. Then they rode one hundred and fifty miles on horseback or in a clumsy *carreta,* a two-wheeled oxcart covered with raw-hides, stopping at Masaya, Managua, León, Chichigalpa, Chinandega, and intermediate villages, until they reached Realejo, on the Pacific. With normal delays along the way, they frequently spent over a month, and at times much longer, on Nicaraguan soil.

The California gold rush opened a new era in Nicaragua. One day in November, 1850, thirty-seven vessels crowded the port of Realejo, chiefly from San Francisco. Four transportation companies competed to forward passengers through, from one ocean to the other. The amount of land under cultivation, in 1850, far exceeded that of any previous year since independence from Spain. Indigo, sugar, and coffee production were expected to rise 30 to 50 per cent. The corn crop doubled that of 1849.

Nicaraguans received the California travellers with open arms. The people were "kind and obliging."[1] The government

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[1] "Our Central American Correspondence," *NY Herald,* 11/25/50, p4, c2.

was also very friendly to Americans, making land grants to those who requested them, and about a hundred Americans opened establishments along the route; among these, the agents of several California houses trading in coffee, sugar, rum, rice, and other tropical products. American hotels appeared in Granada, León, Realejo, and other cities. Americans obtained a grant to construct a plank road from Realejo to the mouth of the harbor. But the canal company put an end to that incipient activity towards development.

During the negotiations of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, Joseph L. White promised Sir Henry Bulwer that an equal participation in the Canal Company would be offered to British capitalists on reasonable terms. Several months later, White and Vanderbilt went to London, armed with "strong letters" from Sir Henry, and effected "an eminently satisfactory arrangement with British capitalists, by which the latter agreed, under certain conditions, to subscribe half the capital for the enterprise."[2] The conditions were: substantiate your statements by facts; show that the project will be profitable.

To obtain the needed facts, the Company was already making a scientific study of the route. It engaged a corps of fifteen engineers headed by Colonel Orville W. Childs, Chief Engineer of the State of New York, who had recently completed work on the enlargement of the Erie canal. Vanderbilt instructed Childs to locate the most feasible line for the interoceanic canal, to survey it, and to present an estimate of the cost of the work. When the corps of New York engineers and their "boxes of mathematical instruments" arrived in Rivas in August, 1850, Nicaraguans were enthralled, erroneously believing that they came not to ascertain the practicability of the building of the canal, but to make the actual surveys, and lay down the route.[3]

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[2]"The Nicaragua Canal--Operations in London--Critical State of the Canal Company's Charter," Ibid. 11/16/1850, p.2, c.3; "Opinion of British Capitalists," Ibid. 12/3/1852, p.2, c.5.

[3]"Canal de Nicaragua," *Correo del Istmo*, 9/9/1850, p.3, c.3.

Vanderbilt instructed Childs to simultaneously construct a transit road in the isthmus of Rivas for the immediate use of California travellers, and the Company sent steamboats to navigate the San Juan river and Nicaragua Lake. The 120 tons *Director,* with a capacity for 400 passengers, was the first steamer ever to pass the river rapids and navigate on Lake Nicaragua. Its arrival at Granada on January 1st, 1851, was dutifully chronicled by Prefect Fermín Ferrer in a historical message to the Government at León:

> Today, the first day of January, 1851, a new era dawns for Nicaragua, already on her way to a future of prosperity and happiness. --At sunrise in this memorable and joyful day, the steamer *Director* appeared, cutting through the waters of the lake towards the city . . . This beautiful vessel brought the Central American flag on her bow, and the North American flag abaft, saluting each other . . .
>
> The entire population of Granada thronged to the beach, and dizzy with delight admired for the first time this ingenious mechanism developed in the present century. The obstacles of the river have been conquered by human skill, and a mysterious coincidence has brought the steamer *Director* to our shores on this day, to herald to us that the happiness and fortunes of Nicaragua date from January 1st, 1851, the first day of the second half of the nineteenth century.[4]

The parish priest, Father Agustín Vijil, merrily rang all the church bells in town, exulting: "A vessel that comes from the shores of Washington. Happy day, happy year, happy era, happy forever, Granada!"[5] Far were the people of Granada from imagining that the *Director* was a herald of doom; nor

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[4]"Interesante," Ibid. 1/9/1851, p.3 c.2.

[5]Ibid.

could Father Vijil and Prefect Ferrer foretell their own relevant roles in the forthcoming tragedy that culminated in the total destruction of their city in November, 1856. That was unthinkable in January, 1851, when the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company was ready to initiate its transit operations in Nicaragua.

Another steamboat, the *Orus*, renamed *Nicaragua*, foundered on the Machuca rapids, about sixty miles upriver from San Juan. It went "high and dry" on the 9th of November, 1850. The *Bulwer* replaced it, while Col. Childs and his crew cut a road through the wilderness in the isthmus of Rivas, between the lake and the Pacific. On August 14, 1851, the *New York Herald* published a very favorable report about the first crossing of the new route, calling it "equivalent to the introduction of another epoch in the history of our inter-oceanic communications with California, and the Pacific Islands, and the eastern hemisphere."[6]

The steamship *Pacific* sailed from San Francisco July 14th and landed her passengers at San Juan del Sur on the 29th. They crossed on muleback over the yet unfinished road to Virgin Bay, on the lake shore. The *Director* took them across the lake and down river to the Castillo rapids. The *Bulwer* carried them from the rapids to San Juan del Norte, setting a new record of thirty-four-and-a-half hours for the whole running time from the Pacific to the Atlantic ocean. When the *Prometheus* landed the 360 passengers at New York on August 12, they had made the voyage from San Francisco in 29 days and 5 hours, beating on the first try the shortest time ever made over the Panama route, which was 31 days.

Passengers crossing from east to west shared a totally different experience. They were detained three weeks in Rivas, "among the vermin, filth and disease of Nicaragua," while the *Pacific* made a side run to Panama.[7] Upon their

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[6] "The Nicaragua Route--Successful Enterprise," *NYH*, 8/14/51, p4, c1.

[7] "The Vanderbilt Route," *Alta*, 8/31/1851, p.2 c.5; p.3 c.2.

arrival at San Francisco, almost seven weeks after having left New York, they told a convincing tale of woe. R. J. Vandewater, the Company's agent, wrote to the press in defense of his line, which drew in retort a letter to the *Alta* from one of the passengers:

> . . . that the whole province of Rivas hardly contains ten thousand inhabitants; and that "nothing to eat or drink and no place to sleep" were facts, and unfortunately come within the experience of all travelers by that route. Mr. Vandewater himself stated, after his return from San Juan del Sud, that "San Juan was not fit for a dog to stay in," and this is the only one of his assertions I found true.
>
> As to the "twelve mile road" --that is coming--and so is Christmas. As to the "hotel at Rivas which shames all Panama" --it certainly shamed the Devil. One more matter: people are not to be gulled now-a-days by "forty running hours"; the time consumed in the transit from point to point was five days, and we were not even encumbered with baggage.[8]

The negative publicity played into the hands of the rival Panama and Tehuantepec agents, who naturally exploited for their own lines' benefit all adverse Nicaraguan news. Stories of "startling outrages" against Americans in Nicaragua had begun to make the headlines in New Orleans, New York, and San Francisco during the spring. Hundreds of Americans who had established themselves in the towns and villages from Realejo to San Juan, had been "so ill treated --the natives refusing to buy from them or sell them provisions"-- that they had given up their business and left the country.[9]

Mr. J. Cavalry Hall, who had been a merchant in Granada,

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[8]"The Nicaragua Route," Ibid. 9/1/1851, p.2, c.5.

[9]"Later and Important from Nicaragua," Ibid. 5/24/1851, p.2, c.2.

described the situation for the *Picayune* upon arriving at New Orleans in April, summarizing it in the phrase: "A great change has come over the friendly feelings formerly entertained by the inhabitants of Nicaragua towards the Americans." Hall blamed the change on the intrigues of British agents, but the facts he related pointed to other causes:

> The best proof of this sudden and decided hostility is the fact that fifteen of our countrymen have been murdered within the last twenty-five days, on the road from Realejo, on the Pacific, across to San Juan, where they formerly traveled without fear of harm or danger, and over which they were making their way as rapidly as possible out of the country to return home.[10]

It turned out that some of the murdered Americans were embezzlers and fugitives from justice, and that some of the killings were "supposed to be as much the work of Americans, as of the natives."[11] And diverse Nicaraguan and American observers stressed a paramount reason behind the change in feeling: Faced with the continued British occupation of San Juan, the Nicaraguan people had lost faith in the United States. Squier concluded:

> No doubt the confidence of Nicaragua in our government has been very much shaken by the sudden reversal of General Taylor's policy there. I know the deepest feeling of disappointment pervades all classes, for they have relied implicitly upon the good faith of the United States, and upon its support in their unequal contest with Great Britain. It is a question whether their confidence can ever be regained.[12]

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[10] "Late and Important from Nicaragua," *NO Picayune*, 4/11/51, p2, c3.

[11] "The Nicaragua Affair," *Alta*, May 25, 1851, p.2, c.5.

[12] "The Reported Troubles in Nicaragua," *NY Herald*, 4/20/1851, p2 c5.

Nicaraguans still friendly to the United States expressed it with vehemence: "O true spirit of great Taylor! do not permit Nicaragua to repent having followed your advice. No! a thousand times no!"[13] General José Trinidad Muñoz, head of the Nicaraguan Army, was despondent: "I hope in Heaven I am mistaken, but, in the descent of General Taylor to the grave, I cannot resist the feeling that the glorious perspective which had opened for Nicaragua has vanished forever."[14]

The fact of the matter is that on the first anniversary of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, England seemed to enjoy a clear field in Central America. The liberal forces of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras that Squier had championed, under Taylor, were forsaken by the Fillmore administration. The British retained possession of San Juan de Nicaragua with the tolerance and apparent support of American Secretary of State, Daniel Webster. The tide of friendship that filled Nicaraguan hearts in 1849, was on the verge of turning into a deep hatred for the United States in 1851.

To worsen matters, the canal bubble was beginning to burst as the New York corps of engineers concentrated on the task of opening a transit road in the isthmus of Rivas. Col. Childs' initial survey made it clear from the beginning that no canal was to be built in the foreseeable future. His findings showed that the work was not practicable for the maritime needs of the 1850's.

Childs' final proposal, advanced in a detailed report in 1852, envisioned a canal for vessels drawing 17 feet of water, at an estimated cost of $31,538,319.55. In order to admit ships of 25 ft draught, the cost soared above one hundred million dollars. When the matter was submitted to the capitalists in London, no one was found willing to invest in the canal.

Commodore Vanderbilt visited Nicaragua in January, 1851, and spent some time with Col. Childs in Rivas. On his return

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[13] "Nicaragua and the United States," Ibid. 6/3/1851, p.7, c.2.

[14] "Very Late and Important from Nicaragua," Ibid., 1/31/1851, p2 c3.

to the United States, he was "sanguine that a speedy and expeditious transit will be opened . . . the motto is go ahead," but "the great question of the ship canal" he left for the future.[15] With the long experience and business acumen of a shipping magnate, Vanderbilt appreciated that the transit was the most profitable and feasible part of the venture. Consequently, when the transit operations were about to begin, it became expedient to separate from the Canal Company grant the part relating to the navigation by steam of the waters of Nicaragua, and form a different company to run the transit route.

Around that time, rumors from Nicaragua asserted that the Government was planning to annul its contract with the Ship Canal Company at the onset of the oncoming Legislative sessions in Managua; moreover, several other companies were on the field, lobbying to obtain the privilege of navigation by steam on the San Juan river and Lake Nicaragua.

Joseph L. White again used his political connections, and the State Department aided him once more in the spring of 1851 when it appointed John Bozman Kerr Chargé d'Affaires to Nicaragua. Secretary of State Daniel Webster instructed Kerr to spare no proper efforts "to uphold the transit company in its just rights, on which such large expenditures have been made."[16] Webster then named Loomis L. White, Joseph's younger brother, U.S. Consul in San Juan del Sur.

Kerr sailed from the New York aboard the *Prometheus* on June 4, 1851, bound for his new post in Nicaragua. Joseph L. White followed him on the next trip of the vessel, a month later.

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[15] "Our Nicaragua Correspondence," Ibid., 2/27/1851, p.2, c.4.

[16] John Bozman Kerr to Daniel Webster (León, March 15, 1852), Microfilm Publication M219-9, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

5. Dress Rehearsal in 1851

During 1850, 103 vessels discharged goods at Realejo worth £56,250, and carried away £25,000 in exports such as cedar plank, Indian corn, sugar, molasses, rice, beans, lemons, cigars, hogs, and live stock (one thousand mules to Panama). By June, 1851, 6,748 returning passengers from California had crossed Nicaragua on their way to the American East coast and Europe. Production naturally lagged behind the sudden increased demand, and almost every article jumped 100 percent in value. British vice-consul John Foster recorded in his diplomatic correspondence from Realejo other effects on the country:

> The money which has lately been thrown into circulation, has been in a great measure amongst the poorer classes who have not the thrifty and hoarding propensities of their neighbors the Costaricans, but squander it away with a carelessness peculiar to a Nicaraguan. . . .
>
> The increased demand for the produce of Nicaragua has given an impulse to its inhabitants to exert themselves to augment it, but it will require the assistance of foreign capital, machinery and enterprise to make any decided improvement.[1]

Amid the incipient bonanza, Nicaraguan government coffers were emptier than ever. Finance Minister Fruto Chamorro

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[1] John Foster to Frederick Chatfield, Realejo, December 31, 1850. T-152-1, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

alerted his countrymen to the appalling fiscal situation in a report dated at Managua, June 3, 1851.[2] His dry, statistical summary of the budget painted a most eloquent picture of bankruptcy:

Total Government Revenues	$122,682 / year.
Fixed Government Expenses	$173,646 / year.
Deficit	$50,964 / year.
Accumulated Debt	$523,905.
Total Debt at end of New Fiscal Year	$574,869.

Practically the entire debt was owed to British creditors, including large amounts to Mr. Thomas Manning, the English vice-consul at León. The lion's share of the budget went to the military: $98,615 per year for the "War Department" and $10,000 additional "war expenses," leaving only $65,031 for all the other branches of government combined. Chamorro immediately undertook to trim the army, but General Muñoz opposed it and the issue became polarized between their respective localities of Granada and León.

At that moment Mr. John Bozman Kerr, the new American envoy arrived at San Juan de Nicaragua on the 24th of June, and Mr. Joseph L. White followed him on the 23d of July. Kerr waited for White's arrival before proceeding to present his credentials to the Nicaraguan government at León. In the interim, he visited the "Mosquito" Captain of the Port and a Captain Jolly, Commander of the British schooner of war *Bermuda* at San Juan; he inspected the transit road in Rivas, and he stayed in Granada "in the apartments prepared for him at the mansion of Albert Horn, Esq., the gentlemanly agent of the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal

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[2] Fruto Chamorro, "Estado general que con presencia de los documentos que existen en el ministerio de hacienda demuestra los ingresos fijos en un año, el importe de los presupuestos de gastos en la misma época, y el crédito contra el Estado al comenzar la administración de 1851," Managua, Junio 3 de 1851. Central American Miscellaneous Newspapers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

Company."[3] Kerr left Granada for León on July 25th, two days after White had landed at San Juan.

Upon reaching León, on August 1st Kerr requested an audience with Don Laureano Pineda, the Supreme Director of the State, in order to present his letter of credentials. Minister Francisco Castellón informed him next morning that Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador had organized a National Government which had the exclusive authority to pass on and adjust all matters relating to foreign relations, for which reason Mr. Kerr would have to present his credentials to the tri-State National Assembly convening in Chinandega.

Although the tri-State National Assembly had been organized under the prompting of Squier in November, 1849, the new American envoy was not ready to accept its existence in 1851. Kerr insisted in a second letter to Castellón, Monday, August 4, 1851, that he was accredited "to the Free and Independent State of Nicaragua," and was ready to enter upon his duties "where the Supreme Power, inherent in her people has been made Constitutionally to repose."[4]

Castellón never answered that letter. As a matter of fact, he never received it, because a revolution broke out that same day and he was summarily expelled from the country. The Pineda administration's proposed reduction of the army was the spark that ignited the uprising. On Monday night, the soldiery, in charge of the garrison at León, forcibly seized the Director, Señor Pineda, and the acting Ministers of State, Messrs. Castellón and Díaz, rushing them blindfolded and under guard towards Honduras. As the constitutional authorities went into exile, a revolutionary government was formed in León, the Legislature met in Managua, a provisional government appeared in Granada, and the tri-State National Assembly convened in Chinandega.

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[3]"Arrival of the New American Charge," *N Y Herald*, 9/5/1851, p1, c6.

[4]Kerr to Castellón, León, August 4, 1851, M-219-9, National Archives.

The supreme power inherent in the people could not be found to repose any where, and this effectively prevented Kerr from entering upon his duties. Like his predecessors Stephens and Squier, he opened his first despatch to Secretary of State Daniel Webster from León: "It is with extreme mortification that I have to announce to you the distracted condition of Nicaragua, occasioned by the petty factions . . ."[5]

Amid the confusion of the moment, the two provisional governments emerging at León and Granada split the country asunder, with Muñoz and Chamorro as heads of their respective armies. Professor Julius Fröebel, distinguished German scientist from the University of Zurich, who was in Nicaragua at the time, recorded the Canal Company intrigues that fueled that revolutionary outbreak of 1851:

> General Muñoz . . . had been opposed to British influence, and though he was on good private terms with the more influential Englishmen living at León, he had reasons to consider them as his enemies. Now the interests of a society of speculators as powerful as the Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company came in conflict with his views on a question of national economy, and thus losing the support of the American influence he seemed unable to resist the combined attacks of his adversaries.
>
> The interference of the Canal Company marks a new period in the history of Central American troubles and dissensions . . .[6]

When the Canal Company tried to secure a separate Accessory Transit Company grant, Muñoz and the whole democratic party, motivated by patriotic as well as sectional

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[5]Kerr to Webster, León, August 5, 1851, M-219-9, National Archives.

[6]Julius Fröebel, *Seven Years' Travel in Central America* (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), pp. 147-148.

views, were opposed to it; but their political adversaries at Granada and Rivas, who would receive immediate advantages from the transit through the southern section of the country, were inclined to yield to the arguments of the friends and agents of the Company. British interests, of course, were decidedly opposed to the transit scheme; and thus all who favored the British interest in Nicaragua found good reasons to support the Leonese party, with General Muñoz, supporting their opposition to the transit contract.

President Pineda, though belonging to the party of Granada and Rivas, agreed with his political antagonists on this particular question. "The intrigues of the New York speculators accordingly turned against him, and by a combination of various interests brought into simultaneous action, he and his government were driven from office".[7]

When the revolt erupted, Joseph L. White was already in Granada. He promptly called a meeting of foreign residents so that they would express their support of the party in power at Granada. He assured the factional authorities there that through his personal influence with the U.S. and British governments he could restore the port of San Juan to Nicaragua, provided that the exclusive privilege of transit would no longer be dependent on the obligation of constructing the canal. And he also promised to furnish arms and men against the *de facto* government at León.

The Granada faction, calling itself "the Supreme Government of the Republic of Nicaragua . . . through its commissioners Don Fruto Chamorro and Don Mateo Mayorga, with the sole object of facilitating the construction of the Maritime Canal, and in accordance with the desires expressed by the Company of the said Canal, represented by Joseph L. White, Esq.," granted a separate charter to the Accessory

[7] Ibid., pp. 149-150.

Transit Company on August 14, 1851.[8] White hurried back, victorious, with his precious document, to New York, and by way of payment, on the next trip of the *Prometheus* he sent two thousand muskets to his "friends" at Granada.

The startling news that the Granada faction had ratified the Accessory Transit Company contract made a strong impression on everyone at León, according to Kerr in his dispatch to Secretary of State Daniel Webster. But although Kerr expressed misgivings on that "bold and imprudent *coup de main*" of Mr. White, he promptly reassured Webster that he would support White as far as he could, as directed by the State Department:

> León, August 25, 1851 . . . I fear from the excited state of the public mind in León this morning that an imprudent step has been taken by Mr. J. L. White, in his zeal to bring about a modification of the terms of the Charter . . . I had hoped, that Mr. White was too sound a lawyer and too good a tactician to ask or receive any material modification of the Charter at such a juncture, when the State, acephalous in fact, was in the hands of two provisional governments . . . Mr. White seems very naturally to have regarded these people, as mere children, who could be led or driven any way, he might be disposed; but I fear, he may have carried his contempt for their intellect somewhat too far. . . . Commended to him by the Department, I will make it a point, however much I may differ from him, on the expediency of recent proceedings, to sustain him as far as I can. . . . It is now late at night, and the unusual sound of a large body of cavalry indicates some significant move by

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[8] "Charter Granted by the State of Nicaragua to the Accessory Transit Company," *An Open Letter to the President of the United States of America . . . from the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company* (New York, February 27, 1888, n.p.), p. 40.

the government here . . .[9]

The Leonese sent a formal protest to the government at Washington, declaring in advance that they would not recognize the contract entered into by their political antagonists, if ever the undivided and legal authority of the State should fall into their hands. In Kerr's response to Rev. J. Estanislao Gonzales, the priest in charge of foreign relations for the Provisional Government at León, he denied having any knowledge on matters pertaining to the Transit Company, and closed with these thoughts:

> It is no part of my mission from the United States of the North to mingle in the strife of contending factions, and I must be content to wait till a better spirit prevail and unanimity be restored to the public councils. But the preparations for a war where brother is to fight against brother, have not been unmarked by me, and after testing the political questions at issue, with the best aids and helps, I have been forced, in all candor, Revd. Sir, to ask myself the question, for what purpose and what end is all this?[10]

American residents in Nicaragua almost unanimously sympathized with the Leonese party, and "the most violent feeling against the Transit Company" incited them in the wake of the new contract.[11] The *de facto* government in León made capital of this by offering inducements to foreigners to join its forces. Kerr actively opposed such endeavors, but he could not find a single American to cooperate with him. The sentiment against the Transit Company was strongest among American settlers around León and Chinandega, since the

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[9]Kerr to Webster, León, 8/25/1851, M-219-9, National Archives.

[10]Kerr to Gonzales, León, 8/30/1851, Ibid.

[11]Kerr to Webster, León, 10/2/1851, Ibid.

opening of the new route through Rivas threatened to convert Realejo into a ghost town.

Muñoz readily enrolled two dozen desperadoes into service and placed them under the command of Col. John McLane [McLaine or McLean], Mexican War veteran from Louisiana. About mid September, the American contingent sailed aboard the brig *Victorine* from Realejo, bound for San Juan del Sur. They intended to pass undetected, first posing as ordinary travellers along the Transit Road and on the lake steamer, and then capturing Fort San Carlos for León. The move was similar to the one successfully executed by William Walker four years later, but under McLane it failed. Seen from our vantage point, it merits special notice as a striking "dress rehearsal" for Walker's forthcoming 1855 Isthmus campaign.

The *Granadinos* got wind of the affair, sent 150 government soldiers from Rivas, under the command of Don Juan Ruiz, who attacked McLane upon landing at San Juan on September 19. After a twenty-minute battle in which two Americans and several Nicaraguan soldiers were killed, McLane was taken prisoner. Next morning, a committee of passengers from the steamer *North America,* at port, proceeded to the house of the *Comandante* and demanded the prisoner. He refused to give him up at first, but upon being told that there were two cannon already in a launch, with five hundred men to back them, he consented to do so on condition that McLane should leave the country, and consequently the latter did leave on the *North America* for California.[12]

No sooner out of the *Comandante's* reach, Col. McLane broke the agreement. He jumped ship at Acapulco, slipped back to Realejo "with some 30 [American mercenary] soldiers" aboard the steamer *McKim,* and on October 20th he was back in León, riding proudly at the right hand of Muñoz in a public reception. Throughout, Kerr assiduously denounced

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[12]"Our Nicaraguan Correspondence," *New York Herald,* October 6, 1851, p.2, c.4; "Affray at San Juan del Sur," *Alta,* October 3, 1851, p.2, c.2.

the enlistment of American mercenaries in the Leonese army, wisely pointing out the danger they represented for Nicaragua. His letter of September 20th to Father Estanislao Gonzales is remarkably prophetically accurate --when read in the light of the subsequent Walker tragedy. The following sentence adumbrates the future:

> It is the keen-sighted and experienced mariner, who recognizes the distant danger of the cloud no larger than the hand, and I will not do the members of the Provisional Government the injustice to suppose, that they have turned over the pages of history to so little purpose as not to acknowledge, how unsafe a thing it is to trust to foreign train-bands in the settlement of domestic differences.[13]

Secretary of Foreign Relations Estanislao Gonzales was no keen-sighted and experienced mariner; he was a man of the cloth who didn't consider U.S. citizens as foreigners, but as "brothers, sons of the same continent, inspired by identical principles, and moved by the noble desire to establish liberty and order in every part of the common fatherland, and to develop its resources by industry."[14] In his answer to Kerr, on September 25th, he likewise denounced the American Minister's interpellation as a sign of his partiality for the Granada faction.

The scarcity of funds was a great drawback for Muñoz, who a *New York Herald* correspondent wrote was "as poor as poverty." His soldiers had great difficulty obtaining rations, "and are to receive, beside, a dime per day, which is 'on tick.'"[15] Moreover, some Leonese radicals had left the city to offer their services to Granada; among them, José María

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[13] Kerr to Gonzales, León, 9/20/1851, M-219-9, National Archives.

[14] Gonzales to Kerr, León, 9/25/1851, Ibid.

[15] "Our Panama Correspondence," *NY Herald*, 12/25/1851, p.6, c.3.

(Chelón) Valle and other former friends of Bernabé Somoza who belonged to the Castellón *"Calle Real"* party and who wanted revenge against Muñoz.

The *Herald* correspondent noted that government affairs in Granada were also "sadly distempered; their coffers are empty . . ."[16] As a result, the whole country was in commotion, business suspended, and monied men were leaving, but there was little bloodshed, for neither party had the resources necessary for carrying on the war with sustained energy. The Granada partisans did win the first engagement, a nine-hour battle in Matagalpa on August 31st. The homecoming reception of the triumphant militia, chronicled by a *New York Herald* correspondent in a letter from Granada on September 10, gives one a sense of déjà vu:

> To-day the government forces came into town with four prisoners, and, indeed, the sight was novel in the extreme. The battle took place in Malegalpor *[Matagalpa]*, in the department of Sogovia *[Segovia]*, and the Indians of that province were the victorious ones. They all came in to-day, looking pretty ragged, indeed, but apparently as loyal as any of the best of the Central Americans. Each one of them had a musket, which he had taken from the enemy, and also his bow and arrows, which they used in the battle.[17]

The stalemate was broken by the intervention of Honduras in favor of Granada. Successive battles were fought at Nagarote and Chinandega, leaving Muñoz at León, hemmed in on every side, with but seven hundred troops. He capitulated to Honduran general Francisco Lope at Chichigalpa, and the Honduran army was given a friendly reception in the plaza of León on the 11th of November, in exchange for guarantees of

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[16] "Our Central American Correspondence," *NY Herald*, 12/4/1851, p7 c2.

[17] "Our Central American Correspondence," *NY Herald*, 11/8/51, p3, c6.

"life and liberty to General Muñoz and his force."[18] However, as soon as the Granadino *Ejército Restaurador del Orden,* under General Fruto Chamorro, occupied León three days later, Muñoz and many of his followers were put in prison. The document signed at Chichigalpa conveniently "disappeared," and Lope's guarantees were disavowed, as word spread that Muñoz and others, including various Americans, were to be summarily court-martialled and shot.

The American Chargé d'Affaires immediately sent strong letters of protest to General Chamorro, General Lope, and Supreme Director Pineda (who was back from exile). Enlisting the aid of the commissioners from El Salvador and Honduras, he succeeded in saving the life of Muñoz, who was sent into exile instead of being shot. Kerr's meticulous dispatch to Webster, December 15, contains more than twenty annexed documents pertaining to that matter. The deplorable events and ordeals that he had experienced during the 1851 revolution in Nicaragua had left lasting impressions in him, molding his opinions. He expressed them freely in that seventeen-page epistle to the Secretary of State:

> I have acquainted myself with the course of events in this distracted country sufficiently now to communicate facts and opinions, that may be interesting to you. On the fourth of August, when a half dozen of the officers in the Plaza of León, fearing personal inconvenience in a proposed reduction of the army, thrust out of the country Mr. Pineda and his ministers Castellón and Díaz, thus precipitating a revolution, there were actually on foot two other attempts of a similar nature. It is alleged and I believe, with some show of plausibility, that Castellón himself, was to have headed a revolution on the 5th of August for the purpose of seizing the reins of government, during which the lives of his Chief, Pineda, Genl. Muñoz and the Bishop were to have been

[18] Kerr to Webster, León, 12/15/1851, M-219-9, National Archives.

sacrificed! This I could not have credited if my good opinion had not have been so completely undermined within the past few weeks from cool blooded acts of treachery directly under my own eyes--But for this let me refer you to the annexed documents. During these same early days of August José Guerrero and Pablo Buitrago, two Ex-Directors, had their schemes for being rid of Pineda and Muñoz, and so succeeding to the control of affairs . . .

León is by no means in a tranquil state. The Plaza is held by Genl. Chamorro with four hundred men. But there are two other parties within its limits well armed. These balance each other and enable Chamorro to hold his position. There is another element of future strife and difficulty. The Granada Government has chosen this particular moment to lay hands on the Church property, asking a loan of the tithes payable this month. The Clergy knows full well the force of "Obsta principiis" --You will not be surprised to learn, that five hundred muskets, in the hands of the honest yeomanry of San Juan and San Felipe [León suburbs], are ready for the rescue of Muñoz; while the only check is an equal number in the hands of the Calle Real, a party deriving its name from one of the principal streets here--radicals for excellence and just now clamorous for the head of Muñoz . . .[19]

In that long and detailed narrative, as well as in previous and subsequent correspondence in response to Webster's directives, Kerr reassured the State Department that "no proper efforts will be spared to uphold the Transit Company in its just rights, on which such large expenditures have been made."[20] As the year 1851 drew to a close, Chargé

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Kerr to Webster, León, March 15, 1852, M-219-9, National Archives.

d'Affaires John Bozman Kerr was still waiting to present his credentials to the Nicaraguan government; his mission, however, had already been accomplished through the "coup de main" of Mr. White and the defeat of Muñoz. The lucrative Accessory Transit Company monopoly, hatched from the burst Canal bubble, was firmly established, its "just rights" secure under the Charter and contract granted by the triumphant Granada faction.

Former Commander-in-Chief, General J. Trinidad Muñoz was temporarily eliminated from the scene, expelled to El Salvador where *Calle Real* chieftain Francisco Castellón likewise remained in exile. Bultrago, Guerrero, and lesser Leonese leaders awaited in Honduras. The political and economic power base shifted perceptibly in favor of Granada, as General Fruto Chamorro dominated the scene and maritime business activities moved from El Realejo to San Juan del Sur.

A temporary calm soon settled over the political milieu, although the subterranean fires of factional passions were potentially explosive. The 1851 revolution was over; it fizzled out and was promptly forgotten. In fact, in revolutionary annals it is simply seen as a sort of "dress rehearsal" for the momentous massacres that in 1854 would again transform the political landscape of "Mahomet's Paradise."

6. Three Partners Divide the Loot

Over five thousand travellers, riding on mules, steamboats and bungos, crossed through Nicaragua during the second half of 1851. Ciudad Pineda (San Juan del Sur) and La Virgen (Virgin Bay), new villages teeming with foreigners, sprouted up as transit road terminals on the Pacific side, while San Juan de Nicaragua (San Juan del Norte, or Greytown), on the Caribbean, became thoroughly "Americanized" under its Mosquito flag propped up by the guns of H.B.M.'s Navy. Even the mayor of Greytown, Mr. Martin, was an American citizen, though he was "naturally warmly attached to the interests of the Mosquito Kingdom."[1]

Greytown interests soon clashed with those of the Transit Company, which from the beginning refused to pay harbor dues to the town. On the fifth trip of the *Prometheus,* November 21, 1851, British consul James Green requested the aid of the Her Majesty's brig-of-war *Express,* and promptly collected the dues for Mosquito upon firing two round shots over the stern and forecastle of the American vessel. The "outrage on the American flag" made banner headlines when the *Prometheus* arrived in New York.[2] Joseph L. White instantly complained to the State Department, and Secretary of State Daniel Webster directed the American Minister in London, Abbott Lawrence, to address a note upon the subject to Lord Palmerston. Meanwhile, President Fillmore rushed the

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[1]Captain Robert Spencer Robinson to Vice Admiral C. F. Saymour, H.M.S. *Arrogant*, Port Royal, January 30, 1852, FO-53-30 Mosquito Correspondence, Public Record Office, London, Microfilm FO-53-11.

[2]"Arrival of the Prometheus -- Outrage on the American Flag," *New York Herald*, December 2, 1851, p.1, c.6.

Home Squadron flagship *Saranac* to San Juan.

Lawrence addressed the note to Lord Palmerston on December 19, 1851, precisely the day on which the Viscount submitted his resignation to Queen Victoria. Palmerston was known to approach questions of foreign policy with vehemence: to the Queen and his colleagues, his personal animosity and imperious language rendered him ineffective and he was thus replaced in the Foreign Office by Earl Granville, an ideal negotiator, who promptly disapproved the conduct of the officer commanding the *Express* and offered an ample apology to the United States.

When Commodore Foxhall A. Parker arrived at San Juan aboard the *Saranac,* in January, 1852, he received a correct and friendly reception from the commanders of the British warships in port--brig *Express,* corvette *Calypso,* steamer *Alban* (tender to the Admiral vessel), and the frigate *Arrogant.* There was animosity in San Juan, but it was from the "American" residents, directed against the "American" Transit Company, mainly because the river and ocean steamers transferred passengers directly at the other end of the bay, far from the town, by-passing it altogether and depriving it of much potential business. The British Captain, Robert Spencer Robinson, of the *Arrogant,* wanted no part in the affair:

> . . . We really have no interest whatever in the matter, except that of keeping ourselves clear of other people's quarrels: The fight, if fight there is to be, will be between the rival and petty interests of American citizens. . . . I have strongly urged this view of the matter upon Mr. Green, begging him to be patient, and wait for a final settlement, between the governments of Great Britain and the United States.[3]

The talks for a settlement between the governments took

[3]Robinson to Seymour, January 30, 1852.

place in Washington. The negotiations on the fate of San Juan de Nicaragua were conducted behind closed doors by British Envoy John F. Crampton, American Secretary of State Daniel Webster, and Costa Rican Minister Felipe Molina. The rightful owner of the property was not invited to the talks, which gave the three interloping parties a free hand to divide Nicaraguan real estate among themselves. On April 30, 1852, they produced a document that in its final version provided as follows:

The Mosquito Kingdom (England) took one-third of Nicaragua, from the Rama to the Coco rivers, and from meridian 84°30' to the Caribbean coast. Costa Rica kept the province of Guanacaste, pushed her boundary to the entire southern margin of the Nicaragua Lake and San Juan River, and gained full partnership with her neighbor in navigation rights over river and lake waters. The American Transit Company secured firm possession of the Nicaragua Route monopoly under the joint guarantee of England and the United States, who likewise reiterated their protection to the American Canal Company.

Nicaragua was effectively given nothing. Although the Mosquito Indians (who did not prepare or sign the document) "ceded" "Greytown" to her, Nicaragua was obliged to hand them "the nett receipts for a period of three years from all duties levied and collected at Greytown . . . And the said Republic of Nicaragua [who had no voice in preparing the document] hereby agrees not in any way to molest or interfere with the Mosquito Indians within the territory therein reserved by them. It is also understood that any grant of land which may have been made by said Mosquitos since the 1st of January, 1848, in that part of the Mosquito territory hereby ceded to Nicaragua shall not be disturbed . . ." [4]

And to prevent Nicaragua from ever exercising any

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[4] "Bases for a Convention for the Settlement of Differences between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, proposed by the United States and Great Britain." U.S. Senate, 34th Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 25, pp. 73-77.

authority whatsoever over San Juan, British Consul James Green simultaneously called a town meeting by Public Notice of March 27, 1852.[5] In his address to the meeting, he surrendered to the people the local government of the port, and a committee was appointed to frame a "Constitution" which under Green's direction was "unanimously adopted" by the citizens two days later. The "Constitution" defined the boundaries of the town as extending seventy miles inland to the Machuca rapids and from Indian River to the Colorado, thus including the entire Mosquito territory "ceded" to Nicaragua in the document drafted in Washington. Its "declaration of rights" and other provisions made San Juan an autonomous State, and all town officers elected were foreigners--eight Americans, one Englishman, and one Scotsman.

The end result of these arrangements was to leave the American Company in secure enjoyment of the Canal and Transit monopolies, and American citizens in full possession of the Nicaraguan Atlantic port, seventy miles of river and some sixty square miles of territory. England gained recognition of her Mosquito Protectorate and its fabulous land grants. Costa Rica acquired undisputed ownership of Guanacaste and became a partner on the Nicaraguan river and lake. Nicaragua lost what the three trespassers wished to wrest from her at the moment.

But the Convention drafted in Washington also obliged Costa Rica to grant any lands that might be needed for the canal, and Don Felipe Molina wanted $100,000 in return for his signature. The Canal Company would not pay, so Molina suggested that the money be taken from the future revenues of Nicaragua! Webster considered Costa Rican pretensions too high, but Molina refused to yield. The Crampton-Webster Convention, signed on April 30, 1852, was on that account a bilateral instead of a trilateral agreement. It was meant to be

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[5] S.S. Wood and W.P. Kirkland, *A Memorial to the Congress of the United States* (New York: John A. Gray, Printer & Stereotyper, 1859).

quadrilateral, for it stipulated that "Nicaragua and Costa Rica shall promptly and without unnecessary loss of time concur in the general basis of this agreement and adopt proper measures for carrying it into effect."[6]

Such strong language from powerful lips was designed to intimidate the helpless victim into signing and "legalizing" the theft. As soon as the Nicaraguan Minister in Washington, Don José Torcuato de Marcoleta, heard the news of the Convention, on May 1st, 1852, he rushed to the State Department, where they refused to give him the still-secret document. Hence, he surreptitiously acquired a copy in order to discover the details of the "agreement." He immediately sent a letter of protest to Mr. Webster and the latter reacted by demanding his recall, branding Marcoleta *persona non grata* for his unauthorized reading of the "confidential" Crampton-Webster-Molina documents. The public was then told by the looters that Marcoleta was "ordered out of the State Department for pilfering papers from its archives."[7]

Special English and American envoys were sent to Central America to secure Nicaragua's compliance with the treaty. With Palmerston out of office in London, Frederick Chatfield was replaced as British Consul General in the region. His successor, Mr. Charles Lennox Wyke, traveled to his post by way of Washington, and proceeded to San Juan de Nicaragua in company of Mr. Robert M. Walsh, special agent on the part of the United States. From San Juan, on May 28, Walsh wrote to Webster, apprising him on how the Greytowners had appropriated for themselves the whole district "ceded" to Nicaragua in Washington, (and of their assertion that they could take the whole Republic whenever they pleased). Walsh concluded that: "Coming events cast their shadows too plainly

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[6] U.S. Senate, 34th Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 25, p. 77.

[7] William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1860), p. 166.

in this quarter to need a prophet's eye to discern them."[8]

Webster's subsequent silence regarding the flagrant violation of the treaty he had just signed, was also eloquently beyond the need of any prophet, since his tacit approval of the autonomy of Greytown dovetailed with his vehement opposition to its incorporation into Nicaragua, even though he was informed that American residents planned to ask for an incorporation.[9] It is not difficult to understand why Nicaraguans then and now consider this as a kind of robbery by foreign crooks, operating behind the legal fiction of a treaty. In addition, the hidden role of the Transit Company in this scheme can be detected in a letter from Joseph L. White to John B. Kerr, marked "confidential" and penned in Washington upon the signing of the treaty.[10]

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[8]Mr. Walsh to Mr. Webster, Greytown, May 28, 1852. U.S. Senate, 34th Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 25, p. 85.

[9]Daniel Webster to John Bozman Kerr (Washington, March 18, 1852), Microfilm Publication M-219-9, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[10]The manuscript, in the National Archives' Microfilm Publication M-219-9, reads:

"My Dear Sir:

"Inclosed I send to you the letter of Mr. Webster. The treaty I have of course seen.

"The part about the three years duty to be paid to the Mosquitos I wrote and caused to be inserted in lieu of the sum of $100,000 which was agreed on and put in the treaty. This I knew would deter Nicaragua from signing --whereas the nett proceeds of a ten per cent duty will be nett nothing. Indeed nearly all the duty collected will be from those persons living at San Juan del Norte, and the State may still collect duties at San Carlos for her own benefit.

"The Company have requested me to go to Nicaragua in obedience to the request of the President, as contained in the letter. I am obliged however to go first to Europe (the 15th inst) and cannot reach Nicaragua before August. Long ere then however you will I hope have procured the signature of Nicaragua to the treaty. If she proves obstinate and refuses to sign, don't send the treaty back before I come, but protract the negotiations until I come with the means which never fail of success among Spaniards. These the government will not of course furnish, but my associates and myself will.

"Please present my regards to Mrs. Kerr, and remember me kindly when you see them to Senores Don Alfaro and Chamorro.

"Yours truly, etc. (Signed). J.L. WHITE.

[In Kerr's handwriting, below]: "Memo: Accompanying the above extraordinary production was an original of a formal note from the State

Envoys Wyke and Walsh proceeded from Greytown to San José, where they arrived on the 8th of June. A week later, the Costa Rican Foreign Ministry "assents, adheres and subscribes to the bases agreed upon in Washington."[11] Before another week passed, the Costa Rican Congress approved and a Presidential decree ratified the Crampton-Webster treaty, which then officially became a tripartite U.S.-Britain-Costa Rican pact. The three signatories, in happy unison and sanguine expectations, needed only the agreement of a helpless Nicaragua to enjoy their spoils guaranteed by an enforced and spurious legality.

Chargé d'Affaires John B. Kerr received a copy of the Crampton-Webster convention on June 21st, and promptly transmitted it to Mr. Francisco Castellón, who was back from exile and at his post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Managua. Upon studying the document, the Senate and Chamber of Representatives of Nicaragua decreed the following:

> Art. 1st. The State of Nicaragua does not accept the projét of agreement or recommendatory bases adjusted on the 30th of April last between his excellency Daniel Webster, Secretary of State of the United States, and his excellency John F. Crampton, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of her Britannic Majesty in Washington, for the regulation of the territorial boundaries of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and the separation of the Mosquito Coast.
>
> Art. 2nd. The State of Nicaragua is disposed to an examination *(ventilar) of* the questions referred to in said bases by an impartial arbitrament.
>
> Art. 3rd. The State of Nicaragua solemnly protests against all foreign interference in matters of her

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Department of April 30th last and it is the letter of Mr. Webster, to which he refers."

[11] U.S. Senate, 34th Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 25, p. 89.

administration, and against the use of force to restrain her will and rights.[12]

Kerr transmitted the bad news to Washington on July 28th, blaming Nicaragua's refusal upon "obstinacy and pride."[13] His lengthy dispatch to Webster, which extends over sixteen pages on the subject, is remarkable in that he doesn't even consider the Nicaraguan proposal for submitting the territorial question to an arbiter. As far he was concerned, "the general good of the world" demanded that Nicaragua meekly surrendered the province of Guanacaste to Costa Rica, Mosquitia to England, and the Canal-Transit monopoly to the United States. No other alternative was conceived to be correct or possible.

Just then, Wyke and Walsh appeared in Managua, on their way back from Costa Rica. Both tried to convince Nicaragua, but both failed. As reported by Kerr to Webster on July 30th, after two days of joint talks with Director Pineda and Minister Castellón, "the government here is disposed to embarrass the subject of a settlement with Costa Rica and all regulations touching the future disposition of the Mosquito Coast. They have most certainly hardened their hearts with more than Egyptian stubbornness, against every attempt on the part of the United States Government to lead them otherwise than their pride suggests."[14] Moreover, Kerr's own pride was disturbed by Nicaraguan complaints "of a want of good faith" on the part of the United States.

Others disagreed with Kerr. For instance, the *New York Herald,* which captured the essence of Nicaragua's plight in that historical moment, commented on her rejection of the Crampton-Webster treaty:

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[12] Ibid., p. 103.

[13] Kerr to Webster (Managua, July 28, 1852), Microfilm Publication M-219-9, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[14] Kerr to Webster (Managua, July 30, 1852), Ibid.

> . . . Although the acceptance of the projet was urged with bluster and threats, the Nicaraguan government received it cautiously, considered it deliberately, and refused it firmly. . . . The feeble State of Nicaragua, deserted by the country to which she had looked for sympathy and support, has fought the battle single handed and successfully. We must admire her firmness and applaud her constancy; and we believe she will understand that the attempt of the American government to coerce her into a surrender of her rights, was not made with the approbation of the people of the United States.[15]

So the Crampton-Webster Convention came to naught. After Daniel Webster died on October 24, 1852 and Franklin Pierce was elected president in November, new hands took the reins of American policy. But the plight of Nicaragua persisted. The three partners held on to their share of the loot, with or without the legal sanction of a treaty. England persevered "protecting" the fictitious Mosquito Kingdom; Costa Rica retained Guanacaste and claimed "rights" over Nicaraguan waters; Americans and other foreigners ruled sovereign in an autonomous San Juan; and the Transit Company busily exploited its lucrative monopoly on the Isthmus. The canal dream faded away, while internal dissensions, dormant or active, continued to enervate the country.

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[15] "Important Document from Nicaragua -- The Rejection of the Webster and Crampton Project," *New York Herald*, October 5, 1852, p.1, c.6.

7. Slaughterhouse, Again

From November 1851 to May 1854, Nicaragua enjoyed thirty months of uninterrupted peace, one of the longest such periods in the three decades since her independence from Spain. But underlying turmoil never abated: the period began with the leading Leonese politicians in exile, and the government at Managua acted as if an outbreak was daily anticipated. Castellón returned from exile to take charge of foreign relations during the Crampton-Webster treaty crisis. As a measure of precaution, Gen. Chamorro removed nearly all the State arms to Granada, thus rousing the local jealousy between the two cities.

As the November, 1852 elections approached, two candidates loomed with possibilities of success: Castellón for the Leonese opposition, and Chamorro for the ruling Granada faction; and the latter, who controlled the army, held the upper hand over the Minister of Foreign Relations. The election passed very quietly, almost unnoticed. Many Castellón adherents remained away from the polls so as to have some justification for creating a revolution afterwards. Chamorro won, but he failed to obtain the 2/3 majority in the Electoral College required by law and the decision became a question for the Legislative Chambers, which chose him Supreme Director of the State in February, 1853. Castellón resigned from his government post, and rumors of impending revolution gained new momentum.

Don Fruto Chamorro was inaugurated in Managua on April 1st, 1853, at the beginning of the Pierce administration in Washington. John B. Kerr returned home and a new envoy, Hon. Solon Borland, Democratic senator from Arkansas, arrived in Managua on September 11, shortly before a new

crisis ominously erupted.

In November, the government announced that it had quelled a revolution in León, arresting Dr. Máximo Jerez and others. But Don Francisco Castellón, the leader, and Don José Guerrero, had escaped to Honduras. The prisoners were brought into Managua between two files of soldiers, riding on mules, which were led by their halters; their trial was private, for the evidence of their guilt was deposited in the secret archives of the government. Jerez and fellow prisoners were found guilty and expelled to Honduras, and on December 14, the *New York Herald's* Granada correspondent reported that the revolution was over. Actually, it had not yet started; it had merely been delayed, albeit fomented by Chamorro's high-handed proceedings.

On January 21, 1854, a Constituent Assembly met in Managua to amend the Constitution to suit Chamorro's views. It promulgated the new Magna Carta on April 30th: it changed the State into a Republic, the title of Supreme Director to that of President, and increased his two-years term of office to four years; it then authorized Supreme Director Don Fruto Chamorro to continue at the head of affairs until 1858, as the first President of the Republic of Nicaragua.

The long awaited revolution erupted on the 5th of May, confirming the gloomy forebodings of many observers, lucidly expressed the previous December by U.S. Minister Solon Borland in a letter to Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs Mateo Mayorga:

> . . . But, however difficult it may be for one unaccustomed to their operation, here, to understand the unhappy causes we are lamenting; it is, in nowise difficult, for any one, whether accustomed to them or not, to foresee the disastrous consequences of their continual recurrence. In this connection, it is not for me to suggest a retrospect of what the short but eventful history of your Republic but too plainly and painfully discloses; nor, in the light which such a past reflects, need any intelligent Nicaraguan be foretold

> what early doom awaits his country, if, again and again, the power to govern her be sought by force --if, perhaps, but once again, the fires of her political altars should be fed with the blood of her own people, shed by each other's hands.[1]

Don Francisco Castellón and fellow Leonese exiles in Honduras, aided by liberal president José Trinidad Cabañas, sailed from the port of La Brea, in the Gulf of Fonseca, aboard the schooner *San José,* skippered by Gilbert Morton, an American. Stopping at Tigre Island for reinforcements and supplies, they landed at Realejo and surprised the 25-man garrison on the 5th of May. One defender was killed in the scuffle; then they took Chinandega without firing a shot. With the *Alcalde* on their side, they promptly enrolled 200 men anxious to join the revolution and equipped them with arms brought from Honduras.

The insurrectionists called themselves "the Democratic Army," wearing a red ribbon as badge on their hats. At Chinandega, on the 8th, "General" Máximo Jerez published the usual proclamation, promising to respect "the lives, property and honor of all peaceable inhabitants and travellers." But those who "directly or indirectly" assisted the tyrant Chamorro, would be considered "traitors to the motherland, and treated in accordance with the rules of war."[2]

President Chamorro marched his army to León, and attacked Jerez on May 12 at El Pozo, a hacienda on the road to Chinandega. He attacked at night, attempting to take the enemy by surprise, but Jerez was warned in time and in the ensuing battle, Chamorro was thrown from his horse when a cannon was fired. Some say he was intoxicated; others deny it. But whether he was or not, his soldiers, seeing him fall,

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[1]Solon Borland to Mateo Mayorga (León, December 5, 1853), Microfilm Publication M-219-9, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[2]Jerónimo Pérez, *Obras Históricas Completas* (Managua: Editorial y Litografía San José, S.A., 1975), pp. 30-31.

thought he was dead and began to run away, giving the revolution a resounding victory over the government.

On news of the defeat and rumored death of Chamorro, whole pickets of government soldiers passed over to the rebels. León and Managua fell. After hiding a while in the woods, Don Fruto set out for Granada, where the greatest confusion prevailed: people were running in all directions, putting their belongings in the houses of foreigners and the churches; others abandoned everything and fled to neighboring villages or haciendas. On Chamorro's arrival confidence was restored, and preparations began for resisting the enemy. The streets were barricaded with adobes, and cannons were planted on the principal approaches.

Jerez's army, 800 strong, advanced on Granada on May 26, making its appearance at 1 p.m., marching in two columns, with bands of music playing and the national flag waving. Jerez apparently expected that no resistance would be offered, but to his great astonishment, 300 defenders opened fire and the battle for Granada began. The revolutionists set their quarters at the Jalteva church after capturing the first blocks of houses in the city; then the troops began to plunder and make off with their booty. Jerez did not pay his soldiers, so he allowed them to take as much as they could steal. Chamorro paid his men daily and was prompt to chastise them when he was informed of any robbery.

Before the end of May, the revolutionists had captured Chinandega, León, Managua, and Masaya, or rather, those towns had joined the revolution. The prefect at Rivas, the military governor, and the commandant of San Juan del Sur, had left for parts unknown. The revolutionaries took Rivas on June 10 without a fight: "All the soldiers had run away, and all the men of the neighboring places--about 500 or 600 strong--had presented themselves to the new government."[3]

Castellón was inaugurated "Provisional Supreme Director"

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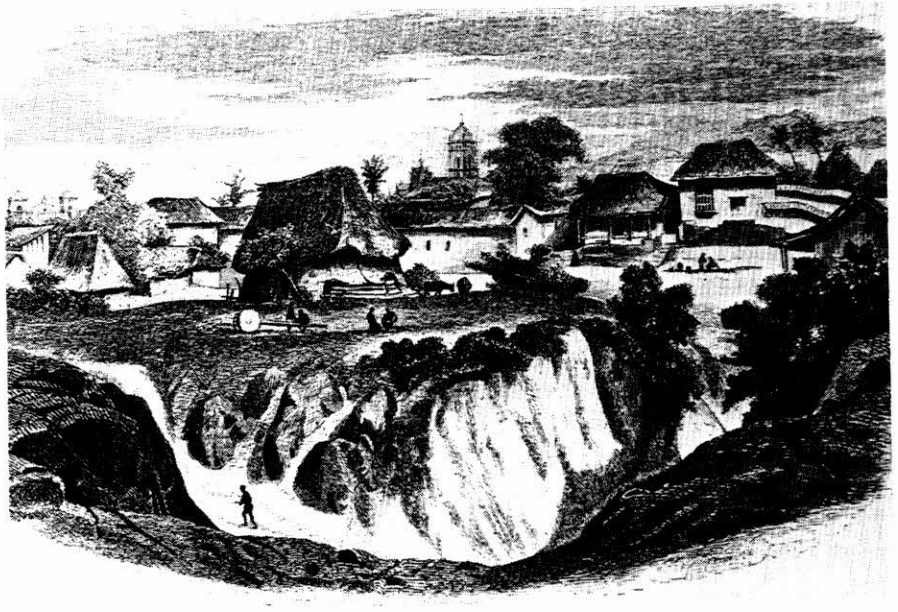
[3]"Our Nicaragua Correspondence," *N Y Herald*, July 2, 1854, p.2, c.2

(Director Supremo Provisorio) at León on June 11. He held sway over the entire Pacific region, except the plaza of Granada where Chamorro stubbornly upheld the "legitimate" government. His Granada defenders took the name of Legitimistas, wearing a white ribbon as badge on their hats, with the inscription *legitimidad o muerte* (legitimacy or death). It was opposed to the Democratic Army's red badge and slogan: *libertad o muerte* (liberty or death). Obviously, Nicaraguans agreed only on their striving for death.

Early in the conflict, the Leonese gained control of the lake and the San Juan river, capturing San Carlos and Castillo Viejo with assistance from Dr. John Henry Segur, an American physician who commanded their fleet of small schooners and bungos in the lake. Meanwhile, Col. Mariano Méndez and his mounted rangers scoured the countryside around Granada, slaying any Legitimist stragglers they could find, as they did on June 8, in a nearby farm, where they killed thirteen Chamorristas, took four prisoners, and captured seventy-four muskets, two boxes of ammunition, seventeen horses, and about forty bayonets.

Both factions recruited sharpshooters and gunners from among the foreign residents and transient passengers. Major Henry Doss, a Texan, headed the list of mercenaries on the side of Chamorro; Captain Charles W. Doubleday, a returning miner from California, recruited by Jerez, afterwards recorded his "Reminiscences" of the fighting at Granada:

> A suburb of the town, covered with thatched cottages and an occasional more substantial adobe structure . . . was now occupied by a force of the enemy. . . In an hour five hundred men were on their way to the exposed position . . . after a short run, we were too close to suffer from the fire of the field-pieces, and the struggle became a hand-to-hand conflict.
>
> . . . when, after nearly an hour's hard fighting, we found ourselves in possession of the ground, the considerable space over which we had fought was literally covered with the dead. Red and white ribbons



Granada suburb
"A suburb of the town,
covered with thatched cottages . . . " (p. 81)

were apparently in about equal proportion.

. . . Those killed in the numerous skirmishes in the vicinity of the town were left to the buzzards, who, although constantly hovering in the air in vast throngs, were yet unable wholly to dispose of the harvest of food which war and pestilence combined cast out for them. The labor of interment was considered too heavy a task to impose upon the soldiers, and the habit of shooting all prisoners--indulged in by both sides--left us without that resource for a labor contingent. The custom that prevailed was to place the corpses of those who die at night, from whatever cause, upon the frontdoor steps every morning at sunrise. At this hour carts were driven along the principal streets, and the bodies, being collected, were conveyed to a cliff near the *Polvón*, about a mile outside the town, and there cast over, becoming soon a mass of putrefaction, the gasses from which tainted the air we breathed.[4]

A crack division of Honduran troops under Generals Francisco Gómez and Marcelino Licona, sent by President Cabañas, reinforced Jerez on the 15th of July. They bore the blunt of the losses two days later, at the battle *del cuadro* chronicled by Doubleday. The Hondurans were then almost annihilated by a pestilence, the *vómito prieto* (black vomit), that appeared at Jalteva in the battle's aftermath. Both Honduran generals died during the epidemic, and their army was completely wiped out by the microbial scourge. From then on, Jerez remained at Jalteva for months on end, failing in his efforts to capture the plaza of Granada.

The whole country was devastated by the continuation of the war. The heavy contributions levied by both parties did not spare a single individual. All the inhabitants around Rivas

[4]Charles W. Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons. The Knickerbocker Press, 1886), pp. 66-68, 71-72.

that had any moveable property took it to the neighboring province of Guanacaste, and many did not intend to return. Cacao plantations went to ruin for lack of men to attend to them. In Granada, anybody who refused to pay the "contributions" assigned him had a guard sent to his house, and not even a glass of water was allowed his family until he paid the tax and fee to the escort. If the owner was out of town, his available property was put up for auction, and if no bidders came forward, the property was then transferred to the government for two-thirds of its value.

The Castellón faction financed the war in the same way as Chamorro; of course, persons suspected of sympathy with the enemy paid more, and as time went on, a good many persons who had left Granada, returned to the city and offered their services to Chamorro. A *New York Herald* correspondent, writing from the "Half Ruined Steeple of the Convent of Merced, Granada de Nicaragua, November 24, 1854," furnished some figures on the increasing internal and foreign debts of the country and on the material losses:

> The recognized debts until now are the following: -- London bond holders, $360,000; estate Santiago Mercher, $28,000; Manning and Glenton, $90,000; government of Guatemala, $8,000; government of Costa Rica, $10,000; government scrip available for duty; purchase of lands, fines, &c., $315,000; estate John Bayly, $1,700; together with the pay of the military from 1845 to 1851, which amounts to $150,000, and various French and American claims that are to be enforced.
>
> The houses burnt in this city are worth fully $200,000; property taken by the Castellón party from the Custom House of San Carlos, $30,000; property from Cayetano Ybarguen's house, a native of Spain, $20,000; from the Department of Rivas, cocoa and money, more than $80,000; from the city of Masaya, $10,000; cattle from Chamorro's and other estates, $20,000; and from the city of León no one knows yet how much. In this city more than $60,000 of property was taken away from the

> lower class. . . . Seven eighths of the bungoes or boats employed in the river, for the transportation of produce and goods, have been destroyed . . .[5]

The tide of events was slowly turning in favor of Chamorro. Some Americans under the command of Dr. Segur, who had three schooners armed and equipped in the lake, left in disgust when the Leonese faction failed to pay them for their services. Castellón's agents tried to raise new volunteers among returning Californians crossing the Isthmus, promising them $200 per month, and fifty acres of land, "but the old gold hunters want $100 of the rocks, cash down, otherwise they won't stay."[6] Lacking the cash, Castellón's agents returned home empty handed.

As the Leonese weakened, Chamorro pressed on, carrying the fight into other regions of the country, and President Cabañas was forced to rush in more aid from Honduras to his friends at Jalteva. Three Legitimista companies sallied forth from Granada at the end of August, towards Diriomo and other neighboring villages, murdering every Democratic partisan they met. At Nandaime they killed all twenty-eight defenders on the spot. Simultaneously, the Granadinos launched a small fleet of schooners to regain possession of the lake. On September 15, 1854 (33rd anniversary of Nicaragua's independence from Spain), near the island of Zapatera, General Ponciano Corral's *La Zara* outgunned the Democratic schooner *La Esperanza,* forthwith slaying the forty Leonese partisans caught on board.

Such merciless slaughter of prisoners was the rule on both sides. Doubleday, recorded the following after a battle in the suburbs of Granada:

> Dead soldiers, wearing the red as well as the white,

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[5]"The Civil War in Nicaragua -- Its Causes and Effects Reviewed," *New York Herald,* December 18, 1854, p.2, c.4.

[6]"Our Rivas Correspondence," Ibid., September 9, 1854, p.2, c.3.

> lay scattered on the pavement of the court. Evidently the place had not been yielded without a severe struggle. What, however, instantly claimed my attention, was a group beneath a large mango tree in a corner of the court. Conspicuous among the men was Méndez, a colored handkerchief bound round his head, his coat thrown off, and holding in his hand his long Toledo sword, the blade of which was wet with blood. He was directing some soldiers who were trying to cast the end of a rope over a branch of the tree, the other end being fastened by a slip-noose round the neck of one of the prisoners. A similiar *[sic]* preparation was being made not far off to hang another of the prisoners, most of whom were on their knees muttering payers *[sic]* for that mercy from their God which had been denied them by their fellow-man.[7]

The war spread north to Teustepe, Laurel Galán, Palacagüina, and finally Jinotega, where on December 2, 1854, Legitimist forces under Lieut. Col. Tomás Martínez defeated a 480-man army sent by Cabañas, killing more than forty Honduran soldiers. Five Honduran officers were later captured far from the battlefield and sent to Granada. They were immediately shot at the plaza upon arrival, "the only process of law being a direct order from Chamorro."[8]

Gaining control of the lake with his fleet of schooners, General Corral took possession of San Carlos, and on December 16 recaptured Castillo Viejo on the San Juan River. In Corral's official report of the final encounter, "twelve of the enemy were killed, and one drowned while trying to escape."[9] Eyewitness William Weir, an American, skipper of the

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[7] Doubleday, *Reminiscences*, pp. 56-57.

[8] Francisco Ortega Arancibia, *Cuarenta Años (1838-1878) de Historia de Nicaragua* (Managua: Papelera Industrial de Nicaragua, 1975), p. 202.

[9] *El Defensor del Orden* No. 42 (Granada), December 22, 1854.

riverboat *Charles Morgan,* chronicled the details of the drowning in a sworn affidavit a few days later:

> The steamer *Charles Morgan* . . . was lying alongside the warf *[sic]* at this place when the attack was made.
>
> . . . After the affair was over, and the party under Chamorro had taken the fort, and place, the Commandant, Laurrino Zelayno *[Laureano Zelaya],* and one of his Lieutenants then fled, and took refuge in David Israng's house; it was discovered by Chamorro's men, that they were there; they were then discovered, and in spite of their entreaties and the supplications of Israng and his wife, they were bayoneted, and murdered in cold blood, in my presence. Subsequent to this horrid affair, one of the non-commissioned officers of Castellon's party, who had been wounded and took refuge on board of my Boat --I thought as the affair was settled, I took from feeling of humanity, pity upon the sufferings of the man, and had him on the forecastle, to have his wounds dressed, when an officer and some of the Chamorro party, happened to pass and saw him. They wished to shoot him on board of my Boat; which I prevented by placing myself between them and the man. The man begged to see their Commander, Genl. Carral [Corral], to ask for mercy and pardon. On the assurances of the officer that they would take him to Carral I allowed him to be taken. They took him on shore, and when only four or five steps they threw him down, and one of the men, sharpened his knife on the barrel of his gun, and seized the wounded prisoner and cut his throat; and then the party threw the dead body in the river.[10]

And throughout the second half of 1854, fierce fighting continued in and around Granada. Christmas was celebrated

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[10]John Hill Wheeler to William L. Marcy (San Juan del Norte, January 2, 1855), Microfilm M-219-10, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

by Jerez with "a dreadful cannonade against the belfry of the Merced church, till at five in the afternoon, the dome and upper half of the structure crumbled down, making a terrible roar. A thousand joyous screams at the tune of martial music greeted in Jalteva the destruction of the tower!"[11] A month later, the Granada defenders won a major battle, and on February 9, 1855, a strong column sallied forth to attack Masaya. Two hundred Leonese held the place for two hours at high noon, and when vanquished at 2 p.m., left 134 dead on the field. Their bastion was *La Parroquia* church, and the final scenes of the carnage were reported by Francisco Ortega Arancibia, one of the attackers:

> As we started up the stairway to the belfry, we met some prisoners on their way down, tied together like a string of garlic with a rope cut from the bell clapper, under guard of an excellent officer, Duarte, from Managua. I knew them all: Valdés, Gago, Cusero, and four more, all begging for mercy, calling me father, brother, friend, in their anguish. Urtechito kept on ascending, but I turned back with those unfortunate souls, to assist Duarte in saving their lives.
>
> As we walked through the church, a few soldiers charged upon the prisoners with hungry look, intending to slay them, but we managed to escort them outside, unhurt . . . then the rabid soldiers appealed to Col. Xatruch, and he said: kill them! upon which they fired at the string of prisoners, the bodies falling on top of each other . . . the pile of dying men, a hair-raising spectacle: fourteen legs and fourteen hands jerking and quivering in multiple paroxysms of death.[12]

With Masaya taken by Chamorro, Jerez abandoned Jalteva

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[11] Pérez, *Obras*, p. 90.

[12] Ortega Arancibia, *Cuarenta Años*, p. 215.

and retreated to León amid another terrible slaughter the next day, leaving over 200 dead, piled in a large heap and burned. By the end of the month, the Chamorristas had retaken La Virgen, San Juan del Sur, Rivas, and Managua, and were advancing past Mateare on their way to León. But Don Fruto Chamorro did not live to savor victory: he died of a chronic liver ailment on March 12, 1855. His successors, inheriting his unflinching inflexibility, then set down to the task of inflicting exemplary punishment on those who had helped the Leonese in the war.

The jails were filled with political prisoners: over 300 women and 400 men were placed in irons, and daily paraded in chain gangs mixed with common criminals. An unfortunate woman, whose only crime consisted in being the wife of a prominent revolutionary leader, was kept in irons in advanced pregnancy, and forced to deliver her baby with heavy shackles tied to her feet.[13] U.S. Minister John Hill Wheeler recorded some of the scenes in his diary, from the vantage point of his residence facing the plaza of Granada:

> Tuesday, May 8, 1855 -- . . . Our eyes were pained with the sight of the troops marching surrounding Irinso [Ireneo] Matus, a prisoner, to the Altava [Jalteva] where he is to be shot. The poor man passed our door with a Priest who was reading the prayers of the church, while he clasped the cross before him . . .
>
> Thursday, May 10 -- Bells today for another military execution.
>
> Friday, May 11 -- Troops under arms today-- another execution, a young man from Massiah [Masaya].

As the battlefield moved away from Granada, Wheeler wrote in his diary:

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[13] José Dolores Gámez, *Historia de Nicaragua* (Managua: Tipografía de "El País", 1889), p. 597.

> Sunday, May 20 -- Firing of cannon and great rejoicing for a victory gained at the Hacienda Santa Anna about 10 leagues from Leon--on the opposite shore from Managua . . .
>
> Tuesday, May 22 -- Great rejoicing for another victory.[14]

But as General Ponciano Corral readied his forces for a final assault on León, a new scourge slew thousands of Nicaraguans in a matter of weeks. The cholera morbus first appeared along the Transit route in June, and swiftly spread northward, annihilating in a few days the Legitimist army marshalled in Managua, filling the city and roads with unburied bodies. And an American journalist-filibuster recorded the picture of Granada after one year of war:

> I am here in the fair famed city of Grenada *[sic]*, once the gem and pride of Central America, but now a scene of ruin and decay. Civil war with its train of horrors, have divided almost every household in the land, and we not infrequently find father arrayed against son, and brother marshalled against brother, which added to the ferocious and sanguinary character of the war, affords daily specticles *[sic]* of the most revolting character.
>
> Many streets in this city are nearly deserted while the houses are tumbling down and choking up the streets with accumulating, and unsightly piles of rubbish. Every house in the city, bear the scares *[sic]* received during the last siege. The one in which I am living at present, shows the passage of a cannon ball through the iron grating that spans around the bow windows fronting the street. The barricades are yet standing; for peace and commerce are strangers to the land, and grim visaged war still frowns over all. The

[14] John Hill Wheeler Papers, Items 1 & 2, The Library of Congress.

> cholera too, in its tramp of death, has added to the dismal gloom in which the people live, for four thousand victims have fallen before its fury, and it continues to linger around Managua and Masaya, and has not yet levied its contributions of death, on Leon and its surrounding towns.[15]

Utterly divided, exhausted, battered and helpless, in 1855 Nicaragua was vulnerable to any foreign band of marauders. At that moment, Walker intervened, and Parker H. French, the journalist who assessed the situation in the above report, played an important role in his venture. Before examining Walker, however, we must look at other American marauders on the scene.

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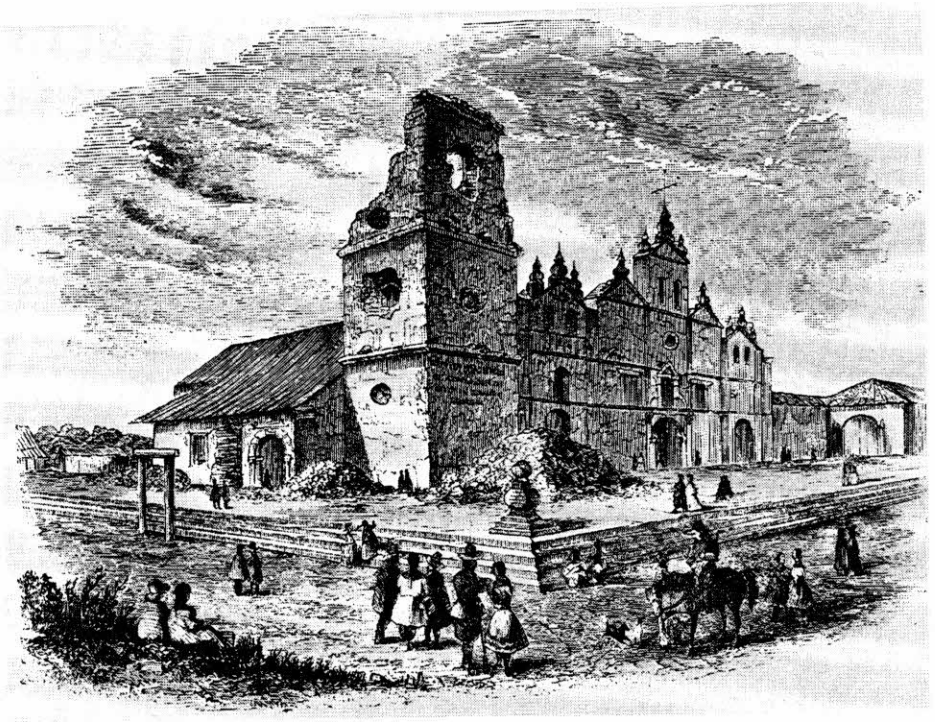
[15]Parker H. French, "Letters from Central America," *State Tribune*, Sacramento, September 19, 1855.



La Merced, Granada

"a dreadful cannonade against the belfry of the Merced church, till . . . the dome . . . crumbled down" (p. 88)

La Parroquia, Masaya
"Their bastion was La Parroquia church . . . " (p. 88)

8. Transit Monopoly Octopus

Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877), nicknamed "Commodore," was the founder of his famous family dynasty, the prototype of the self-made American millionaire. The Commodore made his fortune on steamship and railroad lines, in a world of swindlers. "The swindling in the business of supplying steamers," he said," "is outrageous. If the captain is a smart one, he cheats me, and if he is a dull man, the dealers cheat him, so that in any event there is a swindling draw back."[1] And Cornelius, king of robber barons, knew how to take care of himself very well in a world of swindlers. Shortly before he started the Nicaraguan Canal project in 1849, after decades of steady toil in and around the harbor of New York, his wealth amounted to $1,200,000; scarcely four years later it had increased tenfold, to eleven million dollars, by defrauding Nicaragua and by some shrewd manipulations of the Nicaraguan Canal and Transit Company stock in Wall Street.

Vanderbilt's initial investment in the Nicaragua Canal project was amazingly small. As told by the *New York Herald* in 1850, up to the time when the delegation from the company visited England,

> . . . nothing relating to the grand canal had been effected. No stock had been taken --no stock books opened-- not one cent of capital subscribed or paid in . . . The whole affair was an experiment, in which a few lawyers in Wall Street were the principal movers, their

[1] Wayne Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), p. 39.

> original purpose being to obtain a charter, and afterwards dispose of it at any good price. It is true they obtained a kind of quasi-patronage from one or two capitalists who, however, took good care not to commit themselves until they saw that there was a prospect of effecting something. By an effort, a few hundred dollars were raised, and an agent sent out to Nicaragua, namely, one of the lawyers aforesaid.[2]

All early expenses were rapidly recouped by Vanderbilt and associates upon the successful opening of the Nicaragua transit route in August, 1851. By December, 1852, thirty-odd round trips over lake and river had conveyed 19,000 travellers across Nicaragua, at thirty-five dollars a head, plus five dollars each for baggage and mules, plus one million pounds of freight at fifteen cents a pound, plus one million dollars worth of gold dust at half a penny on the dollar, plus the revenues of local traffic. With aggregate expenses running under twenty thousand dollars per month, the clear net profit of the Nicaragua transit exceeded half a million dollars by the end of 1852.

Vanderbilt's personal profits were much higher, several million dollars, for he owned the Atlantic and Pacific ocean steamers that conveyed the 19,000 passengers at rates ranging up to $300 first cabin, $270 second cabin, and $200 steerage. Early in 1853, he confided to a friend that his capital was "better invested than any other $11,000,000 in the United States. It is worth twenty-five percent."[3]

These auspicious beginnings were cleverly exploited by Vanderbilt and his associates to make large "killings" in Wall Street. Outwardly sustaining public expectations for the construction of the canal, they issued and assigned among themselves 192 grand shares of "Nicaragua Canal 'Rights',"

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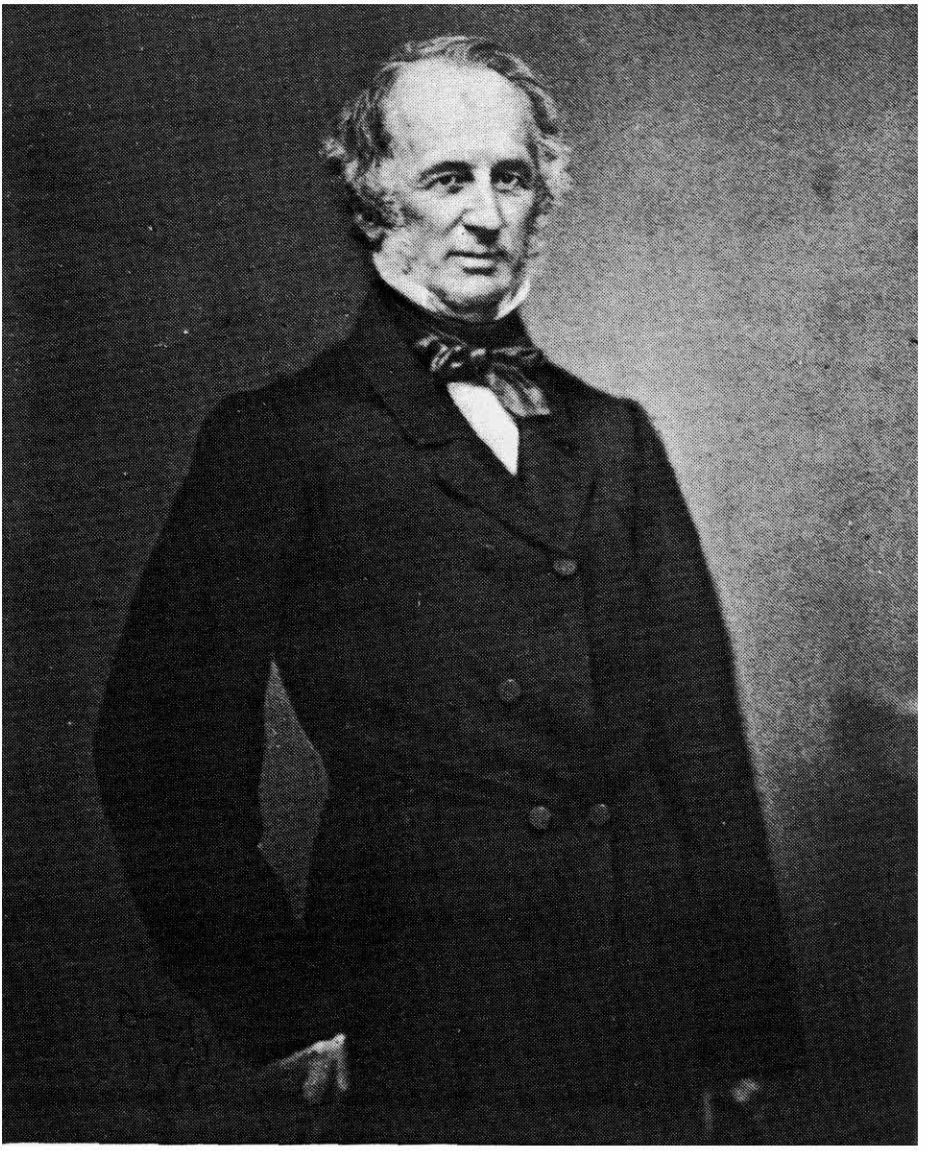
[2]"The Nicaragua Canal--Operations in London--Critical State of the Canal Company's Charter," *New York Herald*, November 16, 1850, p.2, c.3.

[3]Andrews, p. 38.



Cornelius Vanderbilt
"king of robber barons . . . " (p. 94)

and sold them in the stock market at prices soaring to $3,700 each share before the bubble burst towards the end of 1852. Simultaneously, they issued and distributed among themselves 40,000 "Nicaragua Transit Company" shares, which soon rose to peak values of fifty dollars each in the market. In a few days, during March and April, 1852, they swiftly disposed of 15,000 shares in the New York Exchange, and "Mr. Joseph L. White, the legal counsel of the company, is said to have made $300,000 by the rise."[4]

Large transactions continued throughout the year, steadily holding Nicaragua Transit among the most active stocks in the lists of the New York Exchange, and making it the "favorite fancy" among speculators. *The New York Herald's* financial analyst observed that the Nicaragua Transit Company had a wide margin for the manufacture of stock to supply any demand that might spring up, and added:

> . . . if capital amounting to four millions of dollars is issued in the shape of stock, and only about five hundred thousand dollars are required to place the entire inland route in perfect order, it follows that somebody is going to make immense fortunes out of the right of way, or for the privilege of using the grant obtained from the government of Nicaragua, for navigating the lakes and rivers of that country.[5]

With Vanderbilt and associates dumping their holdings, and new owners acquiring increasing shares, infighting inevitably developed for control of the company. Attempts were then made to depress the market, for the purpose of buying in at lower prices. A few hundred shares were sold, in lots of 50 each, at prices considerably below the previous market value, and then, through other agents, they bought

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[4]"Vanderbilt's New Line," *Alta*, May 11, 1852, p.2, c.1.

[5]"Money Market," *New York Herald*, March 29, 1852, p.2, c.4.

as many shares as possible without causing a reaction. At the same time, there was resentment among the stockholders provoked by Vanderbilt's ownership and private exploitation of the ocean steamers: his partners in the Transit Company wanted to place the entire line under the Company's management.

The Board of Directors accepted a new arrangement on December 29, 1852. By it, Vanderbilt sold to the Company his ocean vessels--the steamships *Northern Light, Star of the West, Prometheus, Daniel Webster, Brother Jonathan, Pacific,* and the *S.S. Lewis*--for $1,200,000 in cash and $150,000 in bonds maturing a year later. The cash was raised by issuing 40,000 new shares which were promptly sold in the market at $30 each, somewhat below the current price of the old Nicaraguan Transit stock. As security for the bonds, Vanderbilt retained the New York agency of the line, for which service the company agreed to pay him 20% of its gross receipts!

Between January 1 and June 27, 1853, the Nicaragua Transit Company steamers carried 5,650 passengers to San Francisco and 4,272 returning Californians to the East Coast. Gross receipts ran well into the millions, but nearly all profits went to agent Vanderbilt: for that six-month period, the company received from him only $49,000.

With his wealth soaring to new heights, Vanderbilt took a well-earned pleasure voyage to Europe in his luxury yacht *North Star,* departing from New York on May 20th. But his absence was turned to good account by his opponents, who promptly bought enough stock for a new Board of Directors to take over the company when elections were held on the 18th of July. In 1853 the new president, Charles Morgan, a Connecticut Yankee, founder of the Morgan Line of later years, was already worth several million dollars. In assuming control of the Nicaragua Transit, he acted in complete accord with lawyer Joseph L. White and with Cornelius K. Garrison, the company agent in San Francisco.

The new management immediately stopped paying Vanderbilt his 20%. When the "Commodore" returned from

Europe on September 23, and was told by his clerk in detail what had happened, he exploded, and between expletives dictated a letter to Morgan and Garrison: "Gentlemen: You have undertaken to cheat me. I won't sue you, for the law is too slow. I'll ruin you."[6] To carry out his threat, he issued a writ of attachment against the steamship *Prometheus* and then an application at the custom house for the confiscation of all the Nicaragua Line steamers, but on the legal front Vanderbilt was no match for Joseph L. White, and he failed in both instances.

Next, in February 1854, Vanderbilt established an "Independent Opposition Line" on the Panama route and cut fares drastically, down to $80 cabin and $35 steerage from New York to San Francisco, for he was determined to put the Nicaragua Line out of business. He failed again, in part because the trip averaged less time by Nicaragua than by any other route. Port statistics for that trimester show that the Nicaragua Transit Company carried 9,586 passengers between New York and San Francisco, against 9,134 by all Panama vessels combined.

Official financial reports set the assets of the Nicaragua Transit Company at $2,265,355 in January and $2,847,250 in July, 1854. Gross earnings for the semester ending June 30: $860,000. After paying all expenses and a 3% dividend, $140,000 remained in the bank and in the hands of agents. A 6% dividend was expected in the second semester.

Clearly, the Nicaragua Transit monopoly had produced millions of dollars for Vanderbilt and other Americans. Yet, it had not produced a penny for Nicaragua, although its Charter obliged the Company to pay the State "ten percent of the net profits, without any deduction of interest."[7] The Transit Company Charter also obliged the Company to present an annual statement of its affairs to the State, and the State

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[6] Wheaton J. Lane, *Commodore Vanderbilt --An Epic of the Steam Age* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1942), p. 109.

[7] "The Nicaragua Transit Company Route," *NY Herald*, 11/18/1852, p2 c1.

reserved the privilege to appoint commissioners to examine the books and accounts of the Company.

Accordingly, in August, 1852, when the Company had been operating for over a year without paying any profits to the State or rendering any account, Nicaragua appointed two commissioners "to proceed to New York, to inquire into the cause of this dereliction, and investigate the affairs of the company."[8] These commissioners were Don José de Marcoleta, Minister of Nicaragua in the United States, and the English vice-consul in León, Mr. Thomas Manning (a heavy creditor for loans to the State).

Upon inspecting the books in New York, Marcoleta and Manning found a dividend of two dollars per share had been entered; and as dividends implied profits, Nicaragua was hence entitled to upwards of eight thousand dollars. So they asked for a balance sheet, or statement of accounts, and after evasions and delays, one was finally produced which showed exorbitant expenses and no profit. Marcoleta gave the balance sheet to the press, and the *New York Herald* commented on Nov. 18:

> . . . Perhaps the annals of finance furnish no parallel to this most extraordinary document, which, if true, shows only that the company was not only deeply involved, but had been, notwithstanding its exorbitant charges, a losing concern.
>
> But a large part of the charges, as regarded Nicaragua, were both inadmissible and absurd. For instance, the expenses of Messrs. White and Vanderbilt's unfortunate expedition to England, for the purpose of inducing English capitalists to embark in an entirely distinct enterprise, (that of the canal,) was charged at the modest sum of $9,000! This was one only of a series of charges, having no more relation to the Transit Company, or its expenditures, than to the Erie Railroad and

[8] Ibid.

its accounts . . .

Amongst the charges alluded to, and which the company pretended should be paid from the receipts of the transit, were charges for boats, cost of the so called road, the (pretended) survey for a canal, the expenses of agents in procuring the various charters from Nicaragua, &c., &c., and entered at fabulously extravagant rates. The balance sheet was communicated to counsel, and to leading merchants of this city, and all concurred in the view of the commissioners as to the impropriety of the charges generally.[9]

The *Herald* published all the correspondence between Marcoleta and the company, and mutual rejoinders followed. In a nutshell, White and associates, "with disgraceful imputations and slanders," tried to discredit Marcoleta, upon which the latter closed his rejoinder with the following thoughts:

And now, since the matter has assumed the present form, I have only to add that it is my purpose to fully expose the nature of the differences which exist between the State of Nicaragua and the Canal and Transit Companies, and the extent of the violations of their privileges of which they have been guilty, as a warning and justification of the measures which my government has taken, or may take, to secure its rights and vindicate its honor. Meantime, the public can well understand that every means will be taken to discredit and avert the effect of these disclosures; but the facts will be found to be of such a nature as to defy the sophistry of interested and unprincipled speculators.[10]

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[9] Ibid.

[10] "The Rejoinder of the Nicaraguan Minister," Ibid., 11/20/52, p7 c1.

Nicaragua was seriously contemplating to revoke the charter, when the State Department, in December, came to the aid of the unprincipled speculators and demanded the recall of Marcoleta. The pretext given was the Crampton-Webster Convention incident the previous April, but the timing of Marcoleta's actual dismissal from Washington came at the right moment for Joseph L. White and the Transit Company. This was in keeping with the well-known policy of the Fillmore Administration, examined above (in Chapter Five), and aptly denounced by the *New York Herald's* Granada correspondent:

> The policy of the present administration of the United States seems to be, to divide our territory among our friends on both sides of us and the Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company, apparently believing that we are incompetent to manage our affairs, and are unworthy to be consulted as to the disposition of our own property.[11]

The Company then sent a special agent, J. W. Edmonds, to Nicaragua, to demand Marcoleta's substitution as commissioner, while Secretary of State Edward Everett informed the Nicaraguan envoy that, thereafter, no communication could be received from him in Washington. Minister Kerr candidly admitted that "there seems to be some obliquity regulating the conduct of Mr. White," but nonetheless, at that juncture he was again ready to lend his full support to the speculators to prevent Nicaragua from revoking the charter, thus "saving the rights and privileges of the canal company" as ordained by the State Department.[12]

And to strengthen Kerr's hand, the Company requested and received the support of the U.S. Navy. Washington

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[11] "Our Nicaragua Correspondence," Ibid., 9/25/1852, p.2, c.3.

[12] Kerr to Webster, Managua, July 28, 1852; Kerr to Everett, León, January 13, 1853, Microfilm Publication M-219-9, The National Archives.

ordered war vessels to visit Nicaraguan ports to protect Transit Company interests, for "the mere appearance of a ship is often all that is necessary to afford ample protection." The sloop-of-war *Portsmouth* showed up at Realejo and San Juan del Sur early in February, 1853, but such "moral influence of the national flag" did not help Mr. Edmonds: on January 26, the Nicaraguan Government adamantly rejected his proposal to remove Marcoleta.

Immediately upon returning to the United States, Edmonds wrote to Commodore John Thomas Newton, commander of the Home Squadron aboard the flagship *Columbia*, off Pensacola. That singular letter, dated at Mobile, March 7, 1853, revealed that the Transit Monopoly Octopus was engaged in trying to manipulate the U.S. government into a policy of gunboat diplomacy. Edmonds wanted the gunboats "as early as practicable," because "the legislature of Nicaragua will be in session during March, April, and May, and I apprehend the violation of contract, which I have mentioned will be perpetrated unless it can be prevented by some such means as those I suggest." He added that a warship at San Juan del Norte should also protect the Company's property, for the Greytowners "had threatened to tear down and demolish the buildings of our company."[13]

In his prompt reply, Commodore Newton assured Mr. Edmonds that he would do everything in his power to comply with his wishes. In fact, the sloop-of-war *Cyane*, commanded by George N. Hollins, was already on its way to Greytown, "where she will of course attend to the interests of our citizens, and see that no trespass upon their rights is committed."[14]

The *Cyane* arrived at San Juan del Norte at the last moment, when the Greytown authorities (all of them Americans), with two carpenters, saw and hatchet in hand,

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[13] Edmonds to Newton, Mobile, March 7, 1853, Item 83, Microfilm Publication M-89-93, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[14] Newton to Edmonds, U.S. flagship *Columbia*, March 14, 1853, Ibid.

were beginning to tear down and demolish the Transit Company buildings. Forty fully-armed *Cyane* sailors stopped them. When Captain Hollins' dispatches reached Washington in April, Joseph L. White had a long interview with President Pierce. The British Minister at Washington rushed orders to the British fleet, and the H.B.M. steamer *Geyser* soon relieved the *Cyane* at Greytown, with orders to protect the Transit Company employees and property from the Greytowners.

During the *Cyane's* sojourn at San Juan del Norte, Purser Charles C. Upham, Surgeon George Peck, and Captain Clark, visited the interior expressly to report the gunboat's presence to the local authorities at Managua. In Mr. Edmonds' estimate, the visit of the officers to the seat of government was "absolutely necessary to carry out the purposes of protection which our Navy had in view."[15] The timing was opportune, for Don Fruto Chamorro had just become Supreme Director in Nicaragua, at the onset of the Pierce Administration in Washington.

Minister Kerr was then leaving his post, chagrined at the Nicaraguan government's refusal to replace Marcoleta. Kerr's parting admonition, in a letter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Jesús de la Rocha, April 6, 1853, conveyed an unmistakable warning in reference to the "rights and property" of the Transit Company, which were then in jeopardy:

> . . . The undersigned forbears to press upon the attention of the Honorable Mr. Rocha and of the government of Nicaragua many important questions involving the personal rights and property of his countrymen here. These will be left to the parental oversight of the government of the United States, ever ready to cherish and guard the enterprise of American Citizens everywhere.[16]

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[15] Edmonds to Newton, Mobile, March 7, 1853.

[16] Kerr to Rocha, Managua, April 6, 1853, Microfilm Publication M-219-9, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

The intimidating presence of the *Portsmouth* and *Cyane* strengthened the potential threat implicit in Kerr's warning. Nicaraguan authorities read the message correctly, and wisely shelved all designs for forfeiting the transit contract. Thenceforth, the Transit Monopoly Octopus could feel perfectly secure in the enjoyment of "its rights," without having to comply with the provisions of its charter. Immense fortunes continued pouring into the coffers of the Vanderbilts, Whites, Morgans, and Garrisons, "out of the right of way, or for the privilege of using the grant obtained from the government of Nicaragua, for navigating the lakes and rivers of that country." And Nicaragua continued receiving nothing.

Transit Company buildings
"two carpenters, saw and hatchet in hand . . . " (p. 103)

9. The Tentacles Tighten

Beset by debts and in want of financial resources, the Nicaraguan government insistently tried to collect its ten percent from the Transit Company, to no avail. The Morgan management turned out to be just as slippery as its predecessor. On July 20, 1853, Foreign Minister Mateo Mayorga addressed an "ultimatum" to the Company, demanding that it name arbiters for a settlement, as provided in the Charter, for otherwise the government would be forced to take painful measures "perhaps very transcendental for the Company."[1] In his reply, Joseph L. White threatened to appeal to the new American envoy, Mr. Solon Borland, for protection.

White had already talked to Borland at the Company Headquarters in New York, when the new envoy left for Nicaragua, and hence expected him to side with the Company as Squier and Kerr had. Thus the Company asked Borland to arbitrate, and on September 27, Supreme Director Don Fruto Chamorro accepted him as umpire. The Company proposed to pay Nicaragua thirty thousand dollars in lieu of past dues, up to August, 1853, and two dollars per passenger thereafter. Nicaragua wished to receive forty thousand dollars for past dues and three dollars per passenger thereafter, in addition to a fifty thousand dollar loan from the Company, at seven percent interest, to be repaid from future dues.

Borland sent a detailed account of the proceedings to Secretary of State William L. Marcy, in which he complained of the "want of frankness, candor, and consistency, in the communications of the Company, alike, to this government,

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[1] Mayorga to Borland, Managua, September 26, 1853, Microfilm Publication M-219-9, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

and to me."[2] In New York, White had told Borland that the Transit Company had net profits of around eight hundred thousand dollars a year, but in his negotiations with Nicaragua, White alleged that the Company made no profits at all. Borland commented to Marcy:

> Now, whether the one of these statements, or the other, or neither, be true, I have no means of determining with certainty; but it is certain that one of them is false --grossly, purposely false! I speak plainly, and feel authorized thus to characterize an attempt, first to deceive and then to make use of me, for dishonest purposes.
>
> When this statement was made to me, in New York, I did not give it full credence; but, instead of suspecting anything culpable in the motive of the exaggeration, I ascribed it to that harmless, and often amusing, sort of vanity which delights to invest all its concerns with importance. But, during my passage from San Juan, in conversation with some well informed agents of the company, I was furnished with such additional statements, based on estimates, of what I had some opportunity to observe, as to give me, now, strong reasons to believe that the statement, in question, was not only not an exaggeration, but fell within, rather than exceeded, the limits of truth. At any rate, I feel well assured that the Company are, now, realizing a very large profit upon their investment--I will not say how large, lest it might be thought that I had caught the contagion of extravagance, or some worse habit of mind.[3]

Borland told Marcy that, unlike his predecessors, he would not allow his character to be degraded by becoming a speculator or by favoring the schemes of those who were. As

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[2]Borland to Marcy, Managua, October 8, 1853, Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

arbiter, he would ascertain all the facts and would make an award according to his conscience--without any concern for the wishes of either party and caring only for the public interests of the United States.

Unable to make use of Mr. Borland for their dishonest purposes, the Company discarded him as arbiter and appointed instead a Mr. Rafael García de Tejada, a citizen of Nueva Granada, as their agent, to make a settlement with Nicaragua. García de Tejada met with Minister Mayorga and signed an agreement whereby the Company would pay the government forty thousand dollars in dues up to August, 1853, and two dollars per passenger thereafter. In addition, the Company would lend Nicaragua forty thousand dollars, of the fifty originally requested. Borland transmitted to Marcy the good tidings, expressing great satisfaction, that a settlement had been negotiated and that he would not have to deal with the matter.

But to the dismay of Borland and all concerned, the Company in New York disavowed their agent and revoked the settlement. They charged García de Tejada with having exceeded his instructions. Rather than paying its dues, the Company elected to tighten its grip on Nicaragua. In a November 19, 1853 letter to Borland, White informed him:

> I shall see Gov. Marcy[4] next week, from whose sense of justice, as well as from whose long personal friendship, I hope for a prompt and decided course in our difficulties with Nicaragua.[5]

White travelled to Washington, where long friendship prevailed over justice, and Marcy acceded to his wishes. "Hon. Joseph L. White," bearer of U.S. government despatches to Nicaragua, forthwith sailed from New York on the *Northern*

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[4]Marcy had been associate justice of the New York Supreme Court and U.S. senator, before becoming governor of New York in 1832.

[5]White to Borland, New York, 11/19/1853, Microfilm M-219-9.

Light on February 4, 1854, and Borland received special instructions from Marcy to make sure that the interests of the Company suffered no detriment.

White intended to "see things through" in Nicaragua, counting on the fact that the same Chamorro and Mayorga who in 1851 had signed the Accessory Transit Company contract, were in power. But the *New York Herald* correspondent saw little chance for him, since he would meet with a "general antipathy" from a government that was "firmly resolved to annul the contract, and declare the transit open to the world" unless the Company complied with the agreement signed by García de Tejada. Moreover, "the present government has shown enough energy and determination to execute its resolutions."[6]

Gunboat diplomacy, however, saved the day for White and his associates. As soon as Nicaragua issued a decree taxing the gold dust transported across the country by the Transit Company, it met with Borland's disapproval, and all of Chamorro's "energy and determination" instantly evaporated. Borland's warning, like Kerr's, was ominous: "the United States would have to interpose, for the protection of the legal rights of her citizens."[7]

Mission accomplished, after a month in Nicaragua, White returned to New York. While passing through San Juan, he submitted a proposition to the Greytown City Council for settling the differences between the town and the Company. In short, he asked the town to donate to the Company, with clear title, all the lands needed for the Company's stores, houses, wharves, shops, etc.; to exempt the Company from all taxes, duties, and charges, of any name, kind, or nature, forever; to recognize all the rights granted by Nicaragua to the Company; to build and preserve a pier for its free and uninterrupted use by the Company steamers; to charge no taxes or duties to the Company passengers, etc. The Company,

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[6]"Our Nicaragua Correspondence," *N Y Herald*, Apr. 3, 1854, p.2, c.2.

[7]Borland to Marcy, Granada, March 11, 1854, Microfilm M-219-9.

in return, would graciously allow its passengers to land at the wharf or pier built by the town.

Strange as it may seem, the City Council accepted White's proposal, subject to three amendments:

1. That no hotels or boarding houses would be built on Company grounds; and no store or store houses for commercial purposes would be opened on company grounds other than those actually required by the Company.

2. That the Company would not hinder the free navigation of the San Juan river within the limits of the city.

3. That owing to the limited resources of the city, Greytown would contribute only two thousand dollars towards the construction of the wharf, which the Company would then build, under the condition that all merchandise brought by Company steamers would be free from wharfage charges.

White rejected the Greytowners' amendments, refusing to even consider a compromise. Instead, he sought to gain control of the city through the appointment of Transit Company employees to the Common Council, but he failed. "Accordingly Mr. White, acting like a sort of Greytown Jonah, appeared in the streets, and with a formidable display of bowie knife and pistols, as well as an abundance of oaths, declared that Greytown should be no more."[8] He told Greytowners, that "he would have a man-of-war down on them and blow them all to hell."[9] Upon returning to New York, towards the end of March, White proceeded to Washington:

> . . . [to] present his own statements as a true version of the difficulties then occurring in Central America, representing that the Transit Company had been plundered to the amount of thousands of dollars, by "a camp of savages" pretending to exercise authority over Greytown, and that the lives of citizens of the United States

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[8]"Joe White's Plans for the Regeneration of Greytown," *Weekly Post* (scrap), William Sydney Thayer Papers, Library of Congress.

[9]Manuscript chronicle of events leading to the bombardment of Greytown, Samuel S. Wood Papers, Yale University Library.

were imperilled by their cruelties.[10]

Events quickly went White's way, for on May 16 a Nicaraguan bungo patron named Antonio Paladino was wantonly murdered.[11] The homicide occurred in the lower San Juan river, inside the *de facto* jurisdiction of Greytown, and the killer was the captain of the Transit Company steamer *H L Routh,* a portuguese citizen with the unlikely name of Smith. As the *Routh* cruised down river on its way to San Juan, with American Minister Solon Borland and eastbound California passengers on board, Captain Smith shot Paladino in cold-blood and purposely ran the steamer into his bungo, crushing it like an egg-shell. Eyewitnesses claimed that "Smith would not have shot the man, if he had not been encouraged by Borland."[12]

Upon the *Routh's* arrival at the bay, the Greytown authorities attempted to arrest Smith, but were stopped by Borland, who alleged that "to permit the Greytown officers to arrest an American citizen, and try him for crime, would be to recognize the authority of the town's government in its fullest sense."[13]

As the marshal and his men came on board to arrest captain Smith, and as a bungo with two dozen armed

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[10]"Joe White's Plans . . ."

[11]In the chronicle of his 1853 visit to Nicaragua, former American envoy E. G. Squier wrote: "I had hardly landed before I was nearly caught from my feet in the Herculean embrace of Antonio Paladino, my ancient *patron,* who took this elephantine way of evincing his joy at meeting me again. He had been with me in my visit to Zapatera, and had afterward taken me to San Juan in his pet bongo '*La Granadina.*' Poor Antonio! He was subsequently wantonly assassinated by a brutal captain of one of the Transit steamers, a Portuguese refugee, who only escaped punishment through the interference of an over-zealous American embassador." E. G. Squier, "Nicaragua," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* LXV, Oct. 1855, p. 582.

[12]"William H. Rodgers' Statement," S. S. Wood and W. P. Kirkland, *A Memorial to the Congress of the United States* (New York: John A. Gray, Printer & Stereotyper, 1859), p. 34.

[13]Colonel Frémont's Statement, *A Memorial to the Congress . . .* p.32.

Greytowners approached the steamer, the American Minister took a gun, cocked it, and pointed it, saying: "If you respect your lives, do not allow the boat to come any nearer, or I will fire and kill every one. I shall have a man-of-war here in a very short time to settle all this matter."[14]

The marshal withdrew. In the evening, Borland visited the U.S. Commercial Agent, Mr. J. W. Fabens, in town. A crowd gathered around the house, for some angry Greytowners wanted to arrest the U. S. Minister for obstruction of justice. With Borland standing at the door, somebody threw the fragments of a broken glass bottle at him, slightly wounding him in the face. The crowd promptly dispersed, but during the night the town was occupied by armed men, with sentinels challenging all who attempted to pass, preventing boats from landing or leaving the shore, and thus keeping Mr. Borland a prisoner all night.

The next morning he procured a boat, went aboard the *Northern Light,* and sailed for New York, proceeding forthwith to Washington to denounce the outrage against his person. In presenting his case, on May 30th, to Secretary of State Marcy, he made this assessment of the Greytowners:

> I am unable to regard them in any other light than as pirates and outlaws, upon whom punishment, to the extent of extermination, may be rightfully inflicted by any hand that has the power; and, in my opinion, the interests of good government and humanity impose the duty upon any offended party of inflicting such punishment in a manner at once summary and effective.[15]

At that juncture, the interests of "good government and humanity" coincided with those of the Transit Company, for which reason Joseph L. White also travelled to Washington, to

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[14]Greytown's City Marshal Deposition, Ibid. p. 36.

[15]Borland to Marcy, Washington, May 30, 1854, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 85, p. 3.

join Borland in urging President Pierce to inflict summary punishment on the Greytowners. Upon convincing the president, White sent his instructions to J. W. Fabens, the U. S. Commercial Agent at San Juan de Nicaragua:

New York, June 5, 1854

Dear Sir: -- Major Borland's letter to you does not state what course the government will pursue in this case. You will find the information in my letter to Mr. Scott [Transit Company agent at San Juan], which I have instructed him to send to you. I made the suggestion to the President in presence of Mr. B. and the Secretary of State, that the information of what the government designed to do had better leak out to the people of San Juan, as in that event the guilty parties would runaway, and thus bloodshed be prevented. To all this he assented, as did all parties present. Hence my letter to Scott. You can advise him as to the best mode of accidentally communicating the information (or confidentially) to some honest man in San Juan, if he can be found. Unless the guilty rascals runaway or be delivered up to Captain Hollins, bloodshed is certain; and this all of us want to avoid, if possible. I am well assured that nothing will please the government more than that these men should escape punishment by running away. Very truly yours, &c. --J. L. WHITE.[16]

"In pursuance of the wishes of the President," the Navy Department ordered Commander George N. Hollins to proceed with the *Cyane* to San Juan, with Mr. Joseph L. White directing Hollins' mission behind the scenes. White transmitted from New York his last-minute instructions to U. S. Commercial Agent Fabens:

New York, June 16, 1854

[16] "The Nicaragua Filibuster Case," *N Y Herald*, 2/28/1857, p.8, c.1.

> Dear Sir: --Captain Hollins leaves here next Monday. You will see from his instructions that much discretion is given to you, and it is to be hoped that it will not be so exercised as to show any mercy to the town or people. If the scoundrels are soundly punished we can take possession and build it up as a business place. Put in our own officers--transfer the jurisdiction, and you know the rest.
>
> It is of the last importance that the people of the town should be taught to fear us. Punishment will teach them, after which you must agree with them as to the organization of a new government and the officers of it. Everything now depends on you and Hollins. The latter is all right. He fully understands the outrage, and will not hesitate in enforcing reparation. I hope to hear from you that all is right. Yours, &c., --J. L. WHITE.[17]

White's letters to Fabens again show clearly the intimate relations existing between the Transit Monopoly speculators and the government of the United States. When read in light of previous and subsequent events, they disclose a corrupt bargain between Mr. White and the Pierce administration. Greytown was to be destroyed and the "scoundrels" driven out, so that "we can take possession and build it up as a business place." The royal "we" meant the Transit Company in partnership with prominent politicians--allegedly greasing the palm of President Pierce himself, according to U.S. Commercial Agent Fabens, one of the partners--all of them shareholders of a giant Mosquito land speculation known as the "Central American Land Company."[18]

The *Cyane* arrived at San Juan on July 11, and Fabens and Hollins carried out White's instructions faithfully, avoiding bloodshed but showing no mercy to the town or people. Due notice was given so that the Greytowners could

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Fabens' testimony in court. Ibid.

evacuate their homes before the *Cyane* rained destruction on their dwellings. As reported by Hollins to his superiors, it sounded as natural as turning on and off the kitchen faucet:

> At 9 a.m., on the morning of the 13th inst., our batteries were opened on the town with shot and shells for three-quarters of an hour, followed by an intermission of the same time, when they were opened again for half an hour, followed by a second intermission of three hours. At the expiration of this interval the firing was re-commenced, and continued for twenty minutes, when the bombardment ceased. The object of these several intervals in the bombardment was, that an opportunity to treat and satisfactorily arrange matters might be furnished the inhabitants of the town. No advantage was taken of the consideration shown them, and at 4 o'clock p.m. a command under Lieuts. Pickering and Fauntleroy was sent on shore with orders to complete the destruction of the town by fire. . . .
>
> The execution done by our shot and shells amounted to the almost total destruction of the buildings; but it was thought best to make the punishment of such a character as to inculcate a lesson never to be forgotten . . . and satisfy the whole world that the United States has the power and determination to enforce that reparation and respect due to them as a government in whatever quarters the outrages be committed.[19]

The savage destruction of Greytown by Hollins' forces met with the unqualified approval by the Navy Department and as well as President Pierce and his Cabinet. Naturally, it also raised a storm of angry protests in the American press. The *New York Herald* editorial of August 11, 1854, eloquently conveyed "The Public Verdict on the San Juan Affair":

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[19]Hollins to Dobbin, San Juan de Nicaragua, July 16, 1854, "House of Representatives," *New York Herald*, August 1, 1854, p.1, c.4.

> During the whole period of our connection with the public press, we do not remember any act of government which has met so general and so unqualified condemnation as the outrage committed, under the authority of the present Administration, on the town of San Juan de Nicaragua. The publication of the official documents, which it was hoped might extenuate the act, has served only to confirm the justice of the denunciations which the first intelligence had provoked; and the subsequent efforts of the government organ to palliate the deed by misrepresentations of the facts and gross libels on the people of San Juan, have not only utterly failed, but have covered it, and the stipendiary presses which are its echoes, with contempt.[20]

The fact of the matter was that the officers and crew of the *Cyane* had faithfully executed Mr. White's orders "that Greytown should be no more." The people of San Juan had been taught a lesson never to be forgotten; all opposition to the Monopoly had been "blown to hell," thereby leaving the Company in full control of the entire transit route. Moreover, Greytown being destroyed, and the way thus opened, as Mr. White expressed it, for a new government, the Mosquito land speculators set about preparing for the occupation of the territory.[21]

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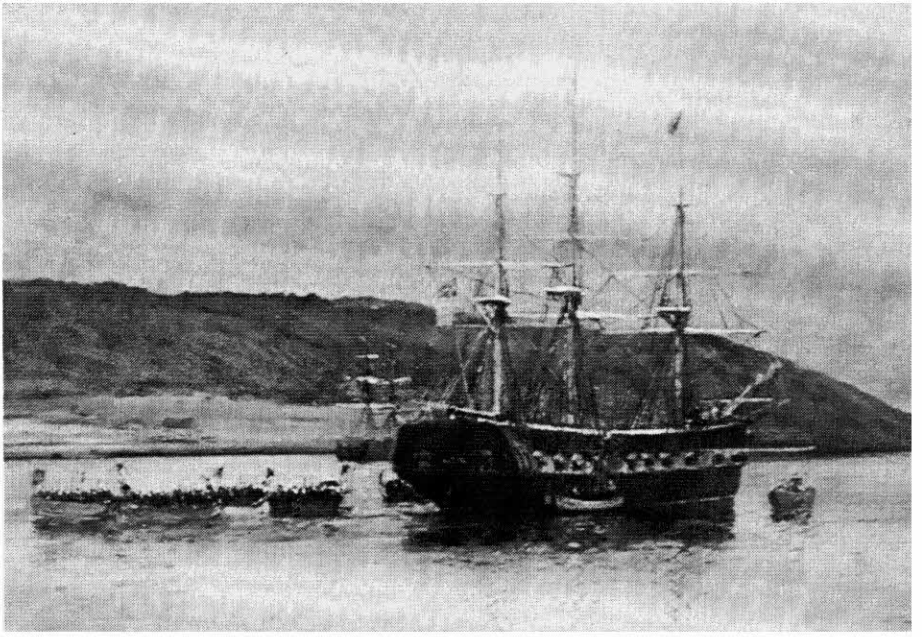
[20] "The Public Verdict on the San Juan Affair," *New York Herald,* August 11, 1854, p.4, c.2.

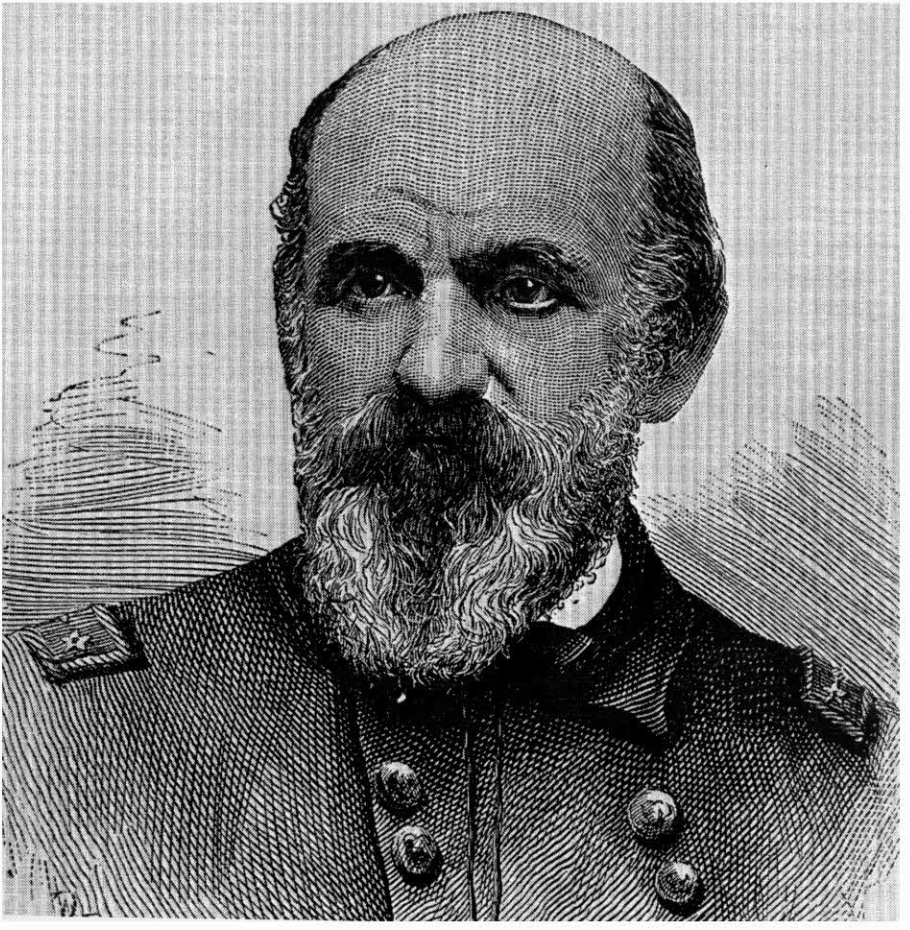
[21] Fabens afterwards repented and testified at the United States Commissioner's Court, in New York: "Greytown being destroyed, (alas! that in my ignorance of the motives of the principals in this affair, I ever permitted myself to be convinced that it was a righteous act,) and the way thus opened, as Mr. White expresses it for a new government, the Mosquito land speculators set about preparing for the occupation of a territory whose chief town they had made a heap of blackened ashes. Upon the arrival of Col. Kinney at Washington, in August *[sic],* 1854, he, at the suggestion of President Pierce, turns his attention to that quarter, and is selected by the Central American Land Company as their leader in the work of colonizing that territory. He is to be the Romulus of our new southern empire." "The Nicaragua Filibuster Case," *New York Herald,* February 28, 1857, p.8, c.1.

Greytown, 1853
King Street, looking northward



USS Cyane

"at 4 o'clock p.m. a command under Lieuts. Pickering and Fauntleroy was sent on shore with orders to complete the destruction of the town by fire" (p. 115).



Captain George Nicholas Hollins

Confederate States Navy

Served in the United States Navy as Midshipman (1814), Lieutenant (1825), Commander (1845) and Captain (1855), until dismissed on June 6, 1861. He immediately joined the Confederate Navy and used devious ways to board United States Navy vessels and capture or scuttle them. He later commanded the Confederate Navy forces on the Mississippi River.

10. *El Ministro filibustero*

Stories about Mosquito land speculators appeared in American newspapers in the fall of 1853. Mr. David Francis Keeling, of Norfolk, Virginia, had acquired a grant of some twenty million acres of land, which the Mosquito king had originally given to Samuel and Peter Shepherd, natives of Savannah, Georgia. The soil in Mosquitodom was said to be as fertile as any under the sun, but still more valuable, "coal, copper, gold and silver abound."[1] Visions of fabulous riches lured gullible people into the scheme. Keeling and associates from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York set in motion a private enterprise said to be the largest in the last century and a half. And once the Anglo-Saxon race "sets his foot on Central American soil, to occupy it permanently," industry and progress would, of course, usher in "a new era in the history of the Central American States . . . of the United States . . . [and] of the world."[2]

James Gordon Bennett, however, exploded that particular Manifest Destiny dream with a well-documented exposé in the *New York Herald* on January 16, 1854. Bennett proved categorically that the Mosquito land grants were utterly worthless. The Mosquitodom humbug instantly disappeared from public view, but the engineers of the fraud continued to advance their grand scheme of colonization in private, adroitly distributing free shares of the "Central American Land and Mining Company" among influential persons in the

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[1] "Americans in the Mosquito Shore --Yankee Enterprise in Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, November 10, 1853, p.2, c.1.

[2] Ibid.

U.S. Government and key Transit Company stockholders.

Joseph L. White and Charles Morgan became directors of the Land and Mining Company, which also counted among its prominent members: U.S. Senator James Cooper, of Pennsylvania; Baltimore attorney William Cost Johnson; Sidney Webster (private secretary of President Pierce) and his "associate," the President himself; Fletcher and Daniel Webster (sons of the late Secretary of State); J. W. Fabens, U. S. Commercial Agent at San Juan; A. O. P. Nicholson, of the *Washington Union;* Col. G. W. Forney, Clerk of the House of Representatives and editor of the *Union;* and "other gentlemen of high standing."[3]

Nicaraguan envoy Don José de Marcoleta, back at his post during the Pierce administration, repeatedly denounced the forthcoming aggression against Nicaragua by the Central American Land and Mining Company in connivance with the Accessory Transit Company, but the U.S. Government paid no attention. Marcoleta's urgent letters of February 7, March 20, and May 4, 1854, received no answer from Secretary of State Marcy. The Nicaraguan revolution against Chamorro that began on the 5th of May, and the bombardment of Greytown by the *Cyane* on the 13th of July, left the door wide open for the colonization project.

On August 30th it was reported in Washington that the Company was almost ready to start operations, and that Senator Cooper, a leading member, would proceed to San Juan on the next Transit Company steamer. The British envoy, Mr. Crampton, had "frequently assured the officers of the American Land and Mining Company that his government would be pleased to see them in the undisputed possession of the whole country, by the concurrence of the Mosquito King. He has also made the same declarations to the President and the Secretary of State."[4] Such stated British approval

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[3] Fabens' testimony, under oath, in the U.S. Commissioner's Court, in New York. "The Nicaraguan Filibuster Case," Ibid., 2/28/1857, p.8, c.1.

[4] "The Central American Question," Ibid., September 2, 1854, p.2, c.6.

encouraged the Mosquito speculators, and those of high standing in the Pierce administration redoubled their efforts to secure U.S. Government support for the project.

Their maneuvers may be read between the lines in the private diary of John Hill Wheeler, Assistant Secretary to President Pierce, who resigned early in August when he was appointed Minister Resident near the Republic of Nicaragua. In the succeeding weeks, prior to his departure for his new post, Wheeler naturally had several long, cosy, and "confidential" talks with President Pierce, Secretary of State Marcy, and Secretary of the Navy Dobbin. And his other engagements could be used to complete an 1854 Mosquitodom Who's Who. Wheeler's subsequent collaboration with the filibusters, narrated below, shows that he was in their camp.

Wheeler spent an entire morning with Col. Forney and Sidney Webster, "and had a most instructive interview as regards our relations with Central America."[5] He then dined at Willard's with Cost Johnson, Fabens, and Hollins, and again with Fabens and his wife. He called on Judge Nicholson of the *Union,* met with Col. Forney, went with Fabens to see Joseph L. White, Charles Morgan, and others connected with the Transit Line, and then dined at White's home with Chas. J. Faulkner, of Virginia. Finally, on October 26, Wheeler met with Fabens, received his final instructions at the State Department, called on the President with Mr. Dobbin, and bade an affectionate good bye to both.

When Minister Wheeler was leaving Washington for his post in Nicaragua, Col. Henry L. Kinney arrived in the capital to take charge of the Mosquitodom project. The colonel was a man well qualified for the job: "a perfect man . . . the powers of endurance of an Indian, and all the experience in rough and adventurous life of the soldier and the frontier pioneer."[6] A native of Pennsylvania, young Kinney had been

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[5]John Hill Wheeler, "Diary," August 13, 1854.

[6]Nicaraguan Land and Mining Company, *The Kinney Expedition* (New York: W. C. Bryant & Co., 1855), p. 4.

an early settler of Chicago before emigrating to Texas to establish a trading post which became Corpus Christi. He then served as Gen. Taylor's quartermaster during the Mexican War, and afterwards established a booming trade to Chihuahua with army surplus goods; his trading post became an important station on the Chihuahua route to the California gold fields.

A disastrous outbreak of yellow fever put an end to his business during the summer of 1854. In late September he travelled via New Orleans and Mobile to the Atlantic States, and the press reported that he was on his way to California, where he would be associated with Col. Hiram H. Pearson in San Francisco.[7] Instead, when Kinney showed up in Washington a month later, he was selected by the Mosquito speculators as their leader, "at the suggestion of President Pierce, his old companion in-arms in the Mexican war."[8]

The news was announced by the speculators in November. The expedition would start from New York, Texas and other parts, to establish a new Anglo-American republic in the Mosquito country, and the celebrated Col. Kinney would be its President. Success was assured by President Pierce's choice of Kinney. A writer commented:

> This looks well for the enterprise. Such a man--who has made his mark wherever he has been, and in whatever he has undertaken--is not likely to fail. Will the people of Central America understand what is "manifest destiny," and what is for the good of their States?[9]

Nicaraguan envoy Don José de Marcoleta did understand what "manifest destiny" was, as well as what was good for his

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[7] "New York," *New Orleans Picayune*, November 12, 1854, p.2, c.3.

[8] Fabens' testimony in the U.S. Commissioner's Court.

[9] "A New Anglo-American Republic in Central America -- What Is in the Wind?" *New York Herald*, November 17, 1854, p.1, c.2.

Henry L. Kinney

"He is to be the Romulus of our new southern empire" (p. 116)

State. On November 22, he directed yet another letter to Marcy, begging the Secretary of State to cause appropriate orders to be issued for the purpose of preventing the departure of the expeditionists from the ports of the Union, especially from New Orleans and New York. Marcy's answer, on November 30, rejected Marcoleta's pleas, because the Kinney expedition would be "peaceful," strictly for "business purposes."[10]

Marcoleta's rejoinder, December 11, proceeded to remind Marcy of the real, notorious nature of the Kinney venture: that the "business" of the company was to establish within the territory of Nicaragua a new "republic" with a foreign President! Costa Rican Minister Don Felipe Molina, fearing the overflow of the colonists into Costa Rican territory, also wrote to Marcy, and the latter again replied that the United States government could not interfere with Kinney's peaceful, agricultural, mining and commercial enterprise.

The *Washington Union* naturally rehashed Marcy's arguments, while others pointed out that such sentiments were the exclusive property of parties with vested interests in the scheme. The *Herald,* the *Tribune,* and other newspapers called Kinney a filibuster, and repeatedly stressed that it was common knowledge that the Pierce administration was involved in the venture. The *New York Herald's* Washington correspondent told it plainly on December 22, 1854:

> The projected colonizing expedition of Colonel Kinney to Central America is exciting quite a sensation here as well as elsewhere. It is generally believed that the administration is virtually pledged to see Colonel Kinney safely installed in his new republic. Unquestionably the Kitchen Cabinet hold a large amount of sympathy, and perhaps, also, of stock, in this grand adventure. The plan is to send down one or two thousand men, armed and equipped, to plant the colony. Having first obtained

[10] "The Great Mosquito Scheme," Ibid., January 6, 1855, p.3, c.1.

a foothold in the Mosquito purchase, they are forthwith to begin "the extension of the area of freedom," and to keep it up till all the Central American States are absorbed in this Cooper, Cost Johnson and Kinney republic.

The sinews of war are to be derived from the stock of the thirty-five million acre tract, which the company suppose they own down there. It is also understood here that Secretary Dobbin is to make a diversion in favor of the new colony, in the concentration of all the available ships of the home squadron, as to check upon the English and French, whose naval force in that quarter, as you are well aware, is in the process of being largely increased. Thus, too, you will perceive that the bombardment of Greytown had a meaning in it, and an object in view of the largest dimensions, and of the most belligerent character.[11]

Despite the wide publicity, the "sinews of war" failed to materialize. There was a crisis in the stock market, which ruined many investors by depreciating the value of the best enterprises, and few buyers threw their money away on the Mosquito Company stock. Moreover, the sensitive issue of slavery was connected to the enterprise, and this worked to the detriment of Kinney in the North. On December 30, the *New York Herald* wrote:

We have . . . from the highest authority, a complete account of the aims and objects of the expedition. It resembles, in its nature, the expedition which was planned here more than twenty years ago, and which, under General Sam Houston, succeeded in colonizing Texas, then in relieving the territory from the government of Mexico, and finally in annexing it to the Union, as one of the sovereign States in the confederacy.

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[11] "Lively News from Washington," Ibid., December 23, 1854, p.4, c.5.

> . . . The original expedition to Texas introduced the system of African servitude into that State, and the result has proved beneficial both to the whites and blacks. The object of the Kinney expedition is similar. Its leaders propose to set up the system of African servitude in Central America, probably by the introduction of slaves from the Southern States.[12]

Nobody contradicted the *Herald* on the slavery aim of the expedition, although some did not consider it "beneficial." Horace Greeley, in particular, while exposing the whole plot in the *Tribune,* with names and details, commented:

> . . . and yet, in the face of this public notoriety, and of these repeated avowals, Mr. Secretary Marcy affects a total ignorance of the design, and replies to Mr. Marcoleta and Mr. Molina, the Representatives of Central America at Washington, that he has no official information concerning it. A mighty convenient phrase this of official information. A Foreign Minister informs the Secretary of State that a hostile expedition against the country he represents is fitting out in our cities; and the Secretary replies that he has no official information on the subject. Quite as well might our Chief of Police answer a man who came to denounce a scheme to plunder and burn a house in the next street, that he had no official information, and could do nothing to prevent the crime. The inference would be as strong in the one case as in the other, that the functionary, thus vainly appealed to, was quite willing to have the crime performed. Whether the lately developed feature of Col. Kinney's plan--the establishment of Slavery in the conquered countries, and their final annexation as slave States--has anything to do with this toleration on the

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[12] "The Kinney Expedition to Central America--Its Aims and Objects," Ibid., December 30, 1854, p.4, c.3.

> part of the Executive, is a point on which we need not here enlarge. It is enough that the two are simultaneously made public, and that the party controlling the Administration is the same which connived at the original transaction in Texas, of which this in Central America is to be a copy.[13]

The "slavery connection" of the Kinney enterprise naturally extended to the Pacific Coast, drawing Henry A. Crabb and other fellow California slavery propagandists into the plot. I covered this in Book Two, where I showed how Crabb, Fisher, Hornsby, and DeBrissot, had become involved, and how the last three had afterwards joined the Walker expedition.[14] And Minister Wheeler, of course, began his filibustering career in Nicaragua with the Fisher-Hornsby-De Brissot trio.

Wheeler was at San Juan del Norte when those three arrived from New Orleans, on the *Daniel Webster,* on January 15, 1855.[15] That day he had dinner with Fisher and Hornsby. He then travelled to San Juan del Sur with the trio attached as members of his suite, and their names were inserted as such in his passport. The foursome tried to hire a boat to take them to Realejo, but failed, and were forced to travel by land to Granada instead. When crossing the Leonese camp besieging the city, filibuster DeBrissot marched in front, bearing the American flag.

Wheeler arrived at Granada on January 29, had an interview with President Chamorro, and left by water next day, aboard a Chamorro government vessel, for Ometepe and

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[13] "The Plot of the Day," *New York Tribune,* January 5, 1855, p.4, c.3.

[14] See Book Two, *The Californias,* pp. 350-353.

[15] John Hill Wheeler, "Diary." The following events were reported by a Rivas correspondent in "Interesting from Nicaragua," *New York Herald,* March 26, 1855, p.2, c.2, and the correspondent's version is corroborated by the entries in Wheeler's diary and by Wheeler's dispatches to Secretary of State Marcy.

then La Virgen. Fisher, Hornsby and DeBrissot, with the Minister's passport, went to Rivas by land. At Jalteva, Fisher signed a contract with Jerez to enlist in California 500 American riflemen for the Leonese army, which he promptly took to Crabb in San Francisco; Hornsby and DeBrissot received $500 to buy munitions of war and to outfit a gang at San Juan del Norte with which to recapture Castillo and San Carlos for the Leonese.

Hornsby and DeBrissot rejoined Wheeler at La Virgen on February 4, and two days later arrived at San Juan del Norte on the Transit Company river boat. At San Juan, "they all lived and messed together."[16] Wheeler visited Peter Shepherd, "and had a full conference as to his grants from the Mosquito King."[17] Hornsby and DeBrissot organized the gang, but besides buying munitions of war, they decided to capture some munitions that Chamorro's agent Don Rosario Vivas had bought in Jamaica and dispatched upriver on a bungo for Castillo and Granada.

A group of seven, commanded by DeBrissot, started in a boat for that purpose on February 18. Three bungos, with forty Nicaraguans, pursued DeBrissot. Hornsby, greatly alarmed, promptly got Wheeler to procure a steamer to go to his fellow filibuster's rescue. On the point of leaving, DeBrissot returned, unharmed. The natives had overtaken him some six miles upriver from San Juan frustrating his designs. Don Rosario Vivas, the Nicaraguan government agent at San Juan, denounced the filibusters' activities in a document he personally handed to Wheeler, and the latter wrote in his diary:

> Mon. 19. Rainy morning. R. Vivas and others came down and filed a paper with me. I informed them that I considered the conduct of the people of Greytown

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[16]"Interesting from Nicaragua."

[17]Wheeler's Diary, February 9, 1855.

> towards Capt. DeBrissot highly reprehensible, and that if the hair of an American citizen was touched or his property plundered, as no law existed to protect them at Greytown, I should seize the aggressor as soon as a man of war came in and hang him. Great excitement all day. Threats to burn up my house, &c.[18]

Wheeler immediately penned a dispatch to Secretary Marcy, denouncing "an outrage of the most extraordinary character" committed by the people of Greytown on a citizen of the United States, Julius DeBrissot, "a resident of New Orleans, late Commander of the United States mail steamer *The United States* and well known to Hon. J. P. Benjamin, Senator from Louisiana." Whereupon he "earnestly" urged Marcy that a "U.S. armed vessel of any size" should regularly visit San Juan to avert "such a catastrophe" ending with the loss of American lives and of the "valuable property" of American citizens to "the needy cupidity and reckless fury of these lawless desperadoes."[19]

When the *Star of the West* arrived from New York on February 22, Wheeler and his companion filibusters sailed upriver (with the west-bound passengers) towards La Virgen, with their luggage full of rifles, powder, etc. for the Leonese. They were surprised that during their absence La Virgen and the entire Meridional Department had been taken by Chamorro's forces. Hornsby and DeBrissot left in a great hurry for San Juan del Sur and departed for California on the *Cortes,* leaving behind the munitions of war--the powder, carried in a trunk, went with them. But the munitions, marked with Wheeler's name, fell into Chamorro's hands. Wheeler wrote in his diary:

> Sat. 24. Reached Virgin Bay, where Judge Cushing

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[18] Ibid., February 19, 1855.

[19] Wheeler to Marcy, San Juan del Norte, February 19, 1855, Microfilm Publication M-219-10, The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

> [Transit Company agent] received us as a Brother. Dr. Gauffreau [U.S. Consul at Realejo, appointed by Wheeler] with us. Hornsby & DeBrissot off to California and Fabens to New York. Note per Mr. Young to Richard P. Ashe, Navy Agent at San Francisco, & enclosed a letter to Commander of Pacific Squadron for a vessel of war to visit San Juan del Sur. Much mortified to find some munitions of war marked with my name, which Judge Cushing delivered to Mr. Chamorro.[20]

Diplomatic immunity protected Wheeler, and he in turn protected his fellow filibusters. The Chamorro authorities allowed Hornsby and DeBrissot to depart for California, for they knew better than to apprehend or harm an American citizen after being warned of terrible reprisals by the American Minister. Memories of the *Cyane* were still fresh in everybody's mind, and everybody was likewise aware of Wheeler's connivance with the filibusters. Another *New York Herald* correspondent wrote from Rivas, March 6, 1855:

> When will the administration cease to send abroad ministers who have not the capacity for their missions, and who are not capable of maintaining the dignity of their country?
>
> They have sent a gentleman to Nicaragua who, from the very first moment he arrived here, has shown himself to be a filibuster and something more . . . The people of the country are very indignant . . . they look upon him as *el Ministro filibustero*.[21]

Wheeler had thus earned his sobriquet *El Ministro filibustero* as soon as he arrived in Nicaragua, and his subsequent activities during the Walker period, fully confirmed that he deserved it.

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[20] Ibid., February 24, 1855.

[21] "Interesting from Nicaragua."

John Hill Wheeler
"They look upon him as El Ministro filibustero" *(p. 131)*

11. Sorry Romulus for Mosquitia

The Crabb filibusters' failure in Nicaragua coincided with graver trouble in the main camp of the would-be "liberators" of Central America in New York and Washington. The problem was the result of a single drawback at the outset: the want of a little hard cash; for the speculators were out to make money, not to spend it. When White, Kinney, Johnson, and Cooper met at the Metropolitan Hotel in New York, in December, the others offered White plenty of land scrip, but nobody was willing to advance a dollar of his own money.

The poverty of the company disgusted White, who also "abhorred" Kinney's "ambition and vanity," and he became convinced that it would ruin everything.[1] White saw at a glance that Kinney could break up the Transit Company and take over its business. Both leaders quarrelled: White withdrew from the Land & Mining Company; Kinney and Cooper elected Cost Johnson president; and Cooper and Johnson elected Kinney lieutenant-general of Mosquitodom. Thereupon, White hurried on to Washington and informed Marcy and Crampton on his decision.

White's withdrawal instantly threw the Transit Company into active opposition to Kinney. On January 2, 1855, the Transit officially informed Marcoleta that it was no longer connected with the Mosquito scheme. Secretary of State Marcy's long personal friendship with White, and Attorney General Caleb Cushing's substantial shares in the Nicaraguan Transit Line, easily converted both officials into Kinney

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[1] Joseph L. White to Hon. C. Cushing (New York, October 2, 1855), Costa Rica, Archivo Nacional, Caja de Relaciones, 1855.

antagonists. In January, 1855, the filibusters suddenly lost their hold on the Cabinet and the support of the Pierce administration. The *New York Herald's* Washington correspondent reported:

> Marcy then sent instructions all along the coast to the United States Marshals to keep a sharp look for the sailing of Kinney's vessels, and to stop them; and Crampton sent orders to Admiral Fanshawe of the British West India squadron, to stop Col. Kinney's ships should they attempt an entrance into the waters of the Mosquito coast. Marcy followed up his instructions with a proclamation, and White returned to New York as quietly as he came.
>
> The result is that the scheme is broken up, and Kinney retires the loser; Cooper, Cost Johnson and company have their thirty-five millions of acres awaiting orders . . . It was a little South Sea bubble--nothing more.[2]

Kinney, alarmed, addressed a letter to Marcy on January 28, and publicly complained bitterly "that the administration led him into the difficulty, apparently only to desert him upon the first opportunity."[3] Marcy's answer to Kinney was made public a few days later:

> . . . If the emigrants should be formed into companies commanded by officers, and furnished with arms, such organization would assume the character of a military expedition, and being hardly consistent with professions of peaceful objects, it would devolve upon the government to inquire if it be not a violation of the

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[2]"The Kinney Expedition--The Blowing and Bursting of our Wall street Bubbles," *New York Herald,* March 18, 1855, p.4, c.3.

[3]"From Washington," Ibid., January 30, 1855, p.4, c.5.

neutrality act.[4]

The subjunctive tense used by Marcy was labeled "needless" by the press, "for the character and purposes of the expedition are notorious, and have been, for a long time, well known to everybody except the government."[5] Of course, Marcy's actions killed the Mosquito filibustering scheme. At a meeting of the directors of the Central American Land & Mining Company, February 22, Cooper and Johnson stripped Kinney of all power and authority, and changed the whole program of proceedings in an effort to remain within the law. But Kinney's dismissal and Cost Johnson's public statement about the peaceful objects of the company could not revive the cadaver: Mosquitodom was dead.

Meanwhile, the slavery camp had begun to mobilize its forces under Gen. Quitman, the leading Cuban (Southern) filibuster of the day. By mid February, New Orleans hotels and boarding houses were full of strange faces, men from Kentucky, Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi. Many of them gathered at "the grand encampment of the filibusters," established on a plantation below the city.[6] Simultaneously, the intelligence reaching New York from Havana told of the discovery of a plot to assassinate Captain General Concha, and that the Cubans very much feared a forthcoming invasion of the island by Gen. Quitman at the head of 8,000 American filibusters. With Mosquitodom dead, it was believed that Kinney and Quitman would descend on Cuba.

Throughout February, numerous stories in the American press suggested that Cuba was the real destination of Kinney. It was pointed out that the Quitman organization, and the filibustering juntas in New York and New Orleans, were

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[4]"Mr. Marcy's Reply to Col. Kinney, of the Central American Expedition," Ibid., February 7, 1855, p.4, c.5.

[5]"The Kinney Expedition--The Finale," Ibid., 2/11/1855, p.4, c.4.

[6]"More About the Cuban Expedition," Ibid., 2/25/1855, p.1, c.6.

branches of the Kinney expedition. Kinney promptly denied any connection with the Cuban movement, but nobody believed him, and the *New York Herald's* Washington correspondent wrote on February 26, that in the morning he had seen Kinney at the breakfast table in company with General Quitman. The *Tribune,* on the other hand, continued to stress that the filibusters' aim was Central America:

> . . . Their aim is the settled interior of the country [Nicaragua]. They mean to overrun and subjugate the existing States of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, in order to establish a new slave-driving, Anglo Saxon Republic on their beautiful and comparatively wholesome plains. We have reason to believe they are privately sending out men to that country, with a view to introduce, unsuspected, a sufficient number to make a sudden rising successful. This is the true scheme of these conspirators, who hope to repeat in Central America the drama enacted in Texas. Slavery is becoming confined in the United States; even Kansas cannot satisfy its necessities, and new countries must be brought under its sway. When will the lone star or twin stars of Central America be added to the spangled banner of the Union?[7]

The arrival of Joseph W. Fabens in New York, on the *Star of the West,* March 4, with dispatches from *el Ministro filibustero* Wheeler, added a new element to the plot that left no doubt about the correctness of the *Tribune's* appraisal. Fabens proceeded at once to Washington, where on March 5, "at the dread hour of ten p.m.," he met his fellow-filibusters at his room, at Willard's.[8] He recounted to Kinney and associates the details of the DeBrissot fiasco at San Juan and

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[7] "We Notice in the National Ingelligencer," *New York Tribune,* March 1, 1855, p.4, c.5.

[8] Fabens' testimony at the U.S. Commissioner's Court, in New York. "The Nicaraguan Filibuster Case," *New York Herald,* 2/28/1857, p.8, c.1.

of the Fisher-Jerez contract at Jalteva. He also handed his filibuster partners a power of attorney from Don Fermín Ferrer (Nicaraguan lawyer, owner of mines in Chontales), for the formation of companies to work the mines.

By the mining laws of Nicaragua, a foreigner could not obtain either possession or the privilege of working mines except by associating himself with a Nicaraguan citizen. A number of joint-stock companies had been formed in 1854, while speculators began to arrive from the United States. Don Fermín owned four "very rich" gold mines in partnership with Fabens near La Libertad, Chontales, and a "valuable" coal mine near Lake Nicaragua.[9] But up to then no gold or coal had found its way into commerce, for there was a want of well-informed miners, as well as of good roads and sufficient capital.

The filibusters were aware that the Nicaraguan government had given tracts of lands to settlers, for Fabens showed his friends a certified copy of a contract made with Auguste Mayonne, a Frenchman, for the introduction of six hundred European families, "and as many single men as he might think proper." Thereupon, Kinney and Fabens drew up "articles of agreement as to the carrying on of this business, whereby Kinney was to furnish a certain number of laborers at the mines, &c., as an equivalent for his interest in the same." Then they transferred one quarter of the colonization plan to A.O.P. Nicholson, Fletcher Webster, and Sidney Webster, "for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar."[10] It was all "properly and legally drawn up" by lawyers, signed, sealed, witnessed, and acknowledged before a notary public. When Sidney Webster, President Pierce's private secretary, and his "associate" (the President), received the

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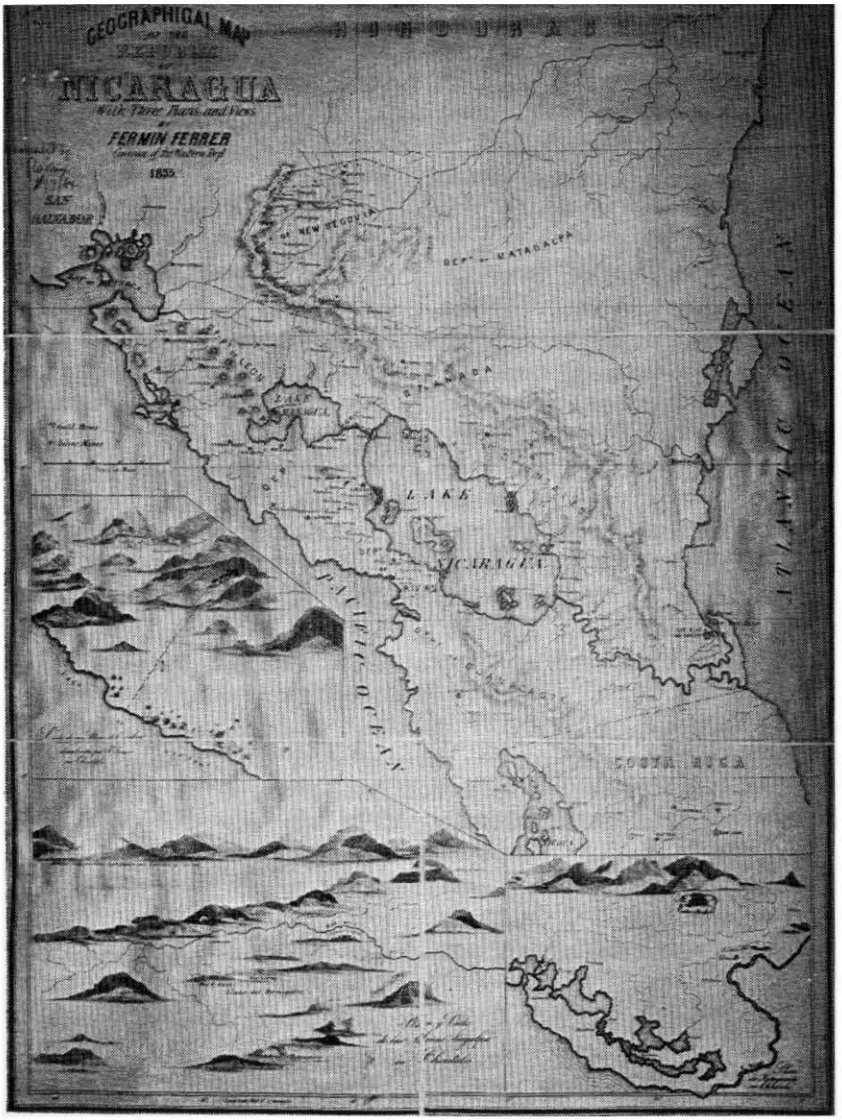
[9] "Our Nicaragua Correspondence," *New York Herald*, September 2, 1854, p.2, c.3; Carl Scherzer, *Travels in the Free States of Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1857), pp. 126-129.

[10] Fabens' testimony.



Map of Nicaragua, 1855
by Fermín Ferrer
With three Plans and Views of Chontales mines

document assigning them one-quarter of the "colonization plan," they acknowledged its receipt in a note that Fabens later presented in Court:

> Washington, D.C., April 24, 1855.
>
> My Dear Fabens --I have received the document, and with my associate here am grateful to you and your partner, and entirely satisfied. The Judge [Nicholson] is here and will be for a week, within which time we hope to see you at Willard's. Don't try to figure in the newspapers. Your friend, (signed) Sidney Webster.
>
> "This letter," says Fabens, when he presents it in Court, "your Honor will observe, is franked, 'Free, Frank Pierce.' We are prepared to prove both the signatures of Sidney Webster and Frank Pierce."[11]

The old scheme naturally assumed a new name: "Nicaraguan Land and Mining Company," and the Romulus of the Anglo-Saxon Southern empire moved the fig tree for the cradle of his "Rome" a few miles to the west, from Mosquitia to Chontales. On announcing it to the world on April 17, Kinney said he was going "to settle upon and improve some lands granted by the Nicaraguan Government, and others purchased of citizens of that Republic, and to work the mines that may be found thereon, which are supposed to be very valuable."[12]

But the public knew better, and the *New York Tribune* remarked: "On the whole, we cannot say that the aspect of this precious scheme is much improved in its new presentation. It still seems to us at bottom no better than a deliberate conspiracy to subjugate a feeble nation with which this country is at peace, and to establish Slavery on the

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[11] Ibid.

[12] "The Americanization of Nicaragua," *NY Tribune*, 4/19/1855, p5, c6.

ruins of freedom."[13] This was fully confirmed by Kinney himself, in a letter to a friend in Brownsville, Texas:

> I look upon the Central American expedition as full of promise. It requires but a few hundred Americans, and particularly if Texans, to take the control of all that country--a country which is destined to command the commerce of the world. I have grants of land, and enough to make a start upon safely and legally. I intend to make a suitable government, and the rest will follow.[14]

Despite his fabulous mines in Chontales and powerful partners in high places, Kinney had difficulties finding additional resources. With the funds he raised in Philadelphia, New York, and other cities, advances on mortgages, and the sale of his ranch in Texas, he managed to secure a steamer, purchased sufficient rifles, and enrolled between 500 and 600 "colonists" in New York. Other contingents--some 150 men--would sail from New Orleans and Mobile, "each paying $25 toward his outfit and passage, besides providing himself with necessary utensils in the shape of a bowie knife and revolver."[15]

Kinney confidently announced that, in due time, his Nicaraguan Land and Mining Company would establish freight and passenger boats on the river and lake, which would in effect take over the business of the Transit Company. White promptly rushed to Washington to undo all of Kinney's designs. He was armed with samples of officers' commissions given by Kinney, proving the military nature of his expedition. White showed them to his friends, Secretary of State Marcy and British envoy Crampton. Around mid-April, the Cabinet was divided, with Davis, Dobbin, (and Pierce)

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[13] "The Nicaraguan Filibusters," Ibid., p.4, c.4.

[14] "The Kinney Expedition," *New York Herald*, May 22, 1855, p.2, c.3.

[15] "Though not much has been said of late," *NY Tribune* 4/13/55, p4 c5.

firmly supporting, and Marcy and Cushing strongly opposing the filibusters.

The deadlock ended when the Cuban branch of Kinney's expedition collapsed late in April. Gen. Quitman quarrelled with the Cuban exiles in New York, resigned as chief, and brought on the dissolution of the Cuban Liberation League. Thereupon, Davis and Dobbin lost enthusiasm while Marcy and Cushing enjoyed unchallenged supremacy in directing policy, abruptly turning the "temper" of the administration decidedly anti-filibuster. Pierce and Webster withdrew from the venture; they afterwards returned their share of the Chontales Company to Kinney. At White's request, Crampton followed suit, sending an order for the British navy to stop and turn back Kinney's vessels.

Kinney's steamship, the *United States,* was advertised to sail from New York on May 7. It would carry his "colonists" to San Juan de Nicaragua. The munitions of war would go on a separate vessel, complying only to the letter of the Neutrality Law. In an attempt to win them over, Kinney made several propositions to the Accessory Transit Company, but White rejected them all. Circumstances thus drew erstwhile antagonists Marcoleta and White into close, temporary, alliance against a common enemy. On April 26, they both furnished information to the New York Grand Jury which thereupon indicted Kinney and Fabens for violation of the Neutrality Law. Both filibusters were arrested by U.S. Marshals acting under "peremptory orders" from Attorney General Caleb Cushing, and were released on bail by the judge, pending trial.[16]

When the trial got under way, on May 7, William O'Brien and another key witness failed to appear, and the judge postponed proceedings until June. Frantic, Marcoleta went to work single-handed. He located O'Brien and they both rushed

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[16]"The Nicaragua Expedition--The Arrest of Colonel Kinney," *New York Herald,* April 29, 1855, p.1, c.4; "The Kinney Nicaragua Expedition," Ibid., May 6, 1855, p.8, c.2.

to Philadelphia, accompanied by White. Upon presenting an affidavit before a Grand Jury, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Kinney. But to Marcoleta's dismay, the New York story was repeated in Philadelphia: at the trial, on May 21, O'Brien failed to appear and the case was postponed until the next term, "with the understanding that the sailing of the expedition need not be delayed."[17]

Kinney hurried back to New York, got his "colonists" on board the steamer, and finally lifted anchor on May 28. But they got nowhere, since the U.S. Navy, with four war vessels, blockaded the filibuster ship inside the harbor. Simultaneously, the revenue cutter *McClelland* was ordered to seize two of Kinney's ships, the *Magnolia* and *Amelia,* near Mobile. The *Amelia* managed to escape, for it had sailed five days earlier for parts unknown, but the *Magnolia* was a rich prize for the revenue cutter. It was full of Kinney's "agricultural" and "mining" implements: 3,000 rifles, 1,800 revolvers, 6,000 lbs. of gunpowder made up into 300,000 rounds fixed ammunition, 1,000 tents, a battery of brass field pieces all complete, with harness, equipment, cartridges and shot to match, lots of pikes and sabres, a quantity of clothing, and 500 cots.

The U.S. Navy was thus the executioner of the Kinney expedition, just as it had done to Walker a year earlier at Ensenada. Naturally, both filibuster chieftains felt betrayed by their own government.

Kinney and Fabens were arrested in New York on June 5, after they failed to appear in court for trial. Upon their release on bond, the next evening the filibusters held a grand "indignation" mass meeting, on the dock foot of eighth street, "to protest against the absurd blockade now in progress."[18] The gathering attracted several hundred people, all eyes fixed on the *United States* nearby. Col. Kinney and

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[17]"The Case of Colonel Kinney," Ibid., May 22, 1855, p.4, c.5.

[18]"The Kinney Expedition," Ibid., June 5, 1855, p.8, c.4; "The Kinney Expedition," *New York Tribune,* June 7, 1855, p.4, c.4.

eighteen others then slipped unnoticed aboard the *Emma,* a fast sailing schooner of about 130 tons. Kinney's companions were mostly "young, unmarried men, mechanics and merchants, with a sprinkling of Western frontiersmen, who had been more inured than the rest to the hardships of out-of-door life." The youngest in the group, "little Daniel Webster," son of the late statesman, was only fifteen years old.[19]

Kinney left behind a manifesto to the public which was handed to the press almost two weeks later, when the *Emma* was safely out at sea, out of reach of U.S. war vessels. The document rehashed Kinney's alleged reasons for going to Nicaragua, and complained of the "high-handed measure to oppress private citizens in the pursuit of lawful business . . . undertaken by a most extraordinary coalition--that of the Government of the United States and the Accessory Transit Company of Nicaragua. The latter party to the alliance is a rival of ours in the project of sending settlers to Nicaragua."[20]

On printing the manifesto, the *Tribune* commented:

> The great reason which the illustrious Kinney gives for his sudden departure just at this particular crisis is that the continuance of the civil war in Nicaragua endangers the property of absentees; and therefore he had to be off to look after his interests. This is rather cool, considering that all the pretended claims of our ingenious fillibuster *[sic]* consist of wild lands in the mountainous region of Chontales, where the civil war has never made its appearance. Next to this in jocularity is Kinney's indignation at the Government of the United States for arresting his expedition, when in the final paragraph of his manifesto he explicitly declares that he

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[19]"Interesting News from Kinney's Expedition," *New York Tribune,* July 19, 1855, p.6, c.2.

[20]"The Eloped Fillibusters," Ibid., June 19, 1855, p.7, c.2.

> goes to Nicaragua to revolutionize the State. He says also that he means to establish there the school-house and the church--all of course of the Anglo-Saxon pattern. Why doesn't he include in his list the third great institution which progressive civilization will render necessary in that latitude? Why omit the Slave-pen from the catalogue of blessings by which that hitherto stagnant and retrograde country is now to be revived and regenerated?[21]

The *Tribune* explained that it printed Kinney's document, "not from its intrinsic importance, but from the probability that the Colonel may yet cut a high figure in the world." But, in point of fact, the chances for that were dim in June, 1855. The Transit Monopoly Company had frustrated his plans, as did Kinney's arch-enemy Joseph L. White with the help of others like Marcy, Cushing, Crampton, and Marcoleta. Moreover, Quitman's separation from the Cuban Junta had dissipated any prospect of assistance for Kinney from that quarter. Finally, a rival filibuster, William Walker, was already on his way from California, aiming to take possession of Mahomet's Paradise Lost ahead of Kinney.

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[21] "Col. Kinney having outwitted," Ibid., p.4, c.4.