



WILLIAM WALKER

The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny
BOOK THREE: NICARAGUA

by Alejandro Bolaños-Geyer



William Walker *The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny*

William Walker (1824-1860), the "Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny," is the indispensable root that anchors the Sandinista revolution and current U.S. involvement in Central America in true historical perspective.

Walker was the hottest news personality between the Mexican War and the Civil War—for a time the most talked of figure in the United States. Yet today probably not one U.S. citizen in ten thousand has ever heard of William Walker—a lost character in American history.

But although forgotten even in his home state of Tennessee, Walker is still vividly remembered in Central America as a devil with horns and a tail. Elementary school books proudly acclaim the *National War* of 1856-57, when the ruthless imperialistic invader William Walker and his Yankee mercenaries were driven out of Nicaragua by the *freedom fighters* of the five Central American republics.

William Walker was a "quiet, modest student" before he was suddenly transformed in 1849 into the "bold, daring, dauntless revolutionist and warrior." The great change in his character, which occurred on the death of his fiancée, has never been explained satisfactorily. His many shifts in occupation from doctor to lawyer to journalist and to soldier of fortune have never been explained either. Walker remains as much a mystery today as he was to his contemporaries, even to his closest friends.

These pages record the process of unraveling the mystery of the "Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny," unlocking the hidden springs of Walker's mind; and they bring into sharp focus the stormy scenes during the early stages of U.S. imperialism climaxing in the Mexican War.

Walker's forays into Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras, until his death by firing squad at Truxillo in 1860, will be the subject of succeeding volumes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Alejandro Bolaños-Geyer is a native Nicaraguan. He was born in Masaya and educated at the *Colegio Centroamérica* in Granada and at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri (M.D., 1948). He practiced Internal Medicine in Managua for twenty years before he retired in 1972 to do research on William Walker.

He is the author of *El Testimonio de Scott* (1974), *The War in Nicaragua as reported by Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (1976), *The War in Nicaragua as reported by Harper's Weekly* (1976), *El Filibustero Clinton Rollins* (1976), *James C. Jamison Con Walker en Nicaragua* (1977), and *1984 in Managua* (1988).

In 1982 he founded the Nicaraguan Information Center in St. Charles, Missouri and in 1985-86 he edited the *Voice of Nicaragua* newsletter.

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BOOK THREE : NICARAGUA

CONTENTS

Walker and Nicaragua xi

Part One : MAHOMET'S PARADISE LOST

1

1. Hell on Earth 2
2. Fabulous Mosquito Kingdom 20
3. Fleeting Rainbow of Hope 34
4. A Great Change Has Come 47
5. Dress Rehearsal in 1851 55
6. Three Partners Divide the Loot 68
7. Slaughterhouse, Again 77
8. Transit Monopoly Octopus 94
9. The Tentacles Tighten 106
10. *El Ministro filibustero* 120
11. Sorry Romulus for Mosquitia 133

Part Two : THE GRAY-EYED MAN

145

12. The American Phalanx 147
13. Rivas, June 29, 1855 156
14. Fruitful Virgin Bay 168
15. Granada, October 13, 1855 178
16. "Guardian Angel of Peace" 192
17. The Terrorist Signs a Treaty 200
18. Thou Art the Man! 208
19. The Star of Empire 222

Part Three : COMMANDER IN CHIEF

235

20. Wall Street Connection 236
21. The Know-Nothing Connection 248
22. Money Is A Necessity 263
23. Mighty *Hermaniticos* 276
24. Walker's Rivals Banished 292
25. The Truth About Nicaragua 298
26. Rout of Santa Rosa 315
27. Imminent Invasion 324
28. Walker's "*Ruse de Guerre*" 331
29. Rivas, April 11, 1856 344
30. Day of Sunshine 359
31. Monster in Human Shape 369
32. Peace Drapes the Horizon 384

APPENDIX

- A. Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's Proclamation 393
- B. Joseph L. White's Instructions 396
- C. The 1540 King of Spain's Charter 400
- D. President Mora's Proclamation 405
- E. The Truth About Nicaragua 407
- F. Walker's Address, March 30, 1856 415

ILLUSTRATION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

419

BIBLIOGRAPHY

421

INDEX

431

ILLUSTRATIONS

San Juan River	6
Ometepe Island	7
Lakeshore, Granada	8
Indigo works	9
A Mosquito burial	24
Shelling turtles	25
Captain Drummer, Mosquito Army	26
Squier on a bungo	38
Granada suburb	82
La Merced, Granada	92
La Parroquia, Masaya	93
Cornelius Vanderbilt	96
Transit Company buildings	105
Greytown, 1853	117
Sloop-of-war <i>Cyane</i>	118
Captain George Nicholas Hollins	119
Henry L. Kinney	124
John Hill Wheeler	132
William Walker	146
Landing at Realejo	152
León	153
General José Trinidad Muñoz	154
El Gigante bay	155
Emmanuel Mongalo	162
Half-way House	174
Virgin Bay	175
General Santos Guardiola	176
Walker's entrance into Granada	189
Filibuster officer's quarters	190
Filibusters in their quarters	191
Fort San Carlos	199
The Guard House on the Plaza, Granada	206
Market Place on the Plaza, Granada	207

Corral's family implore for his life	213
Execution of Corral	214
Indian ruins in Nicaragua	233
General William Walker	234
<i>Star of the West</i>	244
<i>Northern Light</i>	257
The Artillery Barracks, San José	283
Walker's residence	296
Walker's office	297
Walker reviewing troops	305
The new wharf at Granada	306
Troops landing at Virgin Bay	313
Examining a squad at Virgin Bay	314
Santa Rosa, 1856	318
Santa Rosa, 1976	319
<i>Cortes</i>	332
Costa Ricans at Virgin Bay	338
Walker at Castillo	339
Gil González, 1977	340
Rivas, April 11, 1856	348
Rivas, April 11, 1856	349
La Parroquia, Rivas	350
San Francisco Church, Rivas	351
Hipp's Point	361
<i>Orizaba</i> passengers detained at Castillo	365
Costa Ricans retreat from San Juan del Sur	376
Costa Ricans return to San José	377
Pedro Joaquín Chamorro	394
Juan Rafael Mora	404

MAPS

Nicaragua	xiii
Nicaragua, 1855	138
First Battle of Rivas	161
Costa Rica, 1700	282
Walker's " <i>ruse de guerre</i> "	337
Second Battle of Rivas	347

Walker and Nicaragua

Walker's attempt to build a Southern Empire from a base in Nicaragua, was the salient feature of his life, what made him "king of the filibusters" and earned him the "Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny" sobriquet. That endeavor will be the subject of the next three volumes. The previous two--*The Crescent City* and *The Californias*--constitute an introduction to the main body of his biography, having in them studied Walker's personality and his American circumstance up to the time when he sailed on the *Vesta* from San Francisco toward Realejo, in May, 1855.

Book Three, *Nicaragua*, opens with a review of Nicaraguan history, placing in context the diverse factors that interplayed with Walker upon his arrival at Realejo. It then follows him (from June, 1855 to May, 1856) until he was ready to take over as president of the country.

Book Four, *War of Liberation*, follows Walker (from June, 1856 to May, 1857) through his "presidency" and the revolt of Nicaraguan patriots until he was finally expelled by the combined efforts of all Central America.

Book Five, *Truxillo*, studies Walker's succeeding expeditions (from 1857 to 1860) in vain attempts to regain his base, until he was killed in Honduras. In addition, to conclude, I will analyze Walker's *War in Nicaragua* in the light of his personality structure described in Book One.

Again, I wish to express my gratitude to those who have contributed with their advice and personal attention to the tasks of this work, in particular: to professor Steven Blakemore for his attentive, critical reading of my manuscript, to my son Michael for the computer, and to my brother-in-law Thomas Bacott for the photomechanics of the illustrations.

A. B. G.

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