

## 17. San Jacinto

After the fall of Granada, the Matagalpa Indians—Legitimist loyalists—had been the first to rise up against the foreigner. In November, 1855, they chased Walker's native allies out of town and got ready to drive away Col. Fry's Voltigeurs. The Walker-Rivas government suppressed the rebellion through the intercession of an old Matagalpa priest whom the Indians trusted.

In December, 1855, Legitimist partisan Roman Rivas—President Patricio Rivas' elder son—led the next insurrection against the Walker-Rivas regime. Roman resided at San Juan del Norte. He was a passenger aboard the steamer *Virgin*, on his way to Granada with merchandise, when Walker seized the steamer at Virgin Bay on October 11. Thereupon, Roman was an innocent bystander on the steamer when Walker captured Granada; he accompanied his father, Don Patricio, at the Inaugural; and he rebelled upon witnessing Corral's execution.

He returned to San Juan del Norte and organized a rebel force against Walker. The vanguard sailed upriver in mid December: Roman went on the bongo *Capitana* with seventeen men on board. They carried over 100 muskets, plenty of powder and ammunition, and a box full of daggers. Other contingents followed behind for a total of sixty men, a few at a time to allay suspicion.

They rendezvoused and encamped at the San Carlos river junction. Rivas planned to seize a Transit Company steamer, capture Castillo and Fort San Carlos, and then land in Chontales. But the unforeseen presence of the U.S. Navy stopped him before he could seize the steamer. The Transit Company agent called on Commodore Hiram Paulding, who had just arrived at San Juan del Norte on the *Potomac*, and asked the Navy to intervene.

Paulding obliged by sending upriver a crew of armed sailors on a gig of the ship, and disbanded the freedom fighters, who offered no resistance. Roman Rivas went to Costa Rica, where he joined the army in order to fight Walker. At the turn of the year, the Leonese-filibuster alliance effectively controlled Nicaragua, making it impossible for any Legitimist uprising to succeed.

The Costa Rican victory at Santa Rosa suddenly gave the patriots new hope and roused them into action. In April, 1856, Legitimist partisans led insurrections in Ometepe, Chontales, Matagalpa, Segovia, and other parts of the country. Although Walker

suppressed them mercilessly, he could not extinguish the natives' thirst for freedom. The Ometepe Indians rebelled once more in July, were repressed a second time, and would rise again in November. Walker never conquered Chontales or Matagalpa, and both districts cradled the freedom fighters who resisted the foreigner.

Chontales was staunchly Legitimist: in its large farms and sparse population, there were few government troops but many refugees from Granada. Upon receipt of the news of the Costa Rican occupation of Rivas, the people rose against Walker. Legitimist officers organized a squad of patriots, and in the night of April 12 they assaulted the government barracks in Acoyapa, garrisoned by twenty-five Leonese soldiers. They met no resistance because the Leonese commander of the post joined the revolution.

Similar uprisings occurred in Juigalpa, Comalapa, and other towns, but although there was much enthusiasm, the patriots had no weapons or resources to carry on the war against Walker. Several volunteers went on a mission to get help from Mora. They crossed the Lake on a small boat, obtained fifty stands of arms at Rivas, and then returned to Chontales. They returned too late, however, after Goicouría had landed at San Ubaldo with more than 100 American filibusters and Leonese soldiers on April 22d and had disbanded the patriots.

They fled towards Matagalpa, looking for Legitimist General Fernando Chamorro, who had gathered three dozen officers and had organized the resistance as soon as he heard of Santa Rosa. Upon learning that Mora was in Rivas, on April 20 Chamorro and his officers issued a document proclaiming their adherence to Legitimist President José María Estrada, who was in exile in Honduras. Rapidly mustering 400 men—100 armed with old flint muskets and 300 Indians with bows and arrows—they marched toward Segovia, to clear the path for President Estrada's return to Nicaragua.

Chelón Valle stood in the way at Somoto. Chamorro attacked on the night of April 26, but was soundly routed. His men fled in all directions. He retreated to the Matapalo Valley with a few officers, barefooted and almost naked. There they met the remnants of the patriots that Goicouría had chased out of Chontales. Defeated and disheartened, lacking the minimal resources to carry on the war, Chamorro and the rest made their way to Honduras.

Their opportunity came in June, when the Allied Armies of Guatemala and El Salvador were poised nearby, ready to enter into Nicaragua. Then the Leonese broke with Walker. Estrada, in Choluteca, moved in quickly to re-establish his Legitimate administration on Nicaraguan soil. He crossed the border just ahead of the Guatemalan Army and on June 29th installed his government in Somotillo. He issued a Proclamation, appointed Pedro Joaquín Chamorro his General Minister, and General

Tomás Martínez commander-in-chief of the army—of the army to be, for on that date, Estrada had no soldiers.

When General Fernando Chamorro and his fellow exiles (barefooted and in rags) arrived at Somotillo from Honduras, Martínez marched with them to Matagalpa. They carried 300 muskets and ten loads of munitions, donated by Guatemalan General Mariano Paredes. Several hundred Indians met them at El Sauce, and helped them carry the heavy loads. Once in Matagalpa, the 300 muskets in the hands of as many patriots formed the nucleus of the Legitimist Army, afterwards known as Ejército Setentrional (Northern Army) in the war against Walker.

President Estrada moved on from Somotillo to Ocotál, a friendlier town, busily gathering resources from Legitimist partisans in the Segovia district. But his cause was lost once El Salvador had recognized the Rivas government on June 17, and after Guatemala followed suit in July. Frantic, Estrada sent his General Minister, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, to plead with Carrera in Guatemala. Chamorro left for the Honduran border with ten soldiers as escort, which reduced in half the twenty-man Presidential Guard in Ocotál.

On August 13th, a band of assassins murdered Estrada, allegedly on orders from leaders in León. Upon receipt of the news in Matagalpa, Martínez sent 100 men to Ocotál, allegedly to protect his friends who had gone into hiding, and they captured and shot several of the assassins. Thereupon, the Leonese sent a larger force, ostensibly to pacify the region, but with instructions to engage and destroy the Legitimist forces in Segovia and to liquidate the Legitimist leaders in the area.

The recrudescent civil war came to an abrupt end through the good offices of Guatemalan General Mariano Paredes and Salvadoran General Ramón Belloso, who repeatedly wrote to Martínez inviting him to León for peace talks with the Rivas government, pledging his safety. Martínez accepted; the Legitimist leaders then in Matagalpa concurred; President Rivas and his Cabinet agreed; the Leonese forces cut short their stay in Segovia without accomplishing their mission; Martínez marched on to León, taking with him a few soldiers—an honor guard—as escort.

General Fernando Chamorro took command of the Army in Matagalpa during Martínez's absence. A small garrison remained in town, for some of the forces were in Segovia and Chontales, and Col. José Dolores Estrada had taken 120 men on an expedition to the cattle farms down the road to Tipitapa. Estrada's purpose was twofold: to protect the patriots from Masaya, Granada, Managua, and other places, who were on their way to join the army in Matagalpa; and to deny the farms' resources to Walker's foraging parties.

A specific event had determined the move. On August 2d, a party of Walker's cattle rustlers had raided a farm and were driving the cattle to Granada. A group of Nicaraguans on the road pursued the rustlers, killed several of Walker's men and recovered the cattle. Expecting Walker's reprisals, Chamorro sent from Matagalpa Col. Estrada's "Vanguard Division," toward Tipitapa, to protect the farms and the patriots. The stage was thus set for the Battle of San Jacinto, the single event of the Walker War commemorated in Nicaragua.

On August 16th, Walker sent Lieut. Col. Edmund H. McDonald with Companies A, B, and C of the Second Rifle Battalion to Tipitapa. The official roster of the three companies listed twelve officers and 120 privates. On August 20th, at least three filibuster contingents were out on scouting and foraging missions through Chontales and the vicinity: one comprising three companies of the 2d Rifle Battalion, under command of Lieut. Col. Edmund H. McDonald; another smaller party, led by Major W. P. Caycee; and a third composed of Rangers from Tipitapa. On the 29th, Byron Cole departed from Granada on yet another mission, with a volunteer force of fifty men for Chontales. The party was mounted and left with orders to crush the Nicaraguan "renegades."

Confronting this filibuster show of force, Col. José Dolores Estrada sallied south from Matagalpa, at the head of 120 Nicaraguan patriots armed with Guatemalan flint-lock muskets donated by Paredes. He advanced to within a few miles of Tipitapa and occupied the country-house at San Jacinto, a cattle-estate which Kissane had confiscated from the Bolaños family. When the news arrived in Granada, early in September, that the "renegades" had taken possession of San Jacinto, Walker ordered McDonald's Rifles to drive them out. McDonald advanced from Tipitapa and attacked at dawn on September 5th.

As seen and described by the attackers, the San Jacinto farmhouse was well adapted for defense, situated on an elevation which commanded all the ground in its vicinity. In a large corral stood a house fitted up in such a manner that those inside were secure against musket or rifle shots, while through small apertures in the thick walls they could fire into all parts of the corral. The corral itself was surrounded by a strong fence which had to be scaled before any material damage could be done by an assailing party.

After two and a half hours of heavy fire, McDonald's Rifles withdrew, leaving six dead while carrying away a number of wounded. The Americans also abandoned fifteen rifles and assorted ammunition and supplies. The defenders suffered only one dead and three wounded. Having kept his men sheltered inside the adobe house and behind barricades, Estrada's losses were minimal.

McDonald retreated to Granada, and another expedition made up of "citizen volunteers" left Granada on Friday, Sept. 12, for a second assault on San Jacinto. Picking up soldiers at Masaya and Tipitapa, Byron Cole joined the expedition and was elected Captain of the company. At least sixty-five men arrived at San Jacinto at 5 o'clock Sunday morning, September 14th, and paused a few moments in order to arrange a plan of attack. They split into three companies and elected Lieut. Robert Milligan, Major Calvin O'Neal, and Captain Lewis D. Watkins to command them. Milligan's company led the assault.

At first they succeeded in driving some Nicaraguans in the corral into the house, but could go no further, and were soon forced to fall back again behind the fence of the corral. Estrada then ordered a flanking movement that won the battle for him. Three squads slipped out of the adobe house into the woods, surprising the filibusters from the rear. A drove of startled farm horses came running with them, and to the Americans it sounded as if a large body of enemy cavalry had arrived to reinforce the defenders. They instantly fled for their lives, in panic, and the Nicaraguans rushed out of the house in hot pursuit.

Byron Cole was captured down the road and killed on the spot. Charles Callahan was last seen, wounded, exhausted, and pursued by cavalry. Marshall and Milligan were also killed, and O'Neal and Watkins were wounded. Each of the five American commanders was either slain or wounded.

El Nicaraguense listed twelve Americans killed, three missing, and twelve wounded, for a total of twenty-seven casualties on September 14. Estrada reported that out of 200 Americans, twenty-seven were killed and many were wounded. Filibuster Captain Horace Bell, who met the survivors as they arrived at Tipitapa, recorded that on the 14th, the filibusters:

"... were shot down by the tens and twenties, and left the ground covered with their dead. The survivors, with some of the wounded, reached their horses in a grove near by, and by the time they were mounted, Martínez [Estrada] sent his lancers after them. Wiley Marshall had his thigh shattered, but was gotten onto his horse and rode that eighteen miles on a full gallop, with his leg dangling at his side, and died in Tipi-Tapa. My friend Watkins was among the wounded. It was a terrible disaster. The sick and wounded of the two expeditions were collected in the fortress-like church at Tipi-Tapa, and your chronicler was sent down to bury the dead, send in the wounded, and to hold the crossing until the cut-up expeditions could be moved away."

Estrada had received reinforcements from Matagalpa after the Sept. 5 encounter, and his forces numbered 160 men on September 14: men from Masaya, Granada, Managua

and other towns, under officers formed in the 1854 revolution. They, too, suffered heavy casualties: fifty-five dead and wounded.

Although both the number of troops and the casualties were much higher in several other battles of the Walker war, San Jacinto ranks second to none in importance. The two San Jacinto fights, considered as a single battle in two stages, comprised the only battle of the entire war in which Nicaraguans and Americans faced each other without any auxiliaries on either side, and it was a resounding Nicaraguan victory. That is why it came to be the signal event commemorated in Nicaragua.

Andrés Castro, who killed an American with a rock when his musket failed to fire, gained immortality as a superb symbol of the uneven struggle between the ill-clad and ill-armed, barefooted and barehanded Nicaraguan freedom fighters against the manifest-destiny American invaders with their Mississippi Minié rifles and Colt revolvers.

San Jacinto came at an opportune moment: it inspired Nicaraguans and their Central American allies with renewed confidence in their ability to defeat the filibusters precisely when the Allied Armies were at last ready to go on the offensive against Walker. The Allied vanguard had arrived in León on July 13, and it had helped to protect the city from a possible filibuster attack, but a number of events would occur in the next two months before they could begin moving towards Granada.

On July 18, plenipotentiaries from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras signed in Guatemala a formal alliance and recognized Don Patricio Rivas as President of Nicaragua.

On July 27, the Rivas government named Salvadoran general Ramón Belloso, General-in-Chief of the Nicaraguan Army, thus placing both the native and the auxiliary troops under his unified command. By then, the "fever" had begun to decimate the Allied Armies in León, especially the Guatemalan troops who came from a cooler climate. Reinforcements had to be rushed in to replace the losses. Additional contingents of Guatemalan and Salvadoran soldiers arrived at Realejo on August 21st, entering León on the 25th.

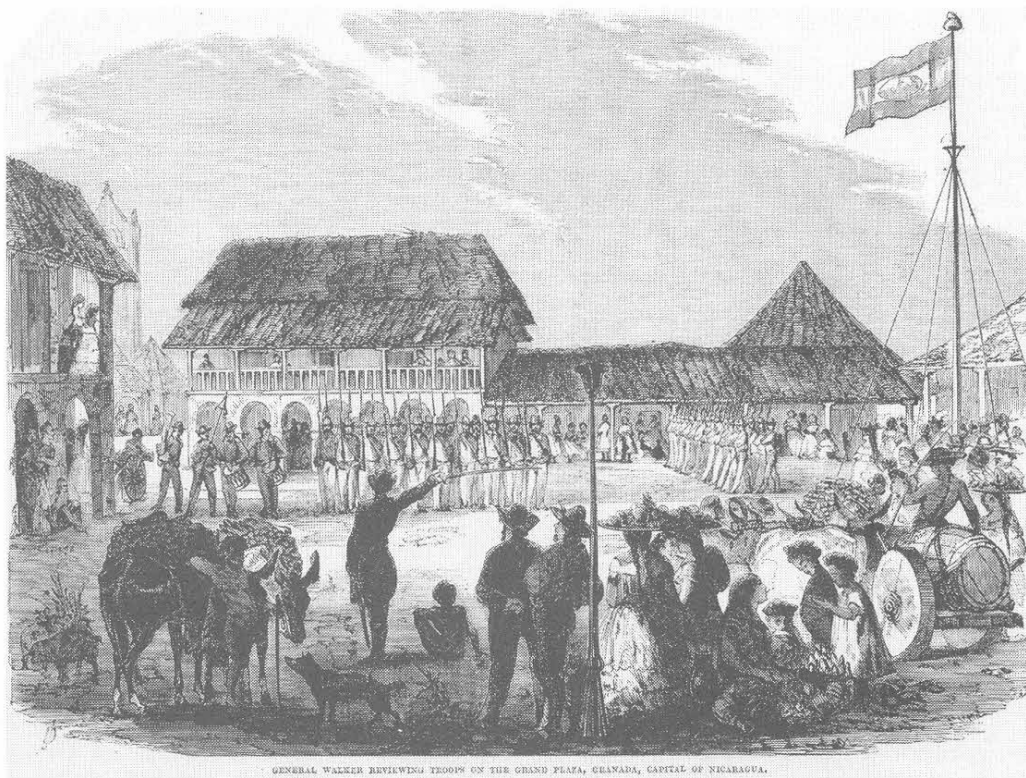
Ancient antipathy made it necessary for the commanders to take measures in order to forestall clashes between the old rivals, Salvadorans and Guatemalans. Both armies were kept separate. The Leonese identified with the Salvadorans; Nicaraguan Legitimists, with Carrera's Guatemalans.

Gen. Tomás Martínez then arrived in León to initiate peace talks with the Rivas government commissioners. Allied generals Belloso and Paredes mediated the talks and stressed to Martínez that if they failed, the Allied armies would abandon Nicaragua. The



talks almost did fail, but after long days of negotiations, an agreement was finally signed on September 12. President Rivas issued a Proclamation the same day, congratulating his countrymen for having put an end to the civil war.

Belloso's Allied Armies began to advance from León towards Managua on September 18. Due to Paredes' illness, Col. José Víctor Zavala commanded the Guatemalan forces. Martínez hurried on to Matagalpa to launch operations against Walker from the north. He found the road open for his forces beyond Tipitapa, for Walker had withdrawn McDonald's Rifles to Granada after his second defeat at San Jacinto.



GENERAL WALKER REVIEWING TROOPS ON THE GRAND PLAZA, GRANADA, CAPITAL OF NICARAGUA.

General Walker reviewing troops on the Grand Plaza, Granada, capital of Nicaragua

*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 21, 1856

## 18. War

“President” Walker of Nicaragua, the “Regenerator of Central America,” had continued dictating decrees to change the primary form of the crystal on which he was building his slavery empire. On September 11 he issued Decree No. 48, changing the flag of his Republic: thereafter, to consist of three stripes, the middle white and the others blue; the middle stripe to be twice the width of the other stripes, and in the center a red star with five points.

On September 22, he issued Decree No. 49: “Article 1. All Acts and Decrees of the Federal Constituent Assembly, as well as of the Federal Congress, are declared null and void.” Since the Federal Constituent Assembly had abolished it, he thus introduced slavery into Nicaragua, without mentioning the word, by annulling its previous abolition—artfully, as he had done in Lower California.

With white “Americans” taking over the land, and black “Americans” (then simply called Africans) the labor force, Walker’s blueprint for Nicaragua’s “new crystal” envisioned a lily-white pyramid over a single ebony-black bottom layer; the brown-skinned “mongrel” Nicaraguan natives, crushed in the middle, were destined for extinction. Walker was then ready to receive the thousands of white immigrants that his agents were sending from the States followed by legions of black slaves to work the land.

But in the month of September, no vessel arrived from New Orleans or San Francisco, and only one steamer docked at San Juan from New York: the Tennessee, which on Sept. 22d brought 205 recruits to Nicaragua, organized as a “New York Volunteers Battalion.” The steamer also brought John P. Heiss and several New York passengers who intended to become Nicaraguan citizens and munitions of war, including four mortars. Letters from New York announced that 1,000 families had signed up as colonists for Nicaragua and that 300 of them would sail immediately for their new home; in addition, 500 recruits were due to arrive in Granada shortly.

Walker also received some bad news: It would be another month before Garrison and Morgan could send a steamer from New Orleans; and President Pierce and the Cabinet had determined not to receive Minister Appleton Oaksmith, allegedly owing to the unsettled condition of Nicaragua. The last problem could have been avoided if Heiss had remained as Minister, since he had been recognized by the State Department in July and had been received by President Pierce on August 25th.



Heiss brought to Walker a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation that Wheeler had signed with the Estrada government on June 20, 1855 and which the U.S. Senate had approved on August 13, 1856. Walker immediately issued Decree No. 51, on September 27, ratifying the treaty.

Meanwhile, the Allied Army under Belloso—1,800 Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Nicaraguans—had marched from León toward Managua and occupied that city on September 24, when Walker withdrew his forces to Masaya. At Masaya, the filibusters had built barricades and other defenses which they considered impregnable. The city was healthy: there had been but one death from fever or sickness in the American garrison during the previous month.

In Granada, the Ordnance Department was actively engaged in fitting out and mounting a sufficient number of guns to constitute a good field-battery. Five cannons were ready for active service, timbered and well cased, on good American wheels. Other cannons had also been refitted to serve as a defense for the garrison of the capital. The reinforcements by the last steamer were said to have furnished good artillerymen for the service in a body of soldiers just from the Crimea. Howitzers, mortars, and a large amount of shells were expected soon, providing Walker artillery superior to anything ever seen in Central America.

According to El Nicaraguense, Walker's army was in excellent health, and after a period of acclimation, all citizens were enjoying the most salubrious state of body and mind. As additional troops left Granada for Masaya, the soldiers went out of town singing merrily. At the end of September, 1856, all indications were that Walker would make a stand at Masaya if the Allies advanced beyond Managua.

In fact, Walker never expected that Belloso would dare attack Masaya, where the filibusters felt secure in their bastion while awaiting huge reinforcements from the States. Walker expected to go on the offensive as the rainy season drew to a close, in November. Early in October, El Nicaraguense wishfully portrayed the Allies at Managua as disheartened and in full retreat.

But, on entering Managua, on September 24th, Belloso learned of Estrada's victory at San Jacinto and decided to continue his advance toward Granada. Putting "military strategy" into practice, he executed a pincer movement: while the Guatemalan and Leonese troops pressed on to Nindirí, the Salvadoran forces went on to Masatepe, thereby threatening Granada as well as Masaya from the rear. Walker's Rangers detected Belloso's move. Fearing an attack on the capital, Walker instantly evacuated Masaya and concentrated his army to defend Granada.

Belloso occupied Masaya on October 2d, a few hours after the filibusters had

abandoned it. Estrada's San Jacinto Battalion, reinforced by growing numbers of volunteers, moved on from Tipitapa and entered Masaya on the 6th, proudly bearing their weapons crowned with branches and flowers, as they marched amid the cheers of the allied soldiers.

Belloso's Allied Army then numbered 2,300 men, and they split into two camps. Guatemalans and Legitimists (nearly 1,000 men) went on to Diriomo, a village seven miles to the southeast, and equidistant from Granada; about 1,300 Salvadoran and Leonese soldiers remained in Masaya.

Just then, Walker received two contingents of recruits from the States. The Sierra Nevada arrived at San Juan del Sur from San Francisco on October 2d with seventy men under Cols. Kewen and Sanders. The lake steamer Virgin brought them to Granada on the 4th. That day, the Texas arrived at San Juan del Norte from New York with 100 recruits under Col. Jack Allen. They landed at Granada, from the Virgin, on the 6th. Allen's men were Kentuckians, and with them came two brass howitzers, a large number of Minnie muskets, and a considerable quantity of ammunition.

Granada had been relatively healthy since the onset of the rainy season in May. Walker's army losses from sickness had been small. Moreover, he had issued a decree impressing into service every white male citizen resident within the state. With the arrival of the Sierra Nevada and the Texas contingents, his entire fighting force totalled 1,500 to 1,600 Americans, no natives being among that number.

In the next few days, Walker assigned the new recruits to their several units, organized a company of Sappers and Miners and had carriages prepared for the howitzers. He armed many of his men with better, newly arrived weapons. He organized a regular corps of sharpshooters in each battalion, made up of the best marksmen, armed with Minié rifles. After engaging in daily target exercises, *El Nicaraguense* reported that the marksmen "may be relied to kill a man at one thousand yards, three shots out of five."

Walker sent one company of soldiers from Virgin Bay to reinforce the San Juan river defenses and pulled the rest of his army into the capital. He ordered Hornsby to proceed immediately with his command—150 men—from San Jorge to Granada, where they arrived at 6 a.m. on the 8th, leaving only skeleton garrisons to guard the Transit road in the Meridional Department.

On October 11th, at noon, Walker marched with his army to attack Masaya: 1,000 men, headed by a fife and drum. Two companies of Rangers formed the advance guard, followed by the First Rifle Battalion. Next came Gen. Walker and his Staff, his body guards in sky-blue uniforms, with red facings, and several gentlemen volunteers. Behind them followed the pack mules bearing ammunition, the two mountain howitzers, the

Artillery Corps, the military band, the Second Rifles, the First and Second Light Infantry Battalions, and mounted Rangers on the extreme rear. Each soldier carried rations for three days. On the flags of the Second Rifles were the words "Victory or Death."

The Americans arrived at the outskirts of Masaya early in the evening and by 10 p.m. the entire force had encamped for the night on the sides of the road under a luminous moon. Parties of American Rangers and Allied Lancers came in contact several times during the night while Walker, "reclining on the ground in front of a cane house . . . lay undisturbed, with the most provoking coolness."

About daylight on the morning of the 12th the battle began. Walker captured the San Sebastián church in a few minutes, as Belloso deployed his forces behind strong barricades in the streets leading to the main Plaza in the center of town, around La Parroquia. The span between the churches—eight hundred yards—contained long blocks of buildings surrounded, for the most part, by thick adobe walls. The streets were defended by cannon.

After a hearty breakfast at San Sebastián, Walker's sappers and miners began cutting through the walls of buildings, opening the way for the Rifles and Infantry to advance slowly inside the houses on each side of the street while the howitzers threw dozens of shells into the Allied positions. But the shells did no damage, for they either exploded too soon, in the air, or didn't explode at all.

At noon, Belloso sallied with two hundred infantry and twenty-five horsemen through a side street to the Granada road and attacked Walker from the rear. A pitched battle ensued, which was cut short when a prolonged torrential rain impelled Belloso to return to the shelter of his quarters.

In the afternoon Walker took up quarters about midway between the churches. By nightfall, his men had inched their way into the houses near the main Plaza, on the edge of the Allied stronghold. But as night came, the firing ceased when Walker decided to postpone the assault on the Plaza till next morning.

El Nicaraguense reported that, on October 12 in Masaya, only two Americans were killed and fifteen were wounded, while at least 100 enemy soldiers were killed. Belloso, in contrast, estimated that the Americans suffered at least 300 dead and wounded, and enumerated Allied casualties at eleven killed and twenty-one wounded.

Unknown to Walker at the time, the Guatemalan and the San Jacinto battalions under Zavala and Estrada were at Diriomo when he attacked Masaya. Having few natives in his ranks, and with the entire population turned against him, his military intelligence was inadequate. Among the few Nicaraguans in his camp, some were spying for the Allies, such as Don Dámaso Sousa and Don Chico Bravo, the Democratic leader from Masaya,

supposedly loyal to Walker. Through couriers, Sousa and Bravo kept the Allies informed of events in the filibuster camp.

Upon learning of Walker's advance on Masaya, Zavala and Estrada moved on from Diriomo to the Masaya-Granada road, and thence to attack Granada. At 1 p.m. on the 12th, their troops—900 men—entered from the west, by Jalteva, and quickly overran most of the city. The 250 Americans under Brig. Gen. Fry included eighty sick and lame in the Hospital (led by Major Calvin O'Neal, in crutches since San Jacinto). They defended the Plaza with the help of artillery: one eighteen and one six-pounder at the southwest corner of the square, one nine-pounder at the Guardhouse, and one six-pounder at the Hospital. The defenders occupied the range of buildings extending along the south and east side of the plaza, from the Quartermaster's and Ordnance Departments to the Hospital.

Zavala advanced as far as Walker's residence and captured the flag waving there. As he paraded in front of the house, bravely brandishing the enemy emblem, he retreated hastily when a hail of filibuster bullets pierced both the flag and his coat in succession. Held in check by the American cannon and small arm fire from La Parroquia church and other buildings around the Plaza, the Allies fell back and made a circuit upon the Hospital, where they were stopped by the six-pounder and the force rallied by Major O'Neal.

The Allies next commenced a vigorous attack on the defenders' rear from the east and south sides of the plaza, but were again checked by the force along the whole line. Unable to break through at any point, the Guatemalan and Nicaraguan troops then dispersed through the city, looting at will. Many became drunk with the abundant liquor they found in the stores and private homes.

For frenzied Nicaraguans in the heat of the Walker war, all Americans were the enemy. Two horrid scenes illustrate this.

Taking deliberate aim through a window, as the children were having dinner at a house opposite the church of San Francisco, a passing soldier wantonly shot in the face and instantly killed seven-year-old Francis Herbert Smith, son of a school teacher recently arrived from New York.

At 4 o'clock p.m., a Nicaraguan officer captured Rev. William J. Ferguson (Methodist Minister), Rev. David H. Wheeler (Agent of the American Bible Society), Henry C. Carsten (carpenter), and John B. Lawless (longtime resident and merchant), at the latter's home near La Merced church, where the four unarmed Americans relied upon the American flag for protection. One hour later, Col. José Dolores Estrada passed in front of the house where the prisoners were confined, on the plaza of Jalteva. On

beholding them he asked who they were, and was informed that they were Americans; whereupon, without making any inquiries into the circumstances of their imprisonment, ordered them to be executed peremptorily.

American Minister John H. Wheeler lay prostrate in bed, convalescing from a severe illness, but practically all other American males took up arms for Walker in Granada that day. Women and children rushed for shelter into Minister Wheeler's residence, guarded by fifteen riflemen posted there by Gen. Fry, and into the La Parroquia Church, main American bastion on the plaza. During the night and following morning, Zavala rallied his troops and made several additional attacks in front, but was driven back by the filibusters' artillery.

In his official report of the defense of Granada, Fry listed seventeen casualties in his command: seven killed and ten wounded. On Allied losses, he was unable to report accurately, but about 150 bodies had been counted.

Meanwhile, in Masaya, Walker believed that he had the entire Allied army within his grasp in the plaza, and rested his men during the night for the final assault next morning. Having spent considerable ammunition during the day, about 9 p.m. he sent Quartermaster General Col. Thomas F. Fisher back to Granada with his pack train for additional supplies. Assistant Quartermaster General Lieut. Col. William K. Rogers accompanied Fisher to expedite matters for the triumphant march on León which Walker expected to make immediately after vanquishing the Allied forces in Masaya. Aide-de-Camp Lieut. Col. F. A. Lainé went along, desiring to take the first steamer (on a mission for Walker) to New York.

As the three filibuster colonels and their column of pack mules and Rangers advanced past Lake Apoyo, the unexpected sound of big guns from the east made them stop and question a native woman along the road. After some pressing, she said that Granada had been attacked that day at noon by the Zavala army. Rogers and two aides galloped back immediately to Masaya, while the others camped on the margin of Lake Apoyo waiting to join any relief party Walker would send in. Rogers got into Masaya late in the night and found Walker in his quarters, pretty close to the main Plaza.

Walker's army began to move out of Masaya at 3 a.m. and about 8 o'clock in the morning of the 13th—the anniversary of the day on which the filibusters first took Granada—his force was within gunshot of the Jalteva church. On a slight rise in the road, Zavala had erected a barricade and placed a cannon. About one hundred Allied soldiers defended the spot. As told by El Nicaraguense:

“As the American soldiers approached the Jalteba [sic] church, the bullets from the guns of the enemy were flying so thickly that every person on horseback instinctively sprang



to the ground, and got behind his horse for protection. Gen. Walker alone remained on his, giving orders to his men with about as much sang froid as if ordering a bottle of wine for his dinner; and it was not until he was repeatedly requested, by those about him, to dismount, that he did so. He seemed to be as regardless of the effects of a Minie ball as if he were proof against them. Fortunately he did not get touched. . . The sight of him made his men invincible. They charged like enraged lions, and the enemy fled in every direction, leaving their cannon on the field."

Walker's men then rushed into the city, attacking the places in which the Allies had fortified themselves, and in less than three-quarters of an hour the defeated Allied soldiers were seeking for safety by hiding in the bushes, and endeavoring to escape from the city by every available route.

Nobody recorded an accurate count of Allied casualties that day in Granada. In his official report, Zavala stated that some of his officers and soldiers were killed; that he had with him 240 men, including sick and wounded; and 100 were missing. A filibuster combatant estimated that about 400 of the allies were killed at Masaya and an equal number at Granada. El Nicaraguense simply said that Allied casualties were "truly astonishing" in numbers:

"In many of the houses they lay piled up in dozens; they were lying on the streets, on the door-steps and in the out-houses. They were killed in large numbers in the bushes; whole bungo loads were killed while they were endeavouring to escape by the lake, and intelligence is every hour arriving of where tens, and twenties of bodies have been discovered in the yards. The guardhouse is already nearly full of prisoners, and others who have been endeavouring to escape, are being, while we write, continually brought in."

In regard to American losses, El Nicaraguense's official roster of casualties in Masaya and Granada on October 12-13, listed 109 names: 24 killed, 76 wounded, and 9 missing. In *The War*, Walker set the figure at 25 killed and 85 wounded. Fr. Patrick M. Rossiter, an American Catholic priest, distinguished himself toting a rifle in the action at Granada. The padre had arrived with the New York Volunteers in September and Walker had appointed him Chaplain of the Army with the pay and emoluments of a captain. On the same day, the celebrated Nicaraguan filibuster priest, Father Agustín Vijil, made his exit. Late in the afternoon of the 13th, Father Vijil obtained a passport from Walker and sailed at midnight on the steamer *Virgin* for San Juan del Norte, and thence for Cartagena, New Granada. After San Jacinto, Masaya, and Granada, on the first anniversary of Walker's capture of the Legitimist capital, the end of his reign over the city was at hand.

## 19. White Tide

To the eyes of his officers and men, Walker exuded success as he slumbered in the hammock after he recaptured Granada on October 13th, 1856. The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny continued viewing the world through the lens of his messianic obsessions. In an article entitled "A Theme for the Novelist," appearing in *El Nicaraguense* on October 18th, Walker wrote the following:

"Less than two years ago, a thought sprang up in the brain of a young man, sitting in his book-girt sanctuary, where he was wont to hold communion with the great and good of other times. . . . Thenceforth he belonged not to himself. There was a mighty purpose to be achieved . . . Reaffirming his belief that "events are guided by the superior laws of an all-wise Being," Walker unblushingly called himself "one of the ablest and most disinterested men who ever undertook to lead a people to prosperity . . . a Washington . . . whom He uses in the development of His designs."

He proclaimed the old line that, with his American followers in Nicaragua, he was striving "to extend the institution which makes a people of sovereigns, the least among whom rushes to conquest with as great ardor and interest as if he were the general." But almost in the same breath, Walker reaffirmed his racist creed when he wrote that in the interior of Africa, "as seen by the great travelers Bruce and Mungo Park":

" . . . The first feelings of the negroes at first sight of a white face appeared to be fear, which reacted into a desire to combat, or attack him. The same feeling is otherwise observable in the actions of a tiger, and other carnivorous animals. It is the instinct of mere brute force in the presence of a superior moral power.

"The dark skinned races on this continent have always reacted in the manner of the [Africa] negroes. They fought not for a principle, or an idea—they were incapable of reaching such a height—but they fought for the continuance of a mere physical existence, and felt in their inmost heart that this they could not maintain, and at the same time keep pace with the pale faces. Hence they have sought for a war of races, and have sometimes almost succeeded in forcing the whites into this position.

"But where is now the Northern brave; where now the warriors of the nations that combined to exterminate the first colonies; where now the confederations that attempted to breast the waves of civilization as rolled over the broad prairies of the West by the whites? They are,

*'Like the snow-flake in the river,  
A moment seen, then lost forever.'*

"All warning, all example is lost upon these people. Their mental vision does not extend beyond the narrow circle of self. They fail to advance as a people, and as individuals they disappear from history, leaving scarcely a trace by which their former existence can be identified."

Walker envisioned a relentless Anglo-Saxon tide sweeping away the mongrel Nicaraguan people doomed to disappear from history—lost forever, like the snow-flake evaporating in the river. Walker's delusion was the very epitome of Manifest Destiny, and he, The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny, saw himself as the champion and living embodiment of his country's racial superiority.

He thus counted on the support of his countrymen. He believed that Morgan and Garrison had finally placed enough steamers on the line so that his agents in New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco could ship large numbers of recruits and war supplies to him. He knew that when the Tennessee had left New York loaded with filibusters on its last voyage it had sailed with the Nicaraguan flag flying, amid the cheers of a large crowd of sympathizers on the pier. On its next trip, on October 6, the Tennessee sailed from New York with eighty "colonists" for Nicaragua—sixty of them recruits for Walker's Army, headed by Charles Frederick Henningsen, besides assorted military supplies.

Recruits and supplies arrived in Granada on the Virgin, Saturday evening, October 18th. Sunday morning, Walker issued General Orders No. 196, by which he appointed Henningsen Brigadier General in the Army and placed him in charge of the Ordnance and Artillery. In New York, at the time, Charles Frederick Henningsen was reputed to be "a thoroughly trained soldier—a tried veteran . . . by far the most eminent of the men who have coupled their names with the Nicaraguan struggle . . . one of the greatest generals of the day, and a man of genius."

Born in Brussels, Belgium, Feb. 21, 1815, in his teens he had served as Captain of Lancers under Zumalacárregui, and aide-de-camp to that general, on the Carlist side, in the war of succession in Spain. He rose to the rank of full Colonel and received the titles of Knight of St. Ferdinand and Knight of Isabella.

He next saw service in Circassia, during the uprising of the revolutionary Schamyl, whom he admired. Later, a fugitive in Asia Minor, he rushed back to Europe to help the Hungarians in their uprising against Austria and distinguished himself as commander at Comorn. In 1851 he followed the Hungarian revolutionary leader, Kossuth, to the United States, serving as his confidential secretary.

Henningsen was also an accomplished man of letters. His writings deal with the social, cultural, military, and political aspects of peoples and countries. His observations are both valuable and entertaining. Many of his works had several editions and were translated into foreign languages.

Upon arrival in the United States, Henningsen became an American citizen and joined the Southern Aristocracy: he married a rich widow, Williamina (Belt) Connelly, a niece of Senator John McPherson Berrien of Georgia, attorney general under Jackson's administration. He settled in New York, where he devoted his leisure time to literature and to the improvement of fire-arms.

The latter activity made him a close friend of the noted capitalist and steamship magnate "Live Oak" George Law, Know-Nothing political leader and U.S. Presidential aspirant. Henningsen had already made various experiments with the Prussian needle-gun and Hale's Rockets in England. When Law purchased 150,000 United States army muskets and, in 1852 offered to sell some to Kossuth, Henningsen superintended their conversion into Minié rifles—the first Miniés ever made in the United States.

In September, 1856, Walker's backers like Soulé, Heiss, Oaksmith, and Cazneau felt the need for a soldier of enlarged experience to help win the war, which in their eyes was then assuming serious proportions. Authorized by Walker, Soulé made some very brilliant offers to Major Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, a West Point graduate with a good record in the Mexican War (and afterwards a distinguished Confederate general in the Civil War), who in 1856 was languishing in the dull, unremunerative routine of the New Orleans Custom House. Beauregard liked Walker's offer and wrote to his superior in the capital, formally requesting a leave of absence:

I view his [Walker's] undertaking as a noble and glorious one—to establish the spirit and blessings of our Institutions over that unfortunate country, and the dominion & supremacy of the Anglo-American race, over that poor & degraded mongrel breed of Spaniards & Indians—if he should not do it, someone else will, for it is a mere question of time—one of manifest destiny—just as sure & certain as that the progress of civilization in North America is bound to annihilate the Indian race—which, in not many years from now, will be one of legends & of doubtful historical facts.

But the Walker-Beauregard agreement was frustrated by delays due to inadequate Transit steamer service at San Juan. It was mid-October when Soulé arrived in New Orleans from Nicaragua by the circuitous route of Aspinwall and Havana. When Beauregard was ready to join Walker, he was no longer needed: by then the more judicious friends of Walker, like Cazneau and Heiss, had approached Henningsen in New York, and on certain conditions he agreed to fight. His terms were at once

accepted, and he left for Nicaragua.

Besides his military skills, Henningsen brought to Walker hundreds of Minié rifles and other military stores furnished by George Law, supplemented by a contribution from Mrs. Henningsen, so that the full value of equipment was estimated at thirty thousand dollars. Such was in fact payment for Nicaraguan ranch lands that Henningsen, and perhaps Law, bought from Walker's agents in New York. Once in Granada, Henningsen was forced to postpone indefinitely any thought of taking possession of "his" ranch lands; first, he had to help Walker wage war against the poor and degraded mongrel breed of Spaniards and Indians who owned and meant to keep it.

On October 25th, Walker learned that the Allies had summarily shot Col. Lainé and several Rangers captured on the road to Masaya on October 13th. He immediately issued to his soldiers General Orders No. 202, recounting "the execution of the Cuban patriot" and concluding:

1. . . . Let then, soldiers, a sense of the justice and grandeur of the cause in which we are engaged, nerve us for the fulfillment of the task which lies before us. Remember that you suffer and struggle to redeem one of the loveliest of lands from barbarian rule and savage despotism. In such a cause as this, who would not gladly endure a few days of privation and fatigue? Who would not undergo some little suffering and dangers for the sake of having his name enrolled among the benefactors of the race?

2. Lieut. Col. F. A. Lainé, aid-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, having been barbarously murdered by the enemy without proposing an exchange of prisoners, it is directed that Lieut. Col. Brigido Valderraman [sic] and Capt. Bernardo Allende be shot this afternoon at 5 o'clock, in the plaza of this city.

3. Brig. Gen. Fry is charged with the execution of the above order.

At 5 o'clock p.m. on October 25, 1856, Valderrama and Allende were executed in the presence of several battalions of soldiers and a large concourse of citizens. They declined to be seated or to be blindfolded, as was the custom, and took their position side by side against the wall; both gazed squarely at the raised rifles, and fell without a murmur. Lainé, in Diriomo, had faced the firing squad with these words on his lips: "Men die; ideas remain." The precious idea Lainé had in mind was the liberation of Cuba; the fixed idea in Walker's mind was his Southern empire.

Though hemmed in by the Allies in Granada, Walker knew that it was a mere question of time before he fulfilled the task that lay before him. He had history on his side—the manifest destiny of the Anglo-American race. Moreover, after long delays, his plan was finally working:

In October, 1856, "Nicaragua Emigration Company" agents in New York, New



Orleans, and other cities, enlisted whole companies of emigrants by offering large grants of land in Nicaragua. Morgan & Garrison's "Nicaragua Transportation Company" then gave them free passage on its steamers after each emigrant transferred one hundred acres of his grant to the company. In Walker's eyes, the white tide rolling over Nicaragua was unstoppable.

On October 23d, the Jacques Guards, a compact body of fine looking abled bodied men, headed by a band of music, paraded down the streets of New Orleans on their way to Nicaragua. On the 27th, they sailed for San Juan del Norte on the Tennessee: 372 recruits organized in six companies under Col. John A. Jacques, and 100 others.

In Granada, Henningsen actively drilled his brigade with the mountain howitzers and mortars, and instructed the men in the use of the Minié rifle. Walker awaited the arrival of recruits from the United States before marching upon Masaya and León. To insure a steady supply of cannon fodder, he appointed Col. E.J.C. Kewen "Commissioner for the Southwestern portion of the United States" and Col. Fisher, in connection with him, as "special agent." The third member of the Know-Nothing trio, Parker H. French, forced out of Nicaragua by Walker, was then engaged in another venture: French had formed a joint stock company in Illinois, for the purchase of real estate in Watab, Minnesota.

On October 29, "President" Walker appointed Don Fermín Ferrer (half of his Cabinet), "Minister Plenipotentiary at the Government in Washington." The other half, his Minister of War, Gen. Mateo Pineda, thereupon became the whole Cabinet with the title of "Minister General."

American Minister John H. Wheeler went with Ferrer to Washington. Before leaving Granada, he gathered testimonies on the murders of innocent Americans by the Allied forces on October 13. He transmitted the affidavits to the State Department on November 1st; in his last dispatch from Nicaragua, informing Secretary Marcy that during the Allied attack: "The flag of the Legation as well as the door of the Legation House was [sic] repeatedly shot through, and it is clear from the evidence that had the Allies obtained full possession of Granada, that neither the flag of the U.S. nor my magisterial character could have prevented me from sharing the same fate of our innocent countrymen."

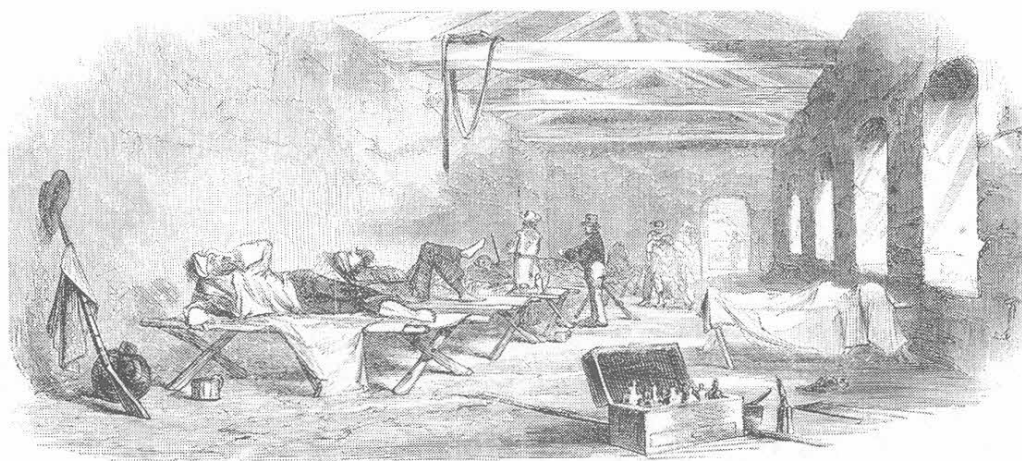
Immediately below, Wheeler wrote that the Allies were "comforted by the presence of the large English force now on this coast," and listed seven British warships—226 guns—lying in the harbor at San Juan del Norte. Next, he informed Marcy that "The last train of passengers from California was threatened [at San Juan del Sur] by a force of 300 natives. Doubtless they would have been attacked, and the scenes of murder and

plunder of the last year repeated, but for a detachment of mounted men, sent down by Genl. Walker, which overawed the natives, and protected the lives of our countrymen and safety of the Treasure.”

Wheeler and fellow passengers sailed from Granada on the steamer Virgin at midnight on November 1st. Brig. Gen. Hornsby with 150 Rangers and Infantry—the detachment of mounted men sent down by Gen. Walker to overawe the natives—went along with them to Virgin Bay. The Sierra Nevada arrived at San Juan del Sur from San Francisco on November 2d. The passengers from California crossed the Transit road under the protection of Hornsby's Rangers, and the Virgin carried them across the lake.

Wheeler and Ferrer boarded the Texas at San Juan del Norte on the 4th, toward New York. Kewen and Fisher sailed for New Orleans, on the Tennessee, on the 5th. That day, the Virgin arrived in Granada with the Jacques Guards from New Orleans and twelve to fifteen recruits from San Francisco; on the 6th, the San Carlos arrived with 130 recruits and immigrants from New York. Altogether, the steamers had brought about 500 emigrants and soldiers for Nicaragua besides a large amount of stores and ammunition for Walker's army.

Including the new arrivals, early in November, 1856, Walker's army consisted of about 2,000 fighting men. Walker was then ready to march upon Masaya and León, but suddenly he had to fight for his life-line when, on November 7, Costa Rican Allied forces occupied San Juan del Sur.



The fever hospital at Granada  
*Harper's Weekly*, March 28, 1857

## 20. Retreat

Upon receipt of the news that Belloso was marching from León toward Granada, the Costa Rican Congress, on October 10, authorized President Mora to resume the war against Walker in union with the Central American allies. A few days later, upon learning that Belloso had entered Masaya, Mora ordered Cañas to advance with his troops from Liberia into Nicaragua.

Simultaneously, Belloso sent 300 Leonese under Col. Félix Ramírez from Masaya to Rivas, to distract Walker's attention and to join Cañas. Ramírez occupied Rivas on October 30 after a light skirmish with the skeleton filibuster garrison. After Walker learned of Ramírez's occupation of Rivas, at midnight on November 1st he sent Hornsby with 150 men to protect the Transit road. Unknown to the filibusters, on November 2d Gen. Cañas' Vanguard Column moved on from Liberia towards San Juan del Sur.

Gen. Cañas' column numbered 300 men, mostly Nicaraguan exiles and Liberians. Second in command: Col. Manuel del Bosque, who had defeated Walker at the First Battle of Rivas; Captain of Company A: Roman Rivas, the President's elder son, who had led the revolt against Walker in December, 1855.

Cañas occupied San Juan del Sur on November 7 and was promptly joined by Ramírez, from Rivas, while Hornsby's forces were at Virgin Bay. The steamer San Carlos brought the news to Granada at 5 o'clock in the morning on the 9th, and was back at Virgin Bay that same evening, with Col. E. J. Sanders, 150 additional troops, and a howitzer.

Hornsby and Sanders advanced along the Transit road at dawn on November 10. Cañas waited for them on a hill near the Half-Way House. The battle commenced at 7 a.m. In El Nicaraguense, the Americans routed the enemy: they killed at least seventy and suffered only two dead and eleven wounded. Yet, Cañas remained in possession of the hill and "Gen. Hornsby thought proper to retire to Virgin Bay." Leaving his men under Sanders' command, Hornsby hurried on to Granada, on the Virgin, for reinforcements.

At 4:30 p.m. on the 11th, the steamer was back at Virgin Bay, with Walker, Henningsen, 250 riflemen, a howitzer, a mortar, and a squad of sappers and miners. With Walker in command, the filibusters marched during the night to the Half-Way House, which they reached just before daybreak on the 12th. The battle at the hill commenced at sunrise; it lasted several hours and it ended with a Walker victory: at ten a.m., Cañas began to withdraw slowly to San Juan and then, at noon, precipitately along the coast trail to Rivas.

The filibuster army returned from San Juan del Sur to Virgin Bay on the 13th. Leaving Col. Markham with the First Infantry—175 men—at Virgin, Walker took the remaining 300 men on the San Carlos and landed with them in Granada at dawn on the 14th. On the 15th, he was on the march again, with about 600 men, to again attack Belloso in Masaya.

The Allies' effective force numbered over 3,000 soldiers in Masaya. Jerez had just left with 300 Leonese to reinforce Cañas in Rivas, but Zavala and Estrada, who had been at Diriomo and Niquinohomo, were back in Masaya, Martínez had arrived from the north with additional volunteers, and fresh troops had also arrived from El Salvador and Guatemala.

Don Dámaso Sousa had sent word to Belloso, on the 14th, about Walker's forthcoming attack, and Belloso prepared to give him a hot reception. To increase the odds against Walker, on the road to Masaya he was told that Jerez had marched toward Rivas with seven or eight hundred men, which was an inflated figure. Fearing for his life-line, he immediately ordered Jacques' Second Infantry—250 men—to return to Granada and take a lake steamer for Virgin Bay, hastening to reinforce Markham's First Infantry protecting the vital Transit road. Thus Walker reduced his own strength to less than 400 men.

Fearing a surprise attack on Granada, he had left there a strong garrison: 450 soldiers besides a citizens' Volunteer Corps, under the command of Brig. Gen. Fry.

On the edge of Masaya, the road from Granada passed through a trench, on each side of which were scattered small reed huts in the midst of plantain patches. About 5 p.m., as Walker's army defiled along the road, the Allies, posted behind the groves, opened fire on the filibusters as they advanced, and the battle began.

The Allies withdrew into the city during the night. Before the fighting stopped on account of darkness, ten Americans had been killed and forty-five wounded. November 16, Walker attacked and took the church of San Sebastián, which the Allies opted not to defend. The sappers then began to cut a passage through the houses on each side of the street running into the right-hand corner of the main Plaza. The cuts made through the adobe houses on a parallel street during the attack of the 12th of October were also used.

Belloso attempted to encircle Walker: he sent a Guatemalan division to attack the rear, Nicaraguans on the right flank, and Salvadorans on the left, but the latter failed to appear at the designated point, and Guatemalans and Legitimists had to withdraw. Thereupon, as Walker advanced toward the Plaza, he set a fire that destroyed the church of San Sebastián and all the houses behind him, so as to protect his rear.

The fight continued similarly for three days, ever closer to La Parroquia. Belloso had fortified and strengthened every spot available for a stand; hence, the Americans had to fight for every inch along the way. By the 18th, Walker had burned the entire southern district of Masaya up to within one block of the main Plaza, but he was unable to advance any further. In his own words: "the effects of three days' labor and fighting were seen in the lassitude of the men and the almost utter impossibility of having guard duty properly performed." In addition, Henningsen's mortars and howitzers could not be counted on, because of defective fuses and a short supply of shells.

During the night, Walker ordered his army to withdraw, leaving behind utter desolation: The largest and most valuable part of the city was destroyed. As his troops passed by the plantain patches where the battle began, many corpses remained yet unburied. The stench was unbearable and was distinctly perceptible for a distance of nearly five miles.

At dawn on the 19th, the Allied soldiers rushed into the houses last occupied by Walker and mercilessly murdered several sleeping filibusters who had not heard the order to withdraw. Walker left many dead strewn all over the ground and carried away numerous wounded.

When the Allies tried to pursue the filibusters, the latter were already in Granada. Belloso claimed 150 Americans killed, and listed 46 Allied dead and 90 wounded. In *The War*, Walker admitted 100 casualties, but in *El Nicaraguense*, only three Americans were killed during three days of fighting inside Masaya. Were we to believe Walker's newspaper, on the 19th the Americans re-entered Granada in triumph: with a large brass band playing lively airs, their colors flying gaily at their fronts, Walker's men supposedly were in good spirits.

In his editorial on "Our Late Battles," Walker placed himself above the Russian, French, and British generals in the Crimean War, above Gen. Taylor in the Mexican War, and above Napoleon, and confidently asserted: "The day is not distant when the late engagements of Americans in this country will be pointed to as surpassing Buena Vista, or Alamo, or Inkerman, and paralleled only by the defence of Leonidas, with his 300 Spartans, against the hosts of Xerxes, or others of the most remarkable feats of arms in ancient or modern times. . . . and that will ultimately place Gen. Walker at the head of the bravest men of the world."

That was Walker's last editorial in the last issue of *El Nicaraguense*, on November 22, 1856, the day he burned Granada. It was a fitting finale for the megalomaniac Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny's annals in the capital of Nicaragua.

In the words of an American eyewitness: On November 19, 1856, the remains of



Walker's Rifles, after a heavy loss, came quietly back to Granada from their second defeat at Masaya, "the weary to rest, and the wounded to die." The lazarettos were filled with sick and dying; provisions were growing daily scarcer, and the soldiers were hardly able to get enough to eat. The hospital attendants were ill or withdrawn for military service, and deaths were in number from ten to fifteen a day; a rate of mortality which in two months would have destroyed the army.

Both steamers were then in Granada. The San Carlos was back from Virgin Bay, where it had taken Jacques' Second Infantry on the 15th. The Virgin was back from Chontales, where it had gone with a party of Kissane's Rangers for the purpose of securing a supply of cattle. On attempting to land at San Ubaldo, the Rangers had been attacked by over one hundred armed natives on shore. They had been lucky to escape empty-handed, and with only two men mortally wounded.

Facing severe shortages and sickness in the capital, besieged by the Allies, and seriously threatened in Rivas, Walker decided to abandon the Oriental Department in order to hold on to his umbilical cord which was the Transit. On the 19th, he ordered the evacuation of Granada. On the 20th, over two hundred Hospital patients filled the two decks of the Virgin; at midnight, Walker and his Staff sailed with them for Virgin Bay. He left Henningsen behind, to assist Fry, commander of the city, in the task of its evacuation.

Walker landed at Virgin Bay at 6 a.m. on the 21st; sick, wounded, and freight continued on the steamer to Moyogalpa; the natives fled on their approach and the Americans took possession of the village. By midnight, the Virgin was on its way back to Granada with William Kissane Rogers on board. Kissane carried an order from Walker for Henningsen to burn and destroy Granada. Walker chose well, for Kissane had served time in Sing Sing and had a long relationship with arson, having been accused of setting fires in Cincinnati and Arkansas.

Kissane landed in Granada at 6 o'clock a.m. on the 22d, and handed Henningsen the order. Henningsen immediately issued a proclamation warning that all private homes and public buildings should be promptly vacated because they would be set on fire within a few hours. The filibusters loaded as much private and public property as they could on the San Carlos throughout the day. The passengers, mostly women and children, boarded the steamer. On the evening, pursuant to Walker's orders, Brig. Gen. Fry sailed to Virgin Bay with them as Henningsen took command of the city and force in Granada.

He assigned troops to different streets, with orders to burn the city at a given signal; every man was at liberty to pillage and take all he could carry with him to the steamer.

At about midnight the old Barcelona brass twenty-four pounder, that lay on the wharf, belched forth her fiery command, and in a few moments the once proud city was in flames—given over to pillage and rapine.

When the San Carlos left the wharf at 1:30 a.m. on the 23d, the whole city was in flames. On arrival at Virgin Bay at sunrise, Brig. Gen. Fry brought to Walker the news of the total destruction of Granada. Walker ordered Fry to take the women and children to Ometepe, and thereafter the San Carlos was to return to Granada in order to evacuate, with the steamer Virgin, the remainder of the inhabitants.

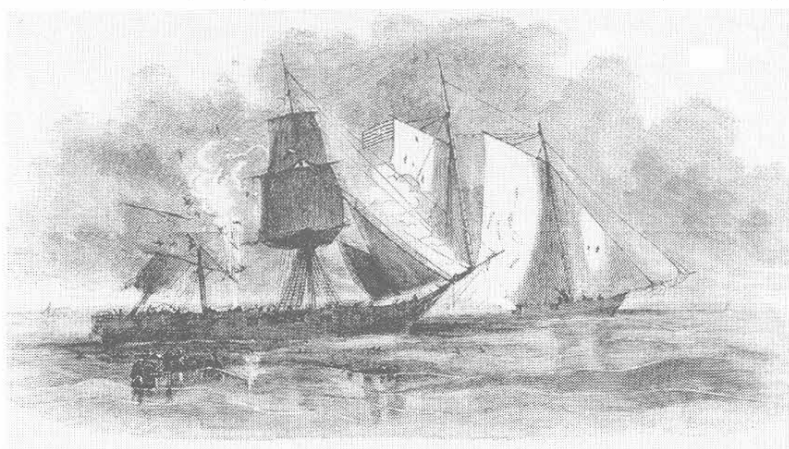
Walker waited for Henningsen before moving on to Rivas, his new capital, then occupied by Cañas and Jerez. But President Mora was reinforcing Cañas and meant to keep the Transit road in Costa Rican hands. On November 1st, he had issued "Decree No. 9, declaring a blockade of the port of San Juan del Sur and forbidding navigation on the San Juan river for the duration of hostilities against the aggressors of Central America." On October 20, his government had acquired the 167-ton brig Dover at Puntarenas, renamed it Once de Abril, and armed it with four nine-pounders.

Upon receipt of the news that Cañas had entered San Juan del Sur on November 7, the brig sailed from Puntarenas on the 11th toward San Juan. It carried munitions and supplies for Cañas, besides seven officers, twenty-seven sailors, eighty-nine soldiers, a chaplain, and a carpenter, for a total of 125 men. Its captain, Antonio Valle Riestra, had been ordered to take possession of the harbor and to capture all vessels flying Walker's flag.

When the Once de Abril arrived at San Juan del Sur, on November 23d, the filibusters held possession of the port with the 65-ton schooner Granada in the harbor. It carried two six-pounders with 180 rounds of ball and canister, and a crew of twenty-four. At 4 o'clock p.m., the schooner hoisted anchor and went out to meet the newcomer; at 5:45, the brig raised Costa Rican colors; at 6 p.m., the battle began at 400 yards from each other; at 8 p.m., a shot from the Granada hit the Once de Abril's magazine, causing an explosion that instantly killed most of the men on board.

Lieut. Callender Irvine Fayssoux, the Granada commander, sent a boat over to the brig and rescued forty-one survivors, many of them badly burned. At least eleven died from their wounds, bringing the total of Costa Rican dead to about ninety-five. The Granada lost two dead and seven injured.

Twenty-nine survivors able to travel were taken prisoner to Virgin Bay on the 24th. Twenty-six of them affixed their signatures, or simply marked a cross next to their names, in a letter of thanks to Fayssoux on the 25th. Walker personally examined them that day, and released all of them with the exception of Federico Martínez, the second



BRILLIANT NAVAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE HARBOR OF SAN JUAN DEL SUR, BETWEEN THE NICARAGUAN SCHOONER "GRANADA" AND THE COSTA RICAN BRIG "ALFONSO XI APOSTOL".

Naval battle at San Juan del Sur  
*Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 18, 1857

in command, and four others. In Walker's own words: "The prisoners who could walk were soon released, and passports were given them for Costa Rica. When they reached home their reports did much to correct the prejudices the Moras had created against the Americans."

The "Federico Martínez" whom Walker kept in the stockade at Virgin Bay, was in fact "Sergeant Major Don Federico Maheit." He was an Italian artilleryman enrolled in the Costa Rican service. Although he changed his name to "Martínez" after the battle, Walker found out his true identity and kept him in captivity.

Had Maheit sunk the *Granada* on November 23d with the *Once de Abril* nine-pounders, it could have shortened the war. On that date, Walker's troops at Virgin Bay were in a very disorganized condition. Had the Costa Rican brig gained control of the harbor at San Juan del Sur, Cañas and Jerez, reinforced from Puntarenas, would have advanced from Rivas to block the Transit road; and that would have tipped the balance against Walker at a critical moment.

Walker was in great debt to Fayssoux. On November 24th, he sent him "the thanks of the whole army" and promoted him to captain. On the 25th, he sent him "the thanks of the Republic" and bestowed on him the large estate of Rosario, which Kissane had confiscated from José Antonio López, its Nicaraguan owner. Rosario had twenty thousand cacao trees and a large house, only two miles from Rivas. But it made no difference to Fayssoux, since the turn of events kept him from ever enjoying a single cup of hot chocolate in "his" hacienda.