

Part Two:

THE WAR

*honor al herido y honor a los fieles
soldados que muerte encontraron por mano extranjera!
;Clarines! ;Laureles!*

.....

*Y al sol que hoy alumbra las nuevas victorias ganadas,
y al héroe que guía su grupo de jóvenes fieros,
y al que ama la insignia del suelo materno,*

Rubén Darío. *Marcha Triunfal.*

10. The Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters

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 Ubaldo Herrera out of town and got ready to drive away Col. Fry's Voltigeurs. The Walker-Rivas government suppressed the rebellion through the intercession of Father Juan Manuel Loredó, an old Matagalpa priest whom the Indians trusted. "He managed to pacify them, but they refused to have any contact or dealings with the Yankees, whom they were determined to harry to their utmost."¹

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 *La Virgen*, 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 the execution of Corral.²

¹Jerónimo Pérez, *Obras . . .*, p. 183; also see Book Three, p. 227.

²Alejandro Bolaños Ceyer, *El Testimonio de Scott*, (Managua: Editorial y Litografía San José, S.A., 1975), pp. 178-179; "Letter from Greytown," *New Orleans Daily Delta*, 6/27/1856. Roman Rivas' is one of the 93 signatures on a Nov. 7, 1855 petition for Walker to spare the life of Corral (original at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California).

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.³ 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, Mr. Hutchinson, called on Commodore Paulding, who had just arrived at San Juan del Norte on the *Potomac*, and asked the Navy to intervene "for the protection of the lives and property of the Americans."⁴

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 the insurrections in Ometepe, Chontales, Matagalpa, Segovia, and other parts of the country.⁵ Although Walker suppressed them with an iron fist, he

³"Diligencias sobre averiguar los autores de una expedición armada contra el Castillo y fuerte San Carlos," Item 98, Fayssoux Collection of William Walker Papers, Latin American Library, Tulane University.

⁴"News From Below," *El Nicaraguense*, 12/29/1855, p.2, c.2.

⁵See Book Three, Chapter 31.

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 stood up to 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 victory at Santa Rosa and Mora's occupation of Rivas, the people rose against Walker. Legitimist lieutenants Crecencio Urbina and Tomás Gutiérrez 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 Leonese Captain Ceferino González, commander of the post, joined the revolution.

Legitimist Captains Francisco Duarte and Saturnino Huete made a *pronunciamiento* against the Walker-Rivas government in Comalapa, and other towns followed. Captain Francisco Sacasa led the uprising in Juigalpa. But although there was much enthusiasm, the patriots had no weapons or resources to carry on the war against Walker.

Colonel Francisco Gutiérrez captured some government muskets at El Paso and returned to Chontales to arm forty patriots. Sergeant Alejandro Pérez, José Borge, and two sailors volunteered for a mission to get weapons 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, "leaving in each town and along the roads in Chontales, a trail of blood with which he intended to sow terror in those whom he called rebels . . . Inhuman Goicouría called 'traitor'

he who in fact was loyal to his country, his religion, and his race."⁶

The disbanded Chontales patriots 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, "seeking shelter in the neighboring country, there to await for another opportunity to fight for the salvation of Nicaragua."⁷

The opportunity came in June, when the Allied Armies of Guatemala and El Salvador were poised nearby, ready to enter into Nicaragua.⁸ Then the Leonese broke with Walker. Estrada,

⁶Pérez, *Obras*, p. 221. See also Book Three, pp. 370-372, 375, 383.

⁷Pérez, p. 226.

⁸The Guatemalan vanguard was then at Corpus, near the Nicaraguan border, in Choluteca (Pérez, *Obras*, p. 403). The first Allied troops arrived in León on July 13. The Salvadorans, commanded by Gen. Ramón Belloso, had travelled by sea to Realejo; the Guatemalans under General Mariano Paredes had marched the whole distance by land ("Central America," *New Orleans Picayune*, 10/1/1856 eve., p.1, c.4).

In Choluteca, moved in quickly to re-establish his Legitimate government 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 Ocotal, 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, on his mission with ten soldiers as escort which reduced in half the twenty-man Presidential Guard in Ocotal.

On August 13th, a band of assassins murdered Estrada, allegedly on orders from leaders in León. The party numbered forty-five Leonese partisans, led by "Anastasio Chávez, Benito Lagos, Mariano Maradiaga, Albino Sánchez, Pedro Zelaya, and others." The assassins struck at noon: they surveyed the site and surprised the garrison when only five soldiers were at their posts; they killed three in a few minutes, and then pursued Estrada who began to run at the

first shots. The President was overweight and asthmatic. They caught him by the river outside the town, where Chávez and the others mangled his body with blows and wounds that killed him instantly.⁹

Upon receipt of the news in Matagalpa, Martínez sent Col. José Bonilla with 100 men to Ocotal, allegedly to protect his friends who had gone into hiding. Bonilla captured and shot several of the assassins. Thereupon, the Leonese sent "Commissioner" Pascual Fonseca and Col. Manuel Berrillos with a larger force, ostensibly to pacify the region, but with private instructions to engage and destroy the Legitimist forces in Segovia and to liquidate the Legitimist leaders in the area.

The recrudescence of 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 (Agustín Avilés, Fernando Guzmán, José Argüello, José Lejarza, Rosalío Cortés) concurred; President Rivas and his Cabinet agreed; Fonseca cut short his stay in Segovia without accomplishing his mission; Martínez and Guzmán marched on to León, taking with them 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, which included a dozen Frenchmen and two Hungarians: Col. Louis Schlessinger and Col. Manuel Grros; the latter a resident in the country who had fought alongside

⁹Pérez, *Obras*, p. 250; "Death of Estrada," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/13/1856, p.2, c.4. Pérez maintains that Benito Lagos, one of Estrada's murderers, was the courier who carried to Walker the letters that led to Corral's death (see Book Three, p. 209).

the Legitimists since 1854.¹⁰ Bonilla was in Segovia, Rivera in 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 under Ubaldo Herrera had raided a farm and were driving the cattle to Granada. A group of Nicaraguans on the road pursued the rustlers, recovered the cattle, and killed Herrera.¹¹ 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.

¹⁰The following "Address from Louis Schlessinger to Americans in Nicaragua" was being secretly circulated among the filibusters:

"Soldiers! The time has come for you to be avenged for all the hardships and dangers you have undergone by the deceiving promises made to you by the faithless traitor. Yey, I call him--"Wm. Walker"--"faithless traitor," who of you will not bear witness to me, that after sacrificing all for him, who by adventurous luck pushed himself forward--meet cold indifference? Did you ever share a part of the millions he robbed the people of this country of? No--I know that the greater part of the army came out here, to seek a peaceable new home, for yourself & family--and as such you were too honorable to steal on your own huk, but he who is your master. Did he ever pay you what he promised--Never. To sacrifice you is his aim: if successful he will throw you off--if unsuccessful he will abscond as he has done in Sonora, leaving you to your own faith. Soldiers of the Army of Guatemala San Salvador Honduras are moving on not agst you but agst him--who defieing justice and humanity seeks to destroy and to sacrifice men and property for the gratification of his made vanity. Soldiers--I offer you full guaranties--pass over and you will be protected here. It is the cautioning voice of a friend who calls you. LOUIS SCHLESSINGER. Matagalpa--Agst--1856." "Col. Schlessinger's Address," *New York Herald*, 9/29/1856, p.1, c.6. [Transcribed literally, respecting punctuation and spelling]. Walker considered it so ineffective, that on August 30th he allowed *El Nicaraguense* to publish it.

¹¹Herrera, a native of Granada, was Walker's guide when he captured the city, October 13, 1855 (see Book Three, p. 187). He had also commanded the firing squad that murdered Mateo Mayorga.

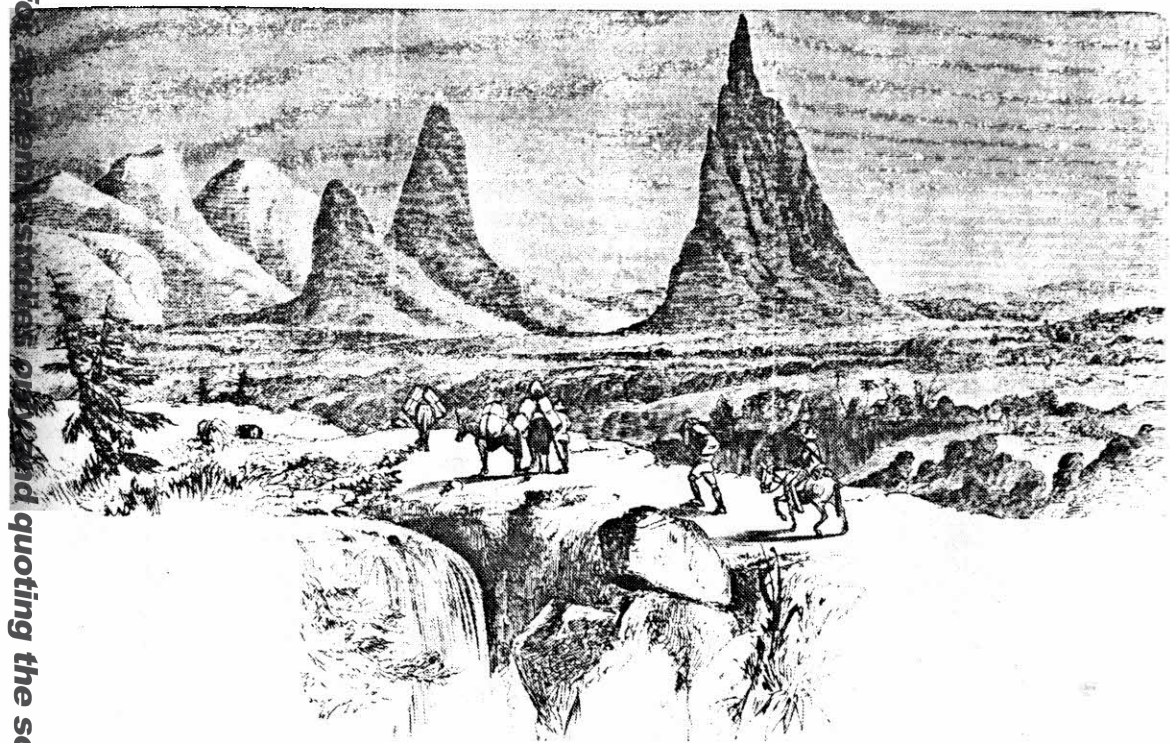


the pass of Lovigüisca

"They entered into Chontales . . . " (p. 102)



at the Hacienda San José
"intending to make a fight there" (p. 103)



mountains in Chontales

"at least three filibuster contingents were out on scouting and foraging missions through Chontales . . . " (p. 104)

11. Dawn at San Jacinto

On orders from the "Secretary of Hacienda," *Confiscador General* Kissane, Lieut. Col. Byron Cole assembled sixteen American volunteers, "all reliable and trustworthy men." Accompanied by fourteen natives, they departed from the wharf at Granada on July 22d, in a large bongo, bound for San Ubaldo, Chontales.¹ In his official report to Kissane, Cole explained that a storm threw the vessel off course, forcing them to land at Los Cocos, and then at Malacatoya.

They proceeded to raid the "haciendas and cattle estates" within reach, "sending out parties each day in search of cattle, horses and mules . . . according to the orders and in the manner prescribed by your [Kissane's] Department." The vessel returned to Granada, loaded with livestock; seven fillbusters and six natives drove to the city by land the remainder of the loot; Cole went on to Chontales with the others (seventeen men), mounted on the best animals they had "levied," saddles, bridles and all appurtenances included.

They entered into Chontales on August 1st. They "passed herd after herd of cattle, mules and horses, and continually admired the extreme beauty of the landscape, and singular richness of the soil and vegetation." At each farm along the way, Cole made the requisitions of cattle ordered by Kissane. Stopping for the night at a hacienda, the next evening:

¹"Official.-- Lieut. Col. Byron Cole's Expedition to Chontales," *El Nicaraguense*, 8/23/1856, p.1, c.2.

. . . The inhabitants opened their doors to us after a long delay, and with evident reluctance. Americans are not popular at present in Chontales. . . . As we proceeded farther, and were, consequently, more in their power, it was easy to perceive a change in the behavior and feelings of the people. At the hacienda of Concepcion the people were sullen and inhospitable to a marked degree, and we gladly took our departure for Comalapa at early dawn.

. . . Whatever may have been the secret emotions of the people at Comalapa, they behaved very well to us on our entrance. . . . My requisitions and orders from your department were met always without a murmur or show of opposition, but in some instances seem to come upon the proprietors like a voice heard in a dream, were it not for the tangible and formidable reality of an armed force at my back.²

Moving on past Comalapa and Camoapa, over the mountains, on August 5th Cole arrived in Juigalpa (a town with less than 300 people) where he was obliged to leave his orders with the priest because both the *alcaldes* had fled as he approached. At Acoyapa, on the 7th, he was informed by a native soldier that Turley's deserters were on the other side of town, ready to attack him as soon as the native forces would cooperate with them. Cole immediately fled from Acoyapa, taking the trails on the open plains towards the lake in order to elude an ambush on the mountain road by Juigalpa.

The next day he stopped at the hacienda San José, "Intending to make a fight there, in case the enemy should appear."³ He again found the people "inhospitable, sullen and silent," but no enemy came. At that very moment, the Nicara-

²Ibid.

³Ibid., 8/30/1856, p.1, c.2.

guan patriots were busy nearby, exterminating Turley's party at Cunaguas, and Cole made his way back to Granada unmolested. He arrived in the city and reported to Walker on August 11.

On the 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.⁴ As they were leaving Granada, a scouting party under Captain C. L. Englehart arrived with two "spies" captured "in the hills of Chontales."⁵ The prisoners were charged with complicity in the slaying of Ubaldo Herrera; a court martial found them guilty and sentenced them to death by hanging. They were erecting the scaffold in the plaza, on August 20, when Pierre Soulé arrived in the city and at the last moment, "by the entreaties of Father Vijil," Walker pardoned the "spies."⁶

On August 20th, at least three filibuster contingents were out on scouting and foraging missions through Chontales and vicinity: "one comprising three companies of the 2nd Rifle Battalion, under command of Lieut. Col. Edmund H. McDonald; another smaller party, led by Major W. P. Caycee; and a third

⁴General Orders No. 111, 115 and 142, General Order Book, Nicaraguan Army, Item 111, Payssoux Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane.

⁵"Affairs in Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 9/8/1856 eve., p.1, c.5; "From Nicaragua," *Alta*, 9/5/1856, p.2, c.5.

⁶"Affairs in Nicaragua," *Picayune*, 9/8/1856 eve., p.1, c.5. Walker's "clemency" may have been aimed at impressing Soulé with a show of Walker's "wisdom and justice," for on reporting Soulé's arrival, *El Nicaraguense* informed: "He is in this city as a visitor observing for himself the order of this great revolution; and it is not going beyond the line of delicacy in saying that he regards the cause as one not only eminently just and patriotic, but as being guided by such wisdom and justice as to leave no doubt of its success." "Distinguished Arrival," *El Nicaraguense*, 8/23/1856, p.2, c.1. (See Book 3, p. 330 for the only other known instance of Walker's clemency).

composed of Rangers from Tipitapa."⁷ 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 went out with a determination to march through the disaffected parts of the district, visiting the rebellious with suitable evidence of the government's displeasure."⁸

In the midst of that 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 ranche [*sic*] is naturally well adapted as a place of defence. It is situated on an elevation which commands all the ground in its vicinity. In a large corral stands a house which has been fitted up in such a manner that all inside are secure against musket or rifle shots, while through small apertures in the thick walls, troops inside of it can fire into all parts of the corral. The corral itself is surrounded by a strong fence which it is necessary to scale before any material damage can be done by an assailing party.⁹

According to Estrada's official report, dated Sept. 5, more

⁷"Affairs in Nicaragua," *N. O. Picayune*, 9/8/1856 eve., p.1, c.5.

⁸"Another Expedition to Chontales," *El Nicaraguense*, 8/31/56, p2, c4.

⁹"The Fight at San Jacinto," *Ibid.*, 9/20/1856, p.2, c.1.

than 120 Americans had attacked San Jacinto that morning. Estrada based his estimate "on the information we gathered, the ground the attackers covered, and the squads they deployed."¹⁰ After two and a half hours of heavy fire, McDonald's Rifles withdrew, leaving on the field six dead and carrying away with them a number of wounded. Three of the dead had been identified: two officers and a surgeon. The Americans also had abandoned fifteen rifles, many rounds of ammunition, four swords, a medical kit and supplies, a set of surgical instruments, fifteen mules and a like number of horses with their respective saddles, ten tin cans, and many blankets, caps, hats, knives, spurs, boots, and damaged pistols.

Nicaraguan losses: one dead--Corporal Justo Rocha, from Managua, and three wounded--Captain Carlos Alegría, aide Abelardo Vega, and private Crescencio Ramírez. Having kept his men sheltered inside the adobe house and behind barricades, Estrada's losses were minimal.

McDonald retreated to Granada. The next two issues of *El Nicaraguense* (Sept. 6 and 13), didn't say a word about the fight, San Jacinto, the Rifles, or McDonald. But fresh news from Nicaragua reaching New York and New Orleans, stated that Walker had sent McDonald with forty men to attack San Jacinto; that they had been repulsed with the loss of six men killed and seven wounded; that McDonald had left a small number of troops to watch the enemy, returning to Granada with the remnant of the force; and that another expedition made up of citizen volunteers, officered from the army, had left Granada on Friday, Sept. 12, for a second assault on San

¹⁰ José Dolores Estrada to Fernando Chamorro, San Jacinto, September 5, 1856, Ildefonso Palma Martínez, *La Guerra Nacional*, (Managua, Nicaragua: Imp. Aldina [México, D.F., México], 1956), p. 379.

Jacinto.¹¹ Walker's official version first appeared in *El Nicaraguense* on September 20th:

THE FIGHT AT SAN JACINTO

About two weeks ago, a party of thirty Americans serving in the Nicaraguan Army, under the command of Col. McDonald, attacked and drove behind their barricades a large number of rebels, numbering 150, or perhaps more. In the encounter one American was killed and several wounded. When the news of the occurrence reached this city a strong feeling manifested itself among the citizens and soldiers to avenge the death of their countryman, and both officers and soldiers requested Gen. Walker to be allowed to volunteer and form a party for this purpose. As the General would not consent to allow any of the officers or soldiers attached to regiments to go, the citizens, over whom he had no control, volunteered to the number of forty-two to fight the rebels upon their own responsibility. Some men were also raised in Massaya [*sic*] and Tipitapa, making in all sixty-five men.¹²

According to *El Nicaraguense*, Byron Cole joined the expedition at Tipitapa on Saturday morning: he volunteered as a private, but was immediately elected Captain of the company. The sixty-five 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. After a consultation, they promoted Byron Cole from Captain to Colonel and named

¹¹"Arrival of the Tennessee," *New York Herald*, 10/3/1856, p.4, c.5;
 "Later from Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 10/3/1856, p.2, c.3;
 "Central America," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 10/18/1856.

¹²"The Fight at San Jacinto," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/20/1856, p.2, c.1.

Wiley Marshall second in command.¹³

They split into three companies of about twenty men each, and elected Lieut. Robert Milligan, Major Calvin O'Neal, and Captain Lewis D. Watkins to command them.¹⁴ Milligan's company led the assault:

. . . its attack was so vigorous that it succeeded in driving the enemy back, and shortly after the other companies came upon the scene of action, the vigor of the assault drove the enemy from the corral into the house. Here the paucity of the number of the assailants became manifest, to their disadvantage. There were not sufficient to hold the place after it was taken, and they were obliged to fall back again behind the fence of the corral. This left the enemy in their former position.

The fighting continued in the corral, and when the Americans retired behind its walls, it became evident from the number that had been either killed or wounded, that it would be injudicious to renew the attack. A retreat was ordered, and the gallant little band fell back upon Tipitapa.¹⁵

As a matter of fact, the "gallant little band" disbanded and fled in all directions as the Nicaraguans rushed out in hot pursuit.¹⁶ A flanking movement by three squads under Cap-

¹³Wiley Marshall was "a Texas gambler and desperado . . . who held no rank in Nicaragua, but was known as a man of desperate courage." Horace Bell, "Confessions of a Filibuster," *Golden Era* [San Francisco], 1876.

¹⁴Lieutenant Milligan had earned his stripes in the Second Battle of Rivas; Major O'Neal was second in command of the First Rifle Battalion, had fought with distinction at Santa Rosa and Rivas, and had been praised by *El Nicaraguense* as "the Murat of the army"; Captain Watkins commanded a Second Light Infantry company in Masaya.

¹⁵"The Fight at San Jacinto," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/20/1856, p.2, c.1.

¹⁶See Col. José Dolores Estrada's official report in Appendix B.

tain Liberato Cisne and Lieutenants José Siero and Juan Fonseca, won the day for Estrada. The three squads slipped out of the adobe house into the woods, and fell upon 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.¹⁷

Byron Cole was captured down the road and killed on the spot. Charles Callahan "was last seen, wounded and nearly exhausted, pursued by some cavalry, and endeavoring to get into the bush. In this he did not succeed, as the horses were nearly upon him at the time."¹⁸ Marshall and Milligan had been killed; O'Neal and Watkins were wounded. Each of the five American commanders was either slain or wounded.

El Nicaraguense's roster of Walker's troops at San Jacinto on September 14, said to be practically complete, contains sixty-three names. On checking their ranks in the official Walker army records, we find that they included: one colonel, one major, seven captains, ten lieutenants, four sergeants, two corporals, and fourteen privates, for a total of thirty-nine soldiers; besides two doctors, one musician, one surveyor, one native boy (Dr. Royston's orderly), and nineteen whose names do not appear in the army records consulted.

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

¹⁷Pérez, *Obras*, p. 269.

¹⁸"Later from Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 10/23/1856, p.1, c.6.

... 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰

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

¹⁹ Bell, "Confessions of a Filibuster."

²⁰ Pérez, *Obras*, p. 270. A few names are mentioned, but I did not find any list of the casualties or separate figures for the dead and wounded.

Andrés Castro
*"killed an American with a
rock when his musket failed
to fire" (p. 110)*





Col. José Dolores Estrada

"A flanking movement . . . won the day for Estrada" (p. 108)

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:

- joining forces in order to drive out "the adventurers who seek to usurp power in Nicaragua and who oppress that Republic, threatening the independence of the other States";
- recognizing Don Patricio Rivas as the de facto "Provisional President of Nicaragua" and binding themselves to "effectively help him in order to liberate that State from the foreign usurpers";
- binding themselves to mediate in order to end "all internal division" in Nicaragua and endeavoring to see that all join in the common effort of "expelling the foreign usurpers";
- inviting Costa Rica to join the alliance.²¹

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 Guatemala-

²¹"Convención," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 9/10/1856, p.3, c.1.

lan 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 the schooner *Asunción* and the brig *San Joaquín* 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."²² Both armies were kept separate. The Leonese identified with the Salvadorans; Nicaraguan Legitimists, with Carrera's Guatemalans.

Gen. Tomás Martínez and Don Fernando Guzmán then arrived in León, to initiate peace talks with the Rivas government commissioners, Gen. Máximo Jerez and Rev. Apolonio Orozco. Allied generals Bellosa 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 and at the point of a hopeless deadlock, an agreement was finally signed on September 12. The agreement entailed the following:

1. Don Patricio Rivas would continue as Provisional President until the election of his constitutional successor.

2. Elections would be held in accordance with the 1838 constitution. The electoral process would begin eight days after the filibusters were expelled from Nicaragua.

3. Don Patricio's Cabinet would consist of the following [list of Legitimist and Democratic members].

4. The first elected Legislature would decide on the legality of the 1854 Constitution and could call for a new Constitution.

5. General Martínez could gather resources for the war against Walker from the department of Matagalpa, the district of Chontales, the portion of the Managua district north of

²² Pérez, *Obras*, p. 257.

Tipitapa and Lake Managua, and the department of Segovia, except the towns and valleys of Somoto Grande, Totogalpa, and El Jícaro. He would carry on operations against Walker in agreement with the General-in-Chief of the Republic.

6. The debts and obligations contracted by both parties were recognized. The State would be responsible for the damages caused during the war by either party.

7. The past would be forgotten. There would be no criminal responsibility for past official acts on either side. Fiscal fraud on either side would be punished in accordance to law.

8. Generals Paredes and Belloso would guarantee the faithful observance of the agreement.²³

President Rivas issued a Proclamation the same day, congratulating his countrymen for having put an end to the civil war:

. . . An olive branch hangs over our heads, and we all look at it in rapturous delight. Let nobody dare strip it of its leaves, for it would be a crime!

There are no more domestic enemies: friendly embraces, kisses of peace, tears of joy, and raving screams of bliss, fill the heart of the nation. Today is the triumph of civilization. . . .²⁴

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.

²³"Convenio," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 9/20/1856, p.1, c.2.

²⁴"El Presidente Provisorio a los Nicaragüenses," *Ibid.*, p.2, c.2.

12. The New Crystal

When Walker captured Granada and began to publish *El Nicaraguense*, in October 1855, "Malé & Cook, Printers and Publishers," appeared on the masthead of the paper. Parker H. French had recruited both filibuster journalists in California. Joseph R. Malé, age 30, born in Ceylon, India, of American parents, had edited a paper in Sydney, Australia and afterwards became a part proprietor of two newspapers in San Francisco.¹

French had enlisted George Cook as a Private in Co. A 1st Rifles on Sept. 20, and Walker transferred him back to the Rifles on Nov. 10, when Charles T. Cutler, former editor of the *Trinity Times*, replaced him as "co-printer and co-publisher

¹On Nov. 29, Malé travelled to New York with French, to purchase a new printing press and fonts of type. Malé returned to Nicaragua a month later on the *Northern Light*, gravely ill: "and, sick as he was--pale, emaciated, and hardly able to stand--he got out of his berth, dressed, was well wrapped up, and conveyed on board the steamer, where he at once retired to his state room, and was put under medical treatment." ("The Search of the Northern Light," *New York Herald*, 12/27/1855, p.1, c.5.) Malé may have died shortly afterwards, for John Tabor's name replaced him on the masthead and I have found no further reference to Malé anywhere. French carried the type and other printing materials to San Juan del Norte in March, but took them away to Aspinwall when Walker expelled him from the country. (See Book Two, p. 327). The reason for Walker's ire was yet another French swindle. As told by Charles Callahan, French was expelled because he was "a defaulter to the extent of ten to fifteen thousand dollars, which had been entrusted to him, and for which he was unable or unwilling to account." ("Late from Nicaragua," *N.O. Picayune*, 4/22/1856 eve., p.1, c.5; "Affairs in Nicaragua," *Ibid.*, 6/26/1856 eve., p.1, c.4).

of *El Nicaraguense*.²

Cutler died "after a short illness" in Granada, Jan. 26, 1856. "His funeral took place at 5 p.m., under the direction of Capt. Morris, officer of the day."³ Walker replaced Cutler the same day with John Tabor, former editor of the *Stockton Journal* who had been condemned to death in California for the murder of a fellow journalist before being pardoned by Governor Bigler.⁴

A Tabor entry in the "Nicaraguan Army" official record, shows that Walker ran *El Nicaraguense* newspaper as part of his army: "Private John Tabor, Company G, First Infantry, enlisted 24 December 1855, was detached 26 January 1856 as editor of the Nicaraguense (the Government paper) . . . assigned to the conduct of a print which he has so ably conducted."⁵

Other entries in Walker's official "Nicaraguan Army" records confirm again and again that Commander-in-Chief William Walker ran *El Nicaraguense* as part of his army. For instance: "Peter A. Yarrington, Company E, First Rifles, convalescent in hospital, is ordered to temporary duty in the printing office."⁶ "Privates T. C. Bell Co. D 1st Infantry and R. H. Smith Co. E 1st Infantry are permanently detached for

²"New Paper," *Daily Democratic State Journal* [Sacramento], 11/11/-1854, p.2, c.3; "Trinity Times," *Ibid.*, 12/12/1854, p.2, c.2. George Cook was wounded at Rivas on April 11, 1856, and killed in San Jacinto on September 14.

³"Obituary," *El Nicaraguense*, 1/26/1856, p.2, c.5.

⁴"The Pardon of John Tabor," *Alta*, 3/13/1855, p.1, c.3.

⁵Special Order No. 72, General Order Book, Nicaraguan Army, Item 111, Fayssoux Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane University.

⁶Special Order No. 55, *Ibid.*

the Printing Office and will report to Tabor . . . "7

In the words of an eyewitness: "The single newspaper published is entirely under the control of Walker, and everything that appears in it has first to receive his sanction."⁸ Others stressed that Walker personally wrote many of the articles.⁹ We have already seen a number of them which suggest his characteristic megalomania. I cannot prove that Walker personally wrote them, because *El Nicaraguense's* editorials are unsigned. But I contend that he at least approved them and that those articles expressed his views. On September 13, the eve of the Battle of San Jacinto, he approved and probably personally wrote the following:

. . . We are just now on the threshold of another age. We are in the midst of a revolution . . . Men with forecast, judgment, precision and endurance, will manage the future revolutions. . . .

Walker . . . meets the ideal. Without means, in the face of a thousand obstacles, beleaguered by creditors and watched by government agents, opposed by his former history, denounced by society and its great organ the conservative press, he still worked at his conception, as the sculptor chisels the block of marble, until a state was wrought from the unforbidding materials.

The individualism of the man was the only source of reliance and ultimate success. The unknown and almost unfathomable resources of a mighty mind, when taxed

⁷Special Order 118, Ibid. Special Orders 104, 107, 110, 115 and General Orders 208 assigned other soldiers to the Printing Office.

⁸"Nicaragua--Its Condition Described by An Eyewitness," *New York Tribune*, 6/17/1856, p.6, c.1.

⁹"*El Nicaraguense*, . . . many of the articles being written by General Walker." James C. Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, (Columbia, Missouri: E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1909), p. 101.

for labor, have brought out the perfect image of what will represent the next age. The future may and will produce imitations, but they will have had their model--the career of one man must give shape to many revolutions of which the future will hear; but without an example such as none could have imagined before its realization, those convulsions would never have been dreamed of.

And in many wars that are to come, founded as they will be on individual enterprise, history will chronicle many failures, but never one so successful as this of ours, for few ages will produce a man so gifted in all the details of government, as the regenerator of Central America. Heroes there are now and will be many; but the combined virtue of the hero, statesman, philanthropist and scholar can scarcely be found embodied in a single man in every century.¹⁰

"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. Being "on the threshold of another age," 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 shall be twice the width of the other stripes, and in the centre of it shall be a red star with five points."¹¹

The new flag was a bad omen for both Walker and superstitious followers on the eve of San Jacinto. When first hoisted amid salvos on the plaza in Granada, it became entwined in a gun carriage, was shredded, tattered and consequently, burned.

¹⁰"Individual Enterprise," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/13/1856, p.4, c.3.

¹¹"Official," *Ibid.*, p.3, c.3. See also Book One, p. 238.

On September 5 and 6, Walker had issued two important decrees:

No. 42: . . . Any person who shall be fifteen days without employment, having no visible means of support, is liable to arrest, and being brought before the Prefect, Sub-Prefect, Governor of Police or Alcalde, may be sentenced to hard labor upon the public works for six months.

No. 44: . . . if a laborer shall contract to work for a longer period than six months, and shall fail to abide by his engagement, the Judge of First Instance, Prefect, Sub-Prefect, Agricultural Judge or local Alcalde may sentence him to forced labor on the public works for the unexpired term of his service. And any person who shall contract work and fail, shall be liable to not less than one nor more than six months forced labor on the public improvements.¹²

Next came an editorial, "What Is Needed," on the 13th:

Public discussion in the United States, and local conversation with us at home, has frequently agitated the question whether or no this Republic could tolerate the institution of slavery? Without proceeding to answer in so important a matter, even as to our own opinion, we may at least be allowed to state, that Nicaragua, now requires but two elements to swing her up to that point of greatness which nature designed she should occupy, and these two elements are Peace and Labor. . . .

Before the revolution of Independence in this country, before the Federal Constitution of April, 1823, was adopted, slavery was allowed in Central America, and from that day--the day when the Fed. Congress

¹²"Two Important Decrees," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/13/1856, p.2, c.1.

declared its abolition--to the present, without industry, the country has continued to fall from its former wealth.

The people of Nicaragua will not work, and it is useless to calculate upon it. To hire one for a day or a month, is to bring into the house or on the farm a subject of incessant vexation. His movements are slow, his judgment and invention at fault, and his mind stubborn. While there is no greater punishment than a discharge, it is useless to attempt to frighten, for with his liberty he obtains freedom from work.

A living can be had, at any rate; and while there are so many houses open, he can sleep in the first hammock he finds empty. Those who have observed the conditions and habits of the men about Granada, will bear us out that they are really too lazy to live. Their time is spent in idleness . . .

It is useless to shuffle off the discussion or the fact--we must have labor, and the only point is how are we to obtain it? On this alternative we shall not attempt to decide, for many gentlemen favor the introduction of slavery, while others advocate the cooley system, by which large numbers of Asiatics may be brought into Nicaragua. At a proper time we shall express our preference . . . ¹³

The "cooley system" was a red herring, for Walker never had any doubt about his preference for slavery. He proved it in La Paz when he decreed the Code of Practice of the State of Louisiana.¹⁴ He proved it again in Nicaragua when he issued Decree No. 49 on Sept. 22d: "Article 1. All Acts and Decrees of the Federal Constituent Assembly, as well as of the

¹³"What Is Needed," Ibid., 9/13/1856, p.4, c.2.

¹⁴See Book Two, p. 219.

Federal Congress, are declared null and void."¹⁵ 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--"too lazy to live"--crushed in the middle, were doomed to extinction.¹⁶

Walker was then ready to receive the thousands of white immigrants that Randolph, Soulé, Pilcher, Jacquess, Moncosos, Cazneau, Oaksmith, Kewen, Sanders, Fisher, Allen, Green, and other agents were sending from the States; with legions of black slaves, as they wished, to work the land in Walkerdome.

He believed that his latest arrangements with Morgan and Garrison had solved the transportation problem. His editorial on the "Transit Route," September 27, looked to the future with confidence. In it he reviewed empires, conquests, and commerce, all over the world and concluded that, in Nicaragua, "wealth will see innumerable of spots on which it can lavish thousands of dollars to create a home and a residence that could not be surpassed in the far-famed chateaus that deck the Rhine or lend enchantment to the lakes of Central Europe."¹⁷

But in the whole month of September, no vessel came from New Orleans or San Francisco, and only one steamer arrived

¹⁵"Official," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/27/1856, p.1, c.2.

¹⁶Walker carried into practice his racist Manifest Destiny philosophy, which he had expressed clearly before. See, for instance, his article on the South Sea Islands: "the swelling tide of white immigrants . . . will sweep away all the colored races" (Book 2, p. 73).

¹⁷"Transit Route," *Ibid.*, 9/27/1856, p.4, c.1.

at San Juan from New York: the *Tennessee*, which on Sept. 22d brought 205 recruits to Nicaragua, organized as a "New York Volunteers Battalion."¹⁸ Walker's emigrant agent, Col. Fabens, had gathered over 500 recruits by offering each a free ticket and 150 acres of land, and the Garrison-Morgan company had purchased the steamer *Calhoun* to convey them from New York to Nicaragua.¹⁹ When it was ready to sail on September 9, the Custom House officers libeled the *Calhoun* as unseaworthy, and the company had to hire the *Tennessee*. In the delay, a portion of the men had dispersed about the city and could not be collected in time to sail on the 13th.

Walker didn't miss much, though, because the men sent by Fabens "showed from the beginning how worthless they were for military duty. A very large proportion of them were Europeans of the poorest class, mostly Germans who cared more for the contents of their haversacks than of their cartridge-boxes . . . Of course such trash as these men proved to be were far worse than no men at all; for their vices and corruptions tainted the good materials near them."²⁰

Captain Charles Rakirlewicz, one of the Europeans, was said to be a Vanderbilt agent on a mission against Walker. Upon arrival in Granada, the captain was promptly court-martialled, declared "enemy of the State," cashiered from the Army, "and shipped to other parts." *El Nicaraguense* proudly concluded that "Mr. Vanderbilt will find himself outwitted in all his undertakings against the Republic when General

¹⁸"Battalion New York Volunteers," Ibid., p.3, c.3; "News from the East," Ibid., p.2, c.1.

¹⁹"Additional Atlantic News," *Alta*, 10/15/1856, p.2, c.2.

²⁰Walker, *The War*, p. 287.

Walker can have a chance to handle him or his agents."²¹

The New York Volunteer Battalion arrived in Granada aboard the *San Carlos* on September 24, together with John P. Heiss and several New York passengers who intended to become Nicaraguan citizens. The steamer also brought "munitions of war which included four mortars."²² Letters from New York announced that a thousand families had signed up as colonists for Nicaragua, and that three hundred of them would sail immediately for their new home; besides five hundred additional recruits for the army, 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, for he had been recognized by the State Department in July and had been received by President Pierce on August 25th.²³

Heiss brought to Walker the 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.²⁴

²¹"News of the Day," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/4/1856, p.4, c.1; General Orders No. 175, 178, 180, General Order Book, Nicaraguan Army.

²²"Vapor San Carlos," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/27/1856, p.7, c.4.

²³"Affairs at the National Capital," *NY Herald*, 12/4/1856, p.8, c.1.

²⁴"Congressional," *New Orleans Picayune*, 8/17/1856, p.3, c.2; "Decree of the Government," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/4/1856, p.8, c.4.

The steamer also brought the news that American Minister George Mifflin Dallas and British Foreign Secretary George William Frederick Clarendon had adjusted the Central American question to the satisfaction of Great Britain and the United States. *El Nicaraguense* reported:

The Mosquito question is to be settled by a complete abandonment on the part of England of any protectorate over the half breeds along the Gulf coast of Nicaragua. The Indians are to retire on to reservations similar to those assigned to savage tribes in the United States; and this government is to give them an annuity which must be fixed by arbitrators. Thus our brother Jonathan settles the affairs of his neighbors without as much as saying "by your leave." Greytown is to be surrendered to this State.²⁵

Walker also received a letter from Goicouría, dated September 9, in which the latter expressed that in view of Oaksmith's rejection by President Pierce, he had postponed his mission to England and would wait for more suitable circumstances. Moreover, Goicouría had failed to get a loan for Walker in New York, "for the government of Nicaragua is not in this city considered capable of performing even a trifling engagement, much less of contracting a loan of the magnitude now proposed."²⁶ Walker's answer came at once:

Granada, September 27, 1856

General--I was quite surprised to hear that you have for the present given up the idea of going to England. This will make it necessary for me to appoint some one else, for now is the time to negotiate with

²⁵"News From the East," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/27/1856, p.2, c.1.

²⁶"Gen. Goicouria to Gen. Walker," *N Y Herald*, 11/21/1856, p.1, c.5.

Great Britain.

Your failure to go to England induces me to place more confidence than I was disposed to put in certain statements made to me concerning your conduct in the United States. I had expected more constancy in your course; but the sudden change you announce in your plans and intentions teaches me to look to some other person to aid in the settlement of the questions pending between Nicaragua and England. . . . Wm. Walker.²⁷

On September 29, Walker issued Decree No. 52, naming Heiss "Special Commissioner of the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua to the Governments of Her British Majesty and the United States to treat and adjust with the first definitely the question pending with this Republic in respect to the Mosquito territory and to insure to both the neutrality of the Isthmus in all events and circumstances."²⁸

Meanwhile, the Allied Army under Beloso--eighteen hundred 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 the latter place, the filibusters had built barricades and other defenses which they considered impregnable. Some called Masaya "the Sebastopol of Nicaragua."

The city was healthy: there had been but one death from fever or sickness in the American garrison at Masaya during the previous month. When Brig. Gen. Fry arrived on September 26 "to take command at Masaya, in the event the enemy should determine to advance," he found the army "in excellent spirits," and the soldiers in church:

²⁷ "General Walker to General Goicouria," Ibid.

²⁸ "Walker-Heiss Papers," p. 339.

Through some strange freak, for which I cannot account, the soldiers have become affected with piety, and are in constant attendance at the large church in the plaza. Their devotions have not been confined to praying alone, but, like the pilgrims of old, they have erected some good works in the vicinity of the sacred edifice, which will serve for future wonder and admiration.²⁹

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 casoned, on good American wheels. Besides these, other pieces, ranging from 24 down to 6-pounders, had been refitted so as to serve as a defense for the garrison of the capital.

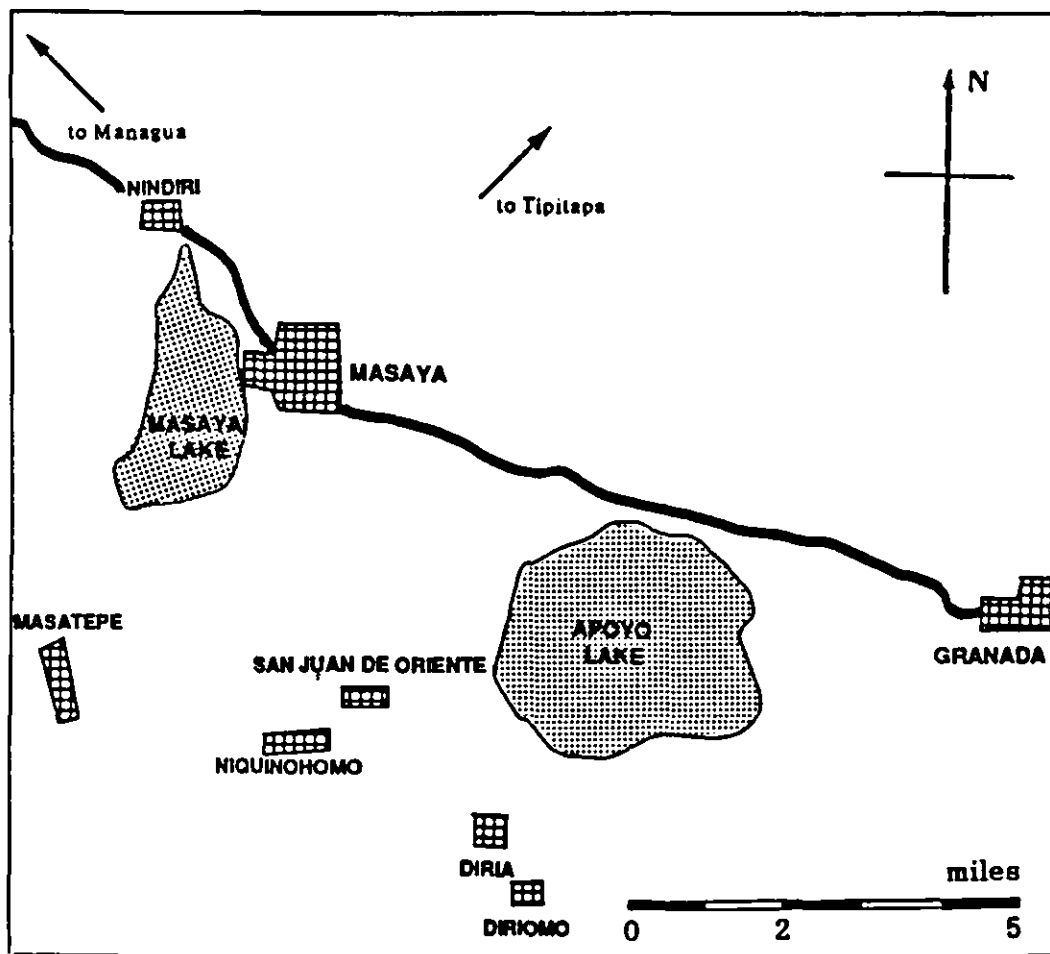
The reinforcements by the last steamer were said to have furnished "good artillerists for the service in a body of soldiers just from the Crimea." Howitzers, mortars, and a large amount of shells were expected by the next arrivals, which would give Walker "a field-park superior to anything ever seen in Central America."³⁰

According to *El Nicaraguense*, Walker's army was "in excellent health, and after a period of acclimation, all the citizens are enjoying the most salubrious state of body and mind." As additional troops left Granada for Masaya, "The boys looked and felt well as they went out of town singing merrily."³¹ At the end of September, 1856, all indications were that should the Allies determine to advance beyond Managua, Walker would make a stand at Masaya.

²⁹"From Masaya," *El Nicaraguense*, 9/27/1856, p.2, c.2.

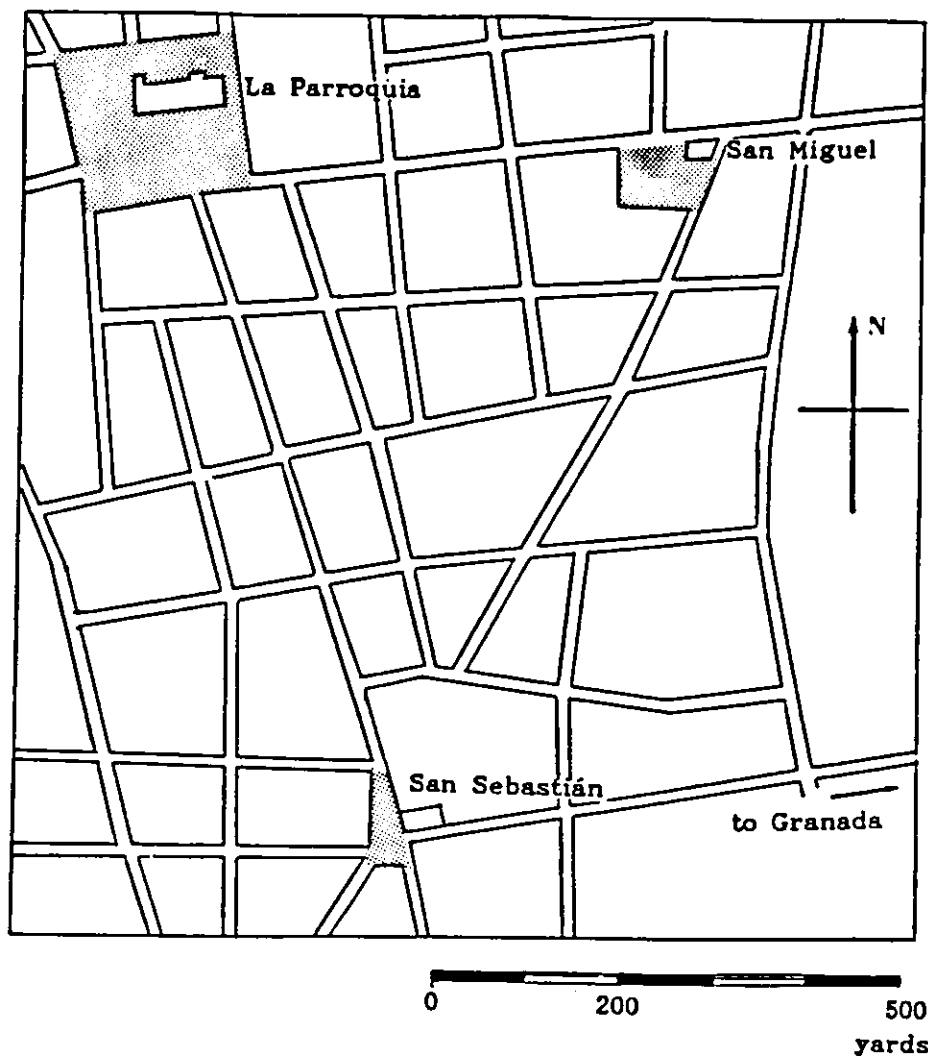
³⁰"News of the Day," *Ibid.*, 10/4/1856, p.4, c.1.

³¹*Ibid.*



Oriente

"Belloso . . . executed a pincer movement . . . (p. 130)



Masaya

"as Walker advanced toward the Plaza, he set a fire that destroyed the church of San Sebastián and all the houses behind him " (p. 161)

13. Belloso's Winning Strategy

In fact, Walker never expected that Belloso would dare attack Masaya, where the filibusters felt secure in their bastion while they waited for huge reinforcements from the States. Walker expected to go on the offensive as the rainy season drew to a close, "on the commencement of the dry season, which will set in about the 1st of November."¹ 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 Leoneze troops pressed on to Nindirí, the Salvadoran forces went on to Masatepe, "thereby threatening Granada as well as Masaya from the rear."² Major Waters' Rangers detected Belloso's move. Fearing an attack on the capital, Walker instantly evacuated Masaya and concentrated practically his entire 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

¹"News of the Day," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/4/1856, p.4, c.1.

²"Parte Oficial," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 10/10/1856, p.3, c.2.

flowers, as they marched in past the ranks and amid the cheers of the allied soldiers."³

Belloso's Allied Army then numbered twenty-two or twenty-three hundred men, and they split into two camps. Guatemalans and Legitimists (nearly one thousand men) went on to Diriomo, a village seven miles to the southeast, and equidistant from Granada; about thirteen hundred 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 at 6:30 a.m. on the 4th. That day, the *Texas* arrived at San Juan del Norte from New York with one hundred recruits under Col. Jack Allen and Capt. John B. Green. They landed at Granada, from the *Virgin*, at 1 p.m. 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."⁴

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

³Pérez, *Obras*, p. 270.

⁴"Ordnance and Ammunition," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/11/1856, p.2, c.4. The New York *Sun* and the New Orleans papers reported higher figures: "500 Minie rifles; four 12 lb field pieces, with 2,000 rounds of grape and round shot for each; six 12 lb mortars, with 500 shells for each; 2 tons of powder, and a corresponding quantity of ammunition for the Minie rifles" ("Aid to Gen. Walker," *N.O. Picayune*, 10/9/1856, p.1, c.6). Fresh news from Nicaragua reaching San Francisco told that "the *Texas* brought 300 stand of Minnie rifles and four mountain howitzers, besides mortars, shells, ammunition and men" ("Arrival of the Sierra Nevada," *Alta*, 10/19/1856, p.2, c.2). In *The War* (p. 290), Walker recalled that, with Col. John Allen, "two twelve-pound mountain howitzers, with a small supply of shells, and four hundred Minié rifles were received from New-York."

state."⁵ 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."⁶

In the next few days, Walker assigned the new recruits to their several units, organized a company of Sappers and Miners--32 men--under Captain of Engineers Eugene C. F. Hesse, 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."⁷

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: one thousand men, headed by a fife and drum. Two companies of Major Waters' 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, the pack mules bearing ammunition, the two mountain howitzers, the Artillery Corps, the military band,

⁵"Additional Nicaragua News," *Alta*, 10/20/1856, p.2, c.3.

⁶Ibid; "Arrival of the Texas," *New York Herald*, 10/19/1856, p.1, c.6.

⁷"Sharp Shooters," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/11/1856, p.3, c.1; "Target Shooting," Ibid.

the Second Rifles, the First and Second Light Infantry Battalions, and more mounted Rangers on the extreme rear. Each soldier carried rations for three days. On the colors of the Second Rifles were the words "Victory or Death."⁸

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 Waters' Rangers and Mariano Méndez's 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."⁹

About daylight on the morning of the 12th the battle began. Walker captured the San Sebastián church in a few minutes, as Bellosó 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, Bellosó 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

⁸"Opening of the Campaign," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/18/1856, p.4, c.2.

⁹*Ibid.*

Impelled Belloso to return to the shelter of his quarters.

In the afternoon Gen. 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 slaying at least one hundred of the enemy.¹⁰ Belloso estimated that the Americans suffered "at least three hundred dead and wounded," and enumerated Allied casualties adding up to eleven killed and twenty-one wounded.¹¹

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 was the case of Don Dámaso Sousa; also Don Chico Bravo, Democratic leader from Masaya, supposedly loyal to Walker, who on October 2d had followed the Americans to Granada. Through couriers, Sousa and Bravo kept the Allies informed of events in the filibuster camp.¹²

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

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"Parte Oficial," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 10/17/1856, p.1, c.1.

¹²Pérez, *Obras*, pp. 273, 277, 284.

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 fillbuster bullets pierced both the flag and his coat in succession.¹³ 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. "The contest in the rear of the Guardhouse was particularly obstinate."¹⁴ Unable to break through at any point, the Guatemalan and Nicaraguan troops then dispersed about the city, disorderly looting at will and soon drunk with the abundant liquor they found in the stores and private homes.

¹³The flag captured by Zavala was the Cuban revolutionary flag belonging to Walker's aides-de-camp: five horizontal blue-white stripes, and a red triangle with a white star in the center. "Extractos y Documentos," *Boletín Oficial* [San José], 12/6/1856, p.1, c.1; Virgilio Rodríguez Beteta, *Trascendencia nacional e internacional de la guerra de Centro América contra Walker y sus filibusteros*, 7th ed. (Guatemala: Editorial del Ejército, n.d.), p. 17.

¹⁴"The Battles of the 12th and 13th of October, 1856," *El Nicaragüense*, 10/18/1856, p.6, c.1.

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., Nicaraguan officer Lorenzo Artiles 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 enquired, who they were, and was informed that they were Americans; whereupon, without making any enquiries into the circumstances of their imprisonment, ordered them to be executed peremptorily.

No time was given them to prepare for death, nor was even the preliminary of forming a guard for their execution gone through with. A band of soldiers standing near at hand opened a promiscuous fire upon the prisoners as they stood conversing together.

Three of the prisoners fell mortally wounded, but Lawless did not fall, whereupon a soldier sprang upon the piazza to bayonette him, but Lawless succeeded in wrenching the musket from the hand of the soldier. Whilst Lawless was thus occupied with the soldier, the aforesaid Col. Dolores Estrada, commander of the Nicaraguan forces, jumped upon the piazza and coming behind Lawless struck him over the head with his sword repeatedly until he died.

The bodies of all the prisoners were then cut, slashed, stabbed, shot and bayoneted by the officers and soldiers under the command of said Col. Dolores Estrada, commanding the Nicaraguan forces.¹⁵

El Ministro filibustero 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 stated that "for 21 hours a force of at least 900 of the enemy was repulsed by less than 250 men, in which number was included all the sick and disabled of the army." He listed seventeen casualties in his command: seven killed and ten wounded. On Allied losses, he was "unable to report accurately, from the fact that during the night of the 12th they threw a large number of bodies into wells and other hiding places, and buried some. About 150 bodies have been recovered."¹⁶

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.

¹⁵James Thomas' sworn affidavit, March 19, 1859, enclosed with Dispatch No. 45 from Minister Mirabeau B. Lamar to Secretary of State Lewis Cass, Managua, March 20, 1859. Microfilm Publication M-219-11, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶"The Battles of the 12th and 13th of October, 1856."

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 inquire from a native woman at a hut along the road. "After some pressing, she said that Granada had been attacked that day at noon by the Zavala army."¹⁷ 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. In his *Reminiscences*, Rogers recalled that he got into Masaya late in the night and found Walker in his quarters, pretty close to the main Plaza: "I reported. He could hardly realize the condition of matters, but soon gave orders to his aids, and the whole army was on the march back to Granada."¹⁸

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 "with a spirit of desperation":

As the American soldiers approached the Jalteba

¹⁷William K. Rogers to James Carson Jamison, Berkeley, February 3, 1910, "Reminiscences of William Walker's Expedition into Nicaragua," C-D 5012, Manuscript Division, Bancroft Library.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

[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.¹⁹

"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 whole opposing forces were seeking for safety by hiding in the bushes, and endeavoring to escape from the city by every available source."²⁰

Nobody recorded an accurate count of Allied casualties that day in Granada. In his official report, Zavala stated: "Some of our officers and soldiers were killed . . . I have with me 240 men, including sick and wounded; about 100 are missing."²¹ A filibuster combatant estimated that "about 400 of the allies were killed at Masaya and an equal number at Granada."²² *El Nicaraguense* simply said that Allied casualties

¹⁹"Incidents of the Battles," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/18/1856, p.3, c.3.

²⁰"Opening of the Campaign," *Ibid.*, p.4, c.2.

²¹J. Víctor Zavala to Gen. Mariano Paredes [Diriomo, 10/14/1856], Alejandro Barberena Pérez, *Estampas de Granada* (Managua: Imprenta Nacional, 1974), p. 60.

²²"Battles of Masaya and Granada," *NO Picayune*, 10/23/1856 eve p4 cl.

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.²³

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.²⁴ In *The War*, Walker set the figure at "something upward of a hundred--twenty-five killed and eighty-five wounded."²⁵ Conspicuous among the wounded: *El Nicaraguense's* John Tabor, whose leg was broken above the knee by a musket ball. Among the other brave "citizens," defenders of Granada: Peter A. Yarrington and fellow soldiers on assignment as "compositors of the English department" of *El Nicaraguense* office.²⁶

Fr. Patrick M. Rossiter, an American Catholic priest, also

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "List of Killed and Wounded," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/18/1856, p.7, c.1. The list is incomplete. It includes one native Nicaraguan, "Ramundo Silva [Ramundo Selva], citizen," wounded in Granada, but it omits the names of Cubans like R. Y. Arnau, wounded at the Hospital, and F. A. Lainé, then missing in action. Moreover, it doesn't include units like the Sappers and Miners, which, according to official battle reports, suffered high casualties ("Sappers and Miners," Ibid., p.7, c.3).

²⁵ Walker, *The War*, p. 299.

²⁶ "The Pen and the Sword," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/18/1856, p.3, c.4.

distinguished himself toting a rifle in the action at Granada.²⁷ 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."²⁸ And precisely on the day the American Catholic cleric made his filibuster debut, 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. Captain James Carson Jamison witnessed Father Vijil's farewell and recorded it in his *Reminiscences*:

. . . General Walker had not slept for two nights and two days, and feeling the need of rest, entered a building opposite the San Francisco cathedral, where were a number of his officers, among them being Colonel Markham, Major Sutter, Captain Lewis, Major Schwartz and myself. He lay down in a hammock in the room, and was soon in profound slumber.

Shortly afterwards Father Vigil, worn and anxious, entered the room silently and reverently, and standing with outstretched hands over the slumbering chieftain, offered a silent prayer, tears streaming down his pallid cheeks as his lips moved in his supplication. Turning quietly, Father Vigil departed. Not a word had been spoken. Men whose eyes had not been wet with tears in many a year bowed their heads to conceal their emotion, so greatly were they moved by the devotion of this

²⁷"List of Officers, Soldiers and Citizens of Brig. Gen. Fry's command, distinguished in the action at Granada, Oct. 12 and 13, 1856," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/18/1856, p.7, c.1.

²⁸General Orders No. 173 [Sept. 29, 1856], General Order Book, Nicaraguan Army.

humble priest.²⁹

At foredawn on the 14th, when Padre Vijil cruised away from his hometown on the *Virgin*, it had been almost six years since he had seen the first American steamer on the lake, when he had cried in joy, "happy forever, Granada!"--exactly one year to the day since his memorable sermon on Walker, "Guardian Angel of Peace."³⁰ Much suffering yet awaited everyone concerned, but 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.

²⁹James C. Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, p. 124.

³⁰See Book Three, pp. 49, 193.

14. The 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. In a letter to a friend in San Francisco, written before he laid down, he recounted the events of the last two days, and concluded: "Guatemalans and Chamorristas, the relics (those last) of the party at San Jacinto . . . have suffered severely . . . were routed and dispersed, with small loss on our part . . . The guard house is filled with wounded and prisoners, and the entire force is dispersed. Their Guatemala allies will never do the enemy any more service."¹

Walker's assessment was incorrect, because the Nicaraguan patriots, "those last relics of the party at San Jacinto," stronger each day, would come back to haunt him, and their Guatemalan allies would yet do much service. But the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny viewed the world through the lens of his messianic delusion and the thought that had governed his life since "Bem and Destiny" in 1849. This time he captioned it "A Theme for the Novelist," in *El Nicaraguense* on October 18th: "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

¹"Important Letter from General Walker," *Alta*, 10/31/1856, p.2, c.3.

a mighty purpose to be achieved . . . "2

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."³ 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."⁴

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

²See full text in Appendix C.

³"Plurality of Partingtons," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/25/1856, p.2, c.3.

⁴"Southern Confederation Against the Americans," *Ibid.*, p.4, c.4.

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.⁵

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 true living embodiment of his country.

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."⁶

⁵"Black Against White," Ibid., p.4, c.3.

⁶"For Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 9/20/1856 eve., p.4, c.1.

On its next trip, on October 6, the *Tennessee* sailed from New York with 540 passengers for California and eighty "colonists" for Nicaragua--sixty of them recruits for Walker's Army, headed by Charles Frederick Henningsen, besides "six hundred Minié muskets and rifles, four mortars, with their proper equipments, the carriages for the mountain howltzers, already received, and a large quantity of ammunition."⁷

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."⁸

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. Wounded and captured by the Christinos, he regained his liberty and was paroled; he did not serve again during the war.

He next saw service in Circassia, during the uprising of the revolutionist prophet of the Caucasus, Schamyl, whom he admired. Later, a fugitive in Asia Minor, he rushed back to

⁷"Later from the East," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/25/1856, p.5, c.1. Other sources give different figures. According to the *Orizaba's* Memoranda (the Pacific steamer on that voyage), the *Tennessee* brought to Nicaragua "400 stand of Minnie rifles, six shell guns, shells, 100 boxes of ammunition and 250 men." "Arrival of the Orizaba," *Alta*, 10/31/1856, p.1, c.1.

⁸"The Nicaraguan Leaders," *Harper's Weekly*, May 23, 1857, p. 332.

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. Before the age of nineteen he had published two poems, *The Siege of Missalonghi*, written in Belgium before 1830, and *The Last of the Sophis* (1831), which was highly spoken of by Coleridge. The list of his works includes: *Scenes from the Belgian Revolution* (1832); *The Most Striking Events of a Twelvemonth's Campaign with Zumalacarregui* (2 vols., 1836); *Revelations of Russia* (2 vols., 1844); *The White Slave* (1845); *Eastern Europe and the Emperor Nicholas* (3 vols., 1846); *Kossuth and The Times* (1851); *The Past and Future of Hungary* (1852).

His writings deal with the social, cultural, military, and political aspects of peoples and countries. Most are the records of his own observations, and are both valuable and entertaining.⁹ Many of his works had several editions; many were translated into foreign languages; and some were published simultaneously in the United States and in England.

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.

⁹In a remarkable science-fiction political novel, *Sixty Years Hence* (3 vols., London: Thomas Cautley Newby Publisher, 1847), Henningsen imagined the civilized world in 1906 divided into capitalist and communist camps; separated into two great states: the United Monarchies--"a Federation of all nations who had property to lose, or the hope of ever acquiring any," and the Democratic Union--in which the "wild communistic doctrines" had triumphed (Vol. 1, p. 138).

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 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.¹⁰

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 General Walker," like Cazneau and Heiss, had approached Henningsen in New York, "and on certain conditions he agreed to go out. His terms were at once accepted, and he left for Nicaragua."¹¹

Besides his military skills, Henningsen brought to Walker hundreds of Minié rifles and other military stores furnished by George Law, "and this donation was supplemented by a contribution from Mrs. Henningsen, so that the full value of equipment was estimated at thirty thousand dollars."¹² The so-called "donation" was in fact payment for Nicaraguan real estate that Henningsen, and perhaps Law, bought from Walker's agents in New York. In the words of his biographer: "Soon after his marriage he [Henningsen] invested in valuable property in Nicaragua, and was on the point of starting to take possession of his ranch lands when war broke out."¹³

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 it and meant to keep it; and thereafter the cruel

¹⁰J. Preston Moore, "Pierre Soulé: Southern Expansionist and Promoter," *The Journal of Southern History*, May 1955, p. 216.

¹¹"The Nicaraguan Leaders," *Harper's Weekly*, May 23, 1857, p. 333.

¹²William O. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, p. 231.

¹³*National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 9 (New York: James T. White & Company, 1899), p. 236.

images of the war in Nicaragua began to surpass in his mind the worst scenes he had witnessed in Europe.

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," to conclude:

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.¹⁴

At 5 o'clock p.m. on October 25, 1856, Valderrama and Allende "underwent the extreme penalty of the law. They were executed in the presence of several battalions of soldiers and a large concourse of citizens."¹⁵ "They declined to be seated or to be blindfolded, as was the custom, and took their

¹⁴"General Orders No. 202," *El Nicaraguense*, 11/1/1856, p.4, c.4.

¹⁵"Execution of San Salvador and Guatemala Prisoners," *Ibid.*, p2, cl.

position side by side against the wall . . . Valderraman and Allende, the latter smoking a cigarette, gazed squarely at the raised rifles, and fell without a murmur."¹⁶ Lainé, in Diriomo, had faced the firing squad with these words on his lips: "Men die; Ideas remain."¹⁷

The precious Idea Lainé had in mind, was the liberation of Cuba. The fixed idea in Walker's mind: 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 vanguard of the Jacques Guards, "a compact body of fine looking abled bodied men . . . headed by a band of music, and marching in two companies, commanded by Capt. A. E. Shaw and Lieut. J. H. Hearsey," paraded down the streets of New Orleans on their way to Nicaragua.¹⁸ On the 27th, at 8 a.m., the entire corps sailed for San Juan del

¹⁶Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, p. 130. The two Guatemalan officers were victims No. 9 and 10 killed on direct orders from Walker on that same spot in one year, beginning with Mayorga. Victim No. 8, Lieut. Jennings Estelle, had been executed on September 19 for the murder of a fellow officer in Walker's army. Numbers 2 to 7: Jordan, Corral, Campbell, two deserters, and Salazar.

¹⁷Pérez, *Obras*, p. 276.

¹⁸"For Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 10/24/1856, p.2, c.1.

Norte on the *Tennessee*: 372 recruits organized in six companies under Col. John A. Jacques, "and 100 others."¹⁹

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."²⁰ To insure a steady supply of cannon fodder, he appointed Col. E.J.C. Kewen "Commissioner for the South-western portion of the United States" and Col. Fisher, in connection with him, as "special agent."²¹ 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.²²

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."²³

El Ministro filibustero Wheeler went with Ferrer to Washington. Before leaving Granada, he gathered testimonies on the murders of innocent Americans by the Allied forces on

¹⁹"List of Emigrants to Nicaragua, *N.O. Picayune*, 10/26/56, p.2, c.6.

²⁰"Important from Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, 11/17/1856, p.1, c.1.

²¹"Later from Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 11/12/56, p.1., c.4.

²²Immediately after Walker threw him out, French was one of the speakers at the St. Louis Hotel meeting in New Orleans on April 28, 1856, and was "enthusiastic in his praises of Walker and Nicaragua." Naturally, he tried to use "the name and cause of Nicaragua to put money in his pockets." Walker then published a "Card" in the New Orleans papers, warning that French had no authority to borrow money on the credit of his government. "Affairs in Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 6/26/1856 eve., p.1, c.5; "Financial Operations," *El Nicaraguense*, 7/5/1856, p.4, c.3.

²³"Decrees of the Government," *El Nicaraguense*, 11/1/1856, p.5, c.4.

October 13. He transmitted the affidavits to the State Department on November 1st, in his last dispatch from Nicaragua, and informed 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."²⁴

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."²⁵

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

²⁴Wheeler to Marcy, Granada 11/1/1856, M-219-10, National Archives.

²⁵Ibid. Although dated at "Granada 1st of Nov. 1856," those lines (backed by his enclosure of a Nov. 3d letter from the U.S. Consul at San Juan del Sur) narrate events that occurred after Wheeler had left Granada, and show that he wrote his dispatch somewhere else, at a later date.

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. At 2 p.m. that day, the *Virgin* arrived in Granada with the Jacques Guards from New Orleans and twelve to fifteen recruits from San Francisco. In the afternoon of 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 Gen. Walker's army."²⁶

Including the new arrivals, early in November, 1856, "Walker's army consists of about two thousand fighting men . . . in high spirits and extremely anxious for another engagement with the enemy."²⁷ 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.

²⁶"Arrival of the Sierra Nevada," *Alta*, 11/21/1856, p.2, c.3.

²⁷"Important from Nicaragua, *New York Herald*, 11/17/1856, p.1, c.1.

15. Retreat from Masaya

When the cholera subsided in Costa Rica towards the end of June, 1856, it had killed ten thousand people in two months. Many Costa Ricans blamed the disaster on President Mora's lack of military skill in Rivas, and some began to plot his downfall. He suppressed the threatened rebellion by putting in jail a number of disaffected persons and sending into exile its potential leader, former President José María Castro, and others.

In his Message to the Congress, on August 3d, Mora told his countrymen: "It may soon be necessary to make fresh sacrifices by augmenting the force which is watching our western frontiers. Perhaps the moment is not distant when it will be indispensable for us to join our well tried troops to the army of our allies, who are at present fighting for the common weal."¹ In August, his brother-in-law, Gen. José María Cañas, watched the western frontier at Liberia. On September 22d, Costa Rica adhered to the alliance signed by Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras on July 18; but it sent no troops nor aid to its allies.

Upon receipt of the news that Belloso was marching from León toward Granada, the Congress, on October 10, authorized President Mora "to continue the war against the foreign invaders, in union with the Central American states, allies of Costa Rica, in defense of the independence and the integrity

¹"Interesting from Costa Rica," *El Nicaraguense*, 10/4/1856, p.1, c.2.

of the Central American territory."² The same decree ordered a war loan of seventy-five thousand pesos, to be collected in proportion to their worth from all citizens whose capital exceeded one thousand pesos. A few days later, upon learning that Bellosó had entered Masaya, Mora ordered Cañas to advance with his troops from Liberia into Nicaragua.

Simultaneously, Bellosó sent 300 Leonese under Col. Félix Ramírez from Masaya to Rivas, "to distract the enemy's attention" and to join Cañas.³ Ramírez occupied Rivas on October 30 after a light skirmish with the skeleton filibuster garrison, in which three Americans were wounded. When 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 at 4:30 p.m. 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 same spot where Walker had waited

²Decreto No. 16, Guerra 4602, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

³Félix Ramírez to José María Cañas, Rivas, November 3, 1856; Caja Relaciones 1856, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

for Corral a year earlier.⁴ 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."⁵

Cañas reported that "after two hours of fighting at our forward trenches, defended by one hundred Nicaraguans and twenty-five Costa Rican riflemen, the enemy was forced to precipitately withdraw. I ignore its losses; ours were two dead and eight wounded, all Nicaraguans."⁶ Leaving his men under Sanders' command at Virgin Bay, 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.

El Nicaraguense reported that, on the 12th, "making allowances for all exaggerations," at least fifty of the enemy were slain, but only two Americans were killed and nine were wounded.⁷ Cañas reported fourteen Americans killed and

⁴See Book Three, p. 185.

⁵"Another Triumph of Americans!" *El Nicaraguense*, 11/15/56, p.2, c.1.

⁶"Correo del Ejército," *Boletín Oficial* [San José], 11/19/56, pl, cl.

⁷"Another Triumph of Americans!" The *Picayune* correspondent upped the figure to four killed ("The News from Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 12/11/1856 eve., p.1, c.5).

twenty-seven wounded.⁸ *El Boletín Oficial* stated in San José that the filibusters suffered "heavy casualties, and our losses were only seven killed and four wounded."⁹ Yet, Cañas retreated to Rivas, and, as told by Walker:

. . . Cañas reached Rivas with a force not only thinned by deaths and desertions, but also discouraged and demoralized by defeat. It was evident, therefore, that he could not soon take any measures to trouble the Transit; he could scarce venture to show himself out of the barricades of Rivas. Hence Walker was anxious to return immediately to Granada and again attack Belloso.¹⁰

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, to again attack Belloso in Masaya.

As the troops assembled in the plaza, "Gen. Walker rode about in person, to see that all the commanders were in readiness." They marched on the road to Masaya about nine o'clock in the morning: "They marched off to the sound of spirit-stirring music, and with their banners borne proudly over their heads, presented a very gay appearance." The Rangers in front, followed by the First Rifles; Gen. Walker and his Staff; the pack-mules bearing the ammunition and the Artillery--one mountain howitzer, two mortars, and two cannons; the Sappers and Miners; the Second Rifles; the Second Infantry, "making, in all, an effective force of about

⁸"Correo del Ejército," *Boletín Oficial* [San José], 11/29/56, pl, cl.

⁹"No oficial," *Boletín Oficial* [San José], 11/26/1856, p.1, c.2.

¹⁰Walker, *The War*, p. 307.

530 men."¹¹

Another filibuster eyewitness account said that Walker marched from Granada to Masaya with 700 men. In *The War*, Walker wrote that "the whole strength was about 560 men."¹²

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, which increased his Nicaraguan *Ejército Setentrional* (Legitimist army) to at least 800 men.

A second Salvadoran Division under General Domingo Asturias had made up for previous losses and brought the Salvadoran troops in the city to 1,300. Another Guatemalan Division under General Mariano Paredes was on its way from León, and when Walker was approaching from Granada, at noon on the 15th, Lieut. Col. Joaquín Cabrera entered Masaya with 600 riflemen who brought the Guatemalan troops in the city to a total surpassing 1,500. "Hence, discounting the sick, wounded, and assistants, the effective fighting force defending Masaya exceeded 3,000 men."¹³

Don Dámaso Sousa had sent word to Beloso, on the 14th, about Walker's forthcoming attack, and Beloso prepared to give him a hot reception. To increase the odds against Walker, on the road to Masaya he "ascertained 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--about 225 to

¹¹"Advance on Masaya!" *El Nicaraguense*, 11/22/1856, p.2, c.1.

¹²"Statement of Dr. Derickson," *New York Herald*, 12/16/1856, p.1, c.4; Walker, *The War*, p. 308.

¹³Jerónimo Pérez, *Obras*, p. 278. Pérez was one of the defenders.

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 300 men."¹⁴

Fearing a surprise attack on Granada, Walker 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 cut, on each side of which were scattered small reed huts, in the midst of plantain patches. Belloso placed there four or five hundred men in an ambushade. About 5 p.m., as Walker's army defiled along the road, the Allies, posted in the plantain patches, poured fire into 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, according to *El Nicaraguense*, ten Americans had been killed and forty-five wounded. When activities resumed at dawn, the men detailed to bury the dead "counted fifty-one of the enemy lying on the road side, close to the bodies of the Americans; and from the indications of the bushes and grass close to them, they supposed a much greater number had been killed."¹⁵

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, during the attack of the 12th of October, were also found serviceable."¹⁶

Belloso attempted to encircle Walker: he sent a Guatemalan

¹⁴Walker, *The War*, p. 308.

¹⁵"Advance on Masaya!" *El Nicaraguense*, 11/22/1856, p.2, c.1.

¹⁶Walker, *The War*, p. 311.

division to attack the rear, Nicaraguans on the right flank, and Salvadorans on the left flank, "but the latter failed to appear at the designated point, and Guatemalans and Legitimists were promptly withdrawn."¹⁷ 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 flight continued similarly for three days, ever closer to La Parroquia:

The enemy had been, ever since the former battle, at Masaya, fortifying and strengthening every spot available for a stand; hence, nearly every house was of itself a citadel in miniature, from which it was necessary to drive them before the Americans could take possession. And the very places which our men had formerly gained at the point of the bayonet, had now to be taken in the same manner.¹⁸

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."¹⁹ In addition, Henningsen's mortars and howitzers could not be counted on, because of defective fuses and a short supply of shells.

Hence, during the night, Walker ordered his army to withdraw, leaving behind utter desolation: "The largest and

¹⁷ Pérez, *Obras*, p. 280.

¹⁸ "Advance on Masaya!" *El Nicaraguense*, 11/22/1856, p. 2, c. 1.

¹⁹ Walker, *The War*, p. 312.

most valuable part of the city was destroyed."²⁰ As the Americans passed by where the first fight happened [,] the dead of the enemy remained yet unburied. The stench was almost beyond endurance, and was distinctly perceptible for a distance of nearly five miles."²¹

At dawn on the 19th, the Allied soldiers rushed into the houses last occupied by the filibusters and "mercilessly murdered several foreign soldiers who had not heard the order to withdraw and were still asleep." Throughout the morning:

It was heart-rendering to hear the laments of the families as they came out of the shelters and found their homes reduced to ashes; the whole district, church and all, had been needlessly burned down by the hand of those who called themselves *civilizers* of the country."²²

In *El Nicaraguense*, only three Americans were killed during three days of fighting inside Masaya, for a total of thirteen dead, counting the ten slain in the outskirts of the city on November 15. Other filibuster sources placed American losses at "about twenty killed and forty wounded."²³ In *The War*, Walker admitted that his casualties totalled "nearly a hundred—one third of the whole number which attacked Masaya."²⁴

Gen. Belloso claimed 150 filibusters killed, and explained: "Walker . . . left many dead strewn all over the ground,

²⁰"The News from Nicaragua," *N O Picayune*, 12/11/1856 eve., p.1, c.5.

²¹"Advance on Masaya!"

²²Pérez, *Obras*, p. 280. According to Belloso, 150 houses were burned.

²³"Statement of Dr. Derickson," *New York Herald*, 12/16/56, p.1, c.4.

²⁴Walker, *The War*, p. 312.

besides those he had buried in large, deep mass graves which we found inside the houses, yards and gardens of the city, and carried away numerous wounded."²⁵ He listed 46 Allied dead (8 Salvadorans, 26 Guatemalans and 12 Nicaraguans) and 90 wounded (14, 53 and 23 respectively).

Gen. Paredes, who arrived in Masaya a few hours after the filibusters departed, gave the same figures for Nicaraguan and Salvadoran losses, but listed smaller Guatemalan casualties (23 dead and 45 wounded), and added: "Enemy losses were very large, for we have found fresh graves in every house they occupied, and more than thirty bodies strewn on the ground . . . our friends in Granada tell us that 87 wounded came into the hospital."²⁶

When the Allies tried to pursue the filibusters on the 19th, the latter were already in Granada. Were we to believe Walker's newspaper, they had returned in triumph:

The army which had left Granada on the 15th, re-entered it on the 19th, with a large brass band playing lively airs at their head, their colors flying gaily at their fronts, and, save the indications of having traveled on a muddy road, appeared in as good spirits as when they took their departure.²⁷

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

²⁵ Gen. Ramón Belloso to the Minister of War, (Masaya, Nov. 19, 1856), "Parte Oficial," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 11/27/1856, p.1, c.1.

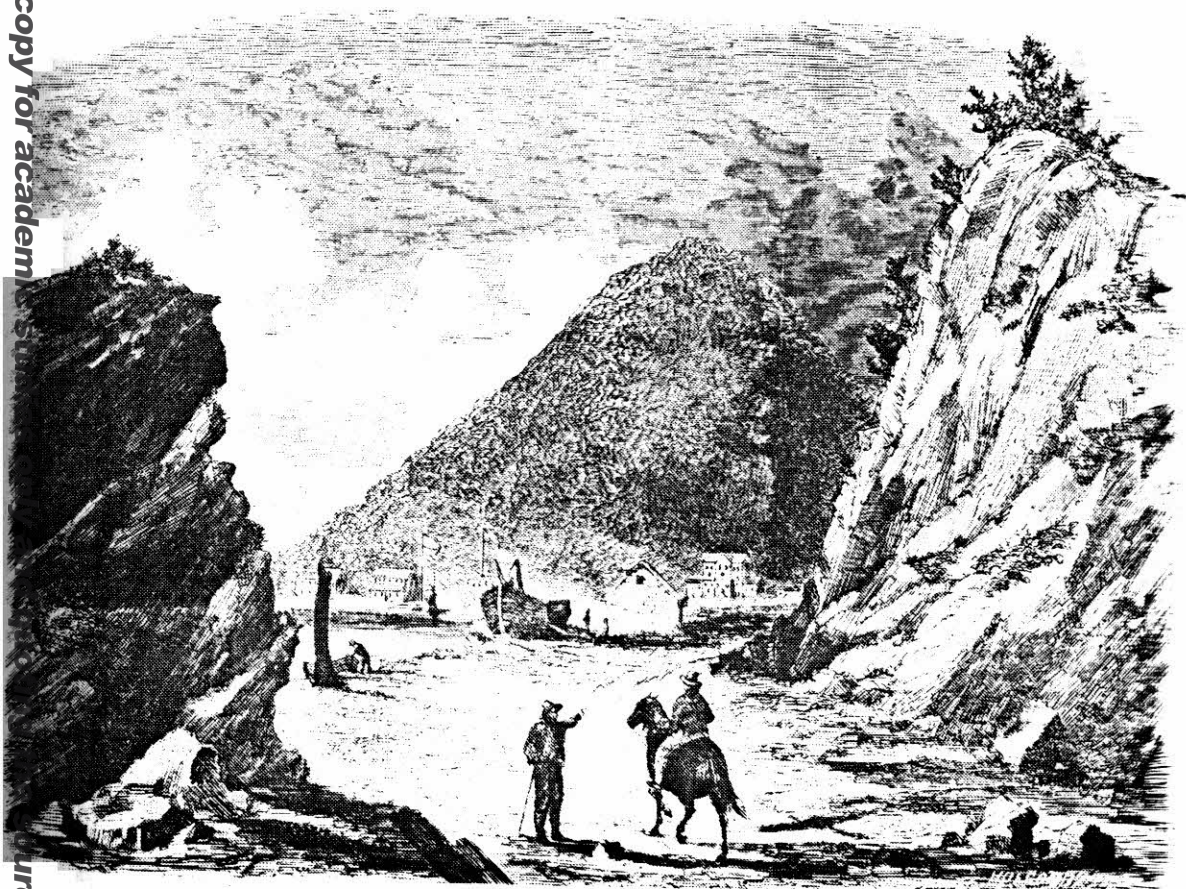
²⁶ Gen. Mariano Paredes to Guatemala's Minister of War, (Masaya, November 20, 1856), Lorenzo Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, (Guatemala: Tipografía La Unión, 1887), p. 682.

²⁷ "Advance on Masaya!" *El Nicaraguense*, 11/22/1856, p.2, c.1.

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."²⁸

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.

²⁸"Our Late Battles," Ibid., p.4, c.1. Again, I must emphasize that whether Walker wrote those words with his own hand, or whether somebody else wrote them for him, may be debated. But it is unquestionable that in its editorials, Walker's official mouthpiece expressed the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny's beliefs.



San Juan del Sur
"Cañas occupied San Juan del Sur" (p. 156)



retreat from Masaya
"and carried away numerous wounded" (p. 163)

16. Timely Naval Victory

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 growing daily scarcer, and the soldiers hardly able to get enough coarse beef to stay the cravings of hunger. The hospital attendants were ill, or withdrawn for military service, and Dr. Brinkerhoff informed me that deaths were in number from ten to fifteen a day; a rate of mortality which in two months would have destroyed the army.¹

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,

¹[James Davenport Whelpley], "A Ranger's Life in Nicaragua," *Harper's Weekly*, March 28, 1857, p. 200.

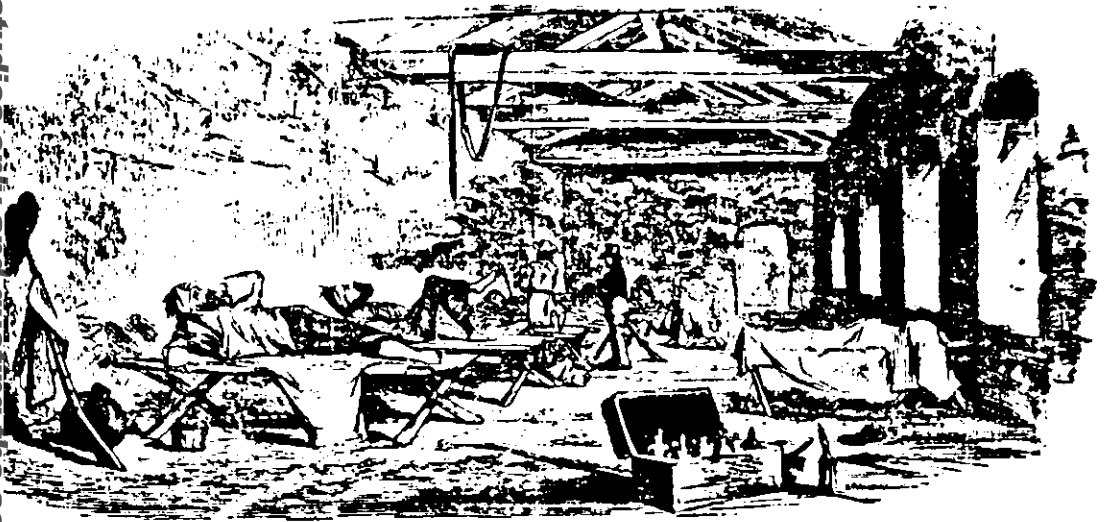
Walker decided to abandon the Oriental Department in order to hold on to his umbilical cord which was the Transit. On the 19th, he ordered the evacuation of Granada. On the 20th, over two hundred Hospital patients filled the two decks of the *Virgin*; at midnight, Walker and his Staff sailed with them 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. Renowned arsonist Kissane carried an order from Walker for Henningsen to burn and destroy Granada.² He landed at 6 o'clock a.m. on the 22d, and handed Henningsen the order.

On the 22d, Henningsen 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."³ The filibusters loaded as much private and public property as they could on the *San Carlos* throughout

²At Moyogalpa, that day, Kissane confided to James D. Whelpley that "he was himself the bearer of an order for the burning of Granada" (Ibid.) Walker chose well, for Kissane had a long relationship with arson. In 1849 he was a clerk in Lott Pugh's pork packing house in Cincinnati when the place burned down; Pugh was left penniless, but clerk Kissane suddenly had money and started a business of his own. When the rival establishment of Mr. Francis Darr also burned down, Darr accused Kissane of arson. Kissane was later indicted for fraud and arson in the 1852 burning of the steamboat *Martha Washington* near Helena, Arkansas. On the eve of his release from Sing Sing, December 7, 1855, a fire (supposed to be the work of an incendiary) destroyed the entire south wing of the prison in the night of December 6 ("The Kissane Case," *Courier-Journal* [Louisville], 4/1/1887, p. 2, c. 1; "City News," *Weekly Enquirer* [Cincinnati], 12/12/1849, p. 3, c. 7; "Another Boat Burned!!" *Vicksburg Weekly Whig*, 1/28/1852, p. 2, c. 2; "Kissane Pardoned--The Ends of Justice Not Subserved," *Daily Enquirer* [Cincinnati], 12/15/1855, p. 1, c. 5; "The Sing Sing Prison Fire," *New York Herald*, 12/8/1855, p. 4, c. 4).

³Pérez, *Obras*, p. 284.



the hospital at Granada
"filled with sick and dying" (p. 167)



landing hospital patients

*"sick, wounded and freight continued on the steamer to
Moyogalpa" (p. 168)*

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:

The troops under his command were assigned to different streets, and they were to simultaneously fire the city at a given signal; then every man was at liberty to pillage and take all he could carry with him to the steamer [*Virgin*] in the morning. 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.⁴

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* to return to Granada in order to evacuate "with the steamer *Virgin* the remainder of the inhabitants of that late town."⁵

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 hold 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

⁴Horace Bell, "Confessions of a Filibuster," *Golden Era* [San Francisco], May 7-Oct. 1, 1876.

⁵"The News from Nicaragua," *N O Picayune*, 12/11/1856 eve., p.1, c.5.

Central America."⁶ 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.⁷

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.⁸ Its captain, Antonio Valle Riestra, had orders "to take possession of the harbor, and to capture willingly or by force all vessels flying the new [Walker's] Nicaraguan flag."⁹

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 hove up anchor and stood out to meet the newcomer; at 5:45, the brig hoisted 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

⁶Guerra 4654, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

⁷Col. Manuel Cañas, Commander at Puntarenas, took possession of the brig on October 20, 1856; the owner, Don Eduardo Beeche, sold it to the Government at San José, on November 14, for five thousand pesos to be paid on installments. (Guerra 4651, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica).

⁸The official list contains 114 names, but ten more riflemen and the chaplain boarded the vessel at the last moment, bringing the total to 125. (Guerra 4789 and 9387, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica).

⁹Antonio Valle Riestra's Statement (San Juan del Sur, January 2, 1857), Item 132, Fayssoux Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane.

wounds, bringing the total of Costa Rican dead to about ninety-five. The *Granada* lost two dead and seven injured. Its foresail had 107 and the main sail 78 shot holes through it.

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 in command, and four others."¹⁰ 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."¹¹

The "Federico Martínez" who Walker kept in the stockade at Virgin Bay, was in fact "Sergeant Major Don Federico Maheit," second in command on the *Once de Abril*. He was an Italian artilleryist, enrolled in the New York contingent sent by the Transit Company against Kinney in July, 1855. 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.¹² On that date, Walker's troops at Virgin Bay "were in a very disorganized condition."¹³ Had the Costa Rican brig

¹⁰"The News from Nicaragua," *N O Picayune*, 12/11/1856 eve., p.1, c.5.

¹¹Walker, *The War*, p. 317.

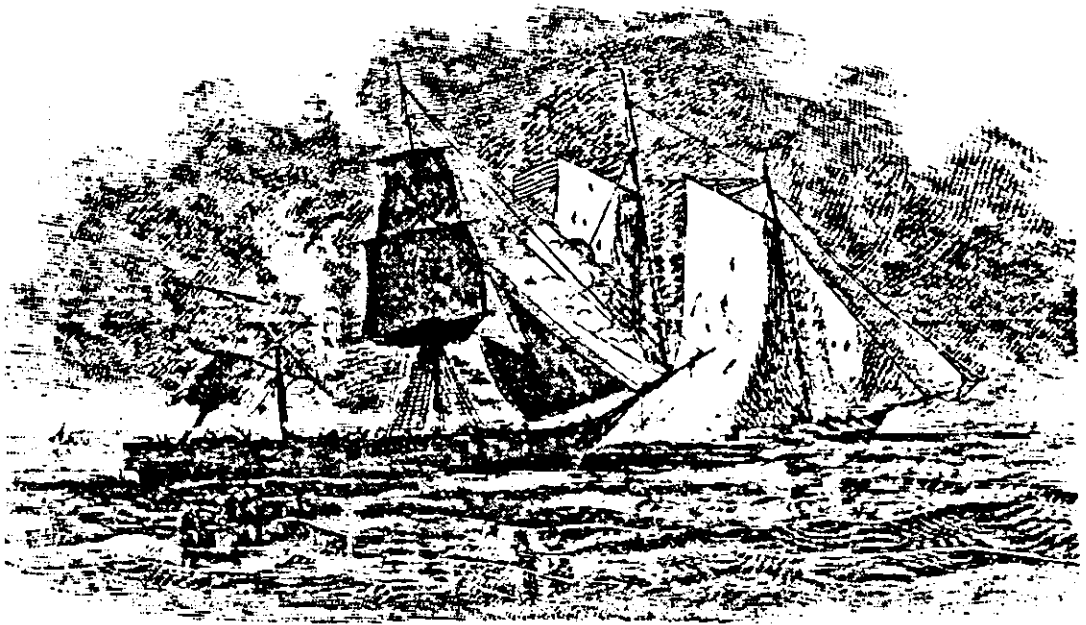
¹²In his Nov. 25 battle report to Cañas, Maheit blamed the disaster on superior enemy ammunition: "Our ammunition of cannon, was ball and grape, but the enemy had the great advantage of having 'red-hot shot' and 'Congreve-rockets' . . . About 8:15 o'clock, we received in our 'Magazine' a red hot shot, which immediately set it on fire. We found it impossible to extinguish it." Item 132, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

¹³Walker, *The War*, p. 315.

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.¹⁴ 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.

¹⁴Item 132, Fayssoux Collection, Latin American Library, Tulane.



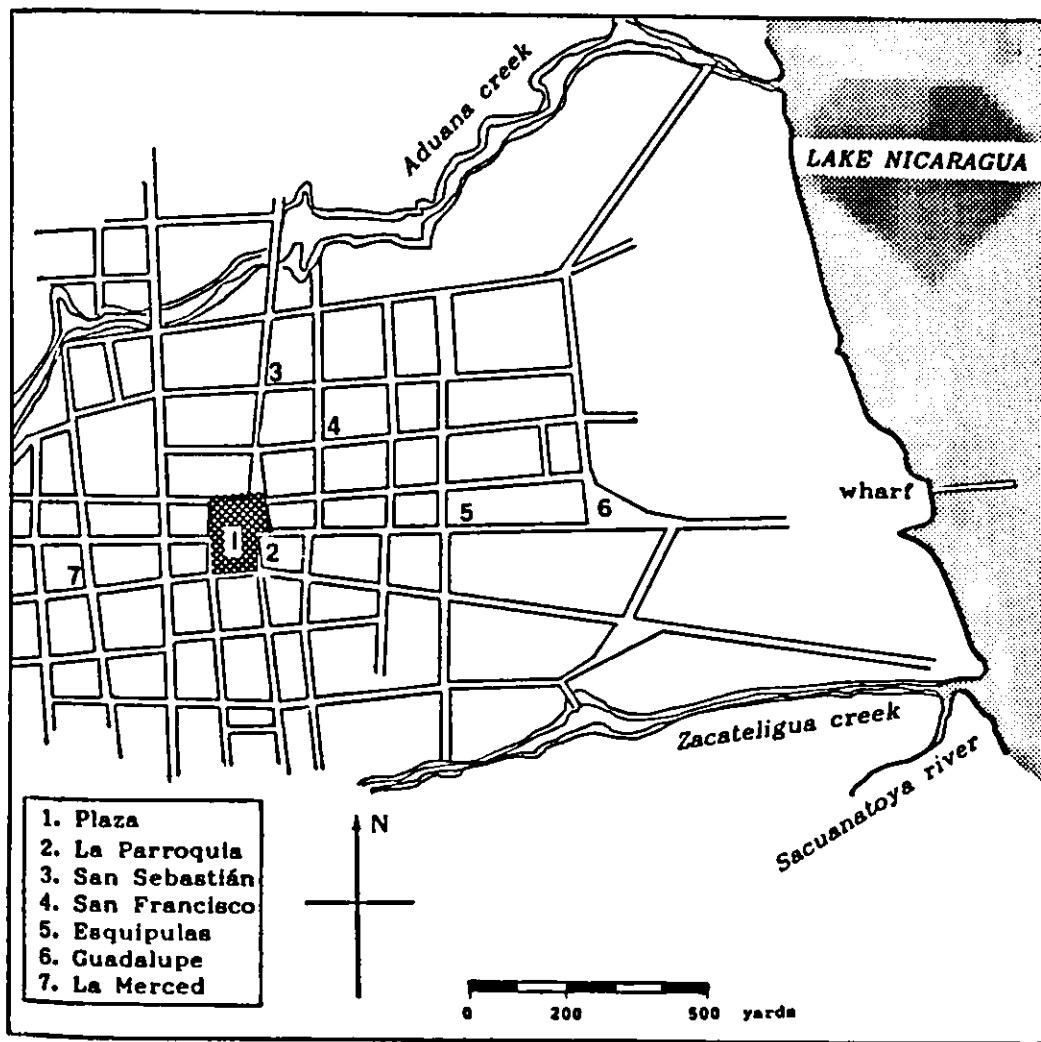
naval battle

*"a shot from the Granada
hit the Once the Abril's magazine" (p. 172)*



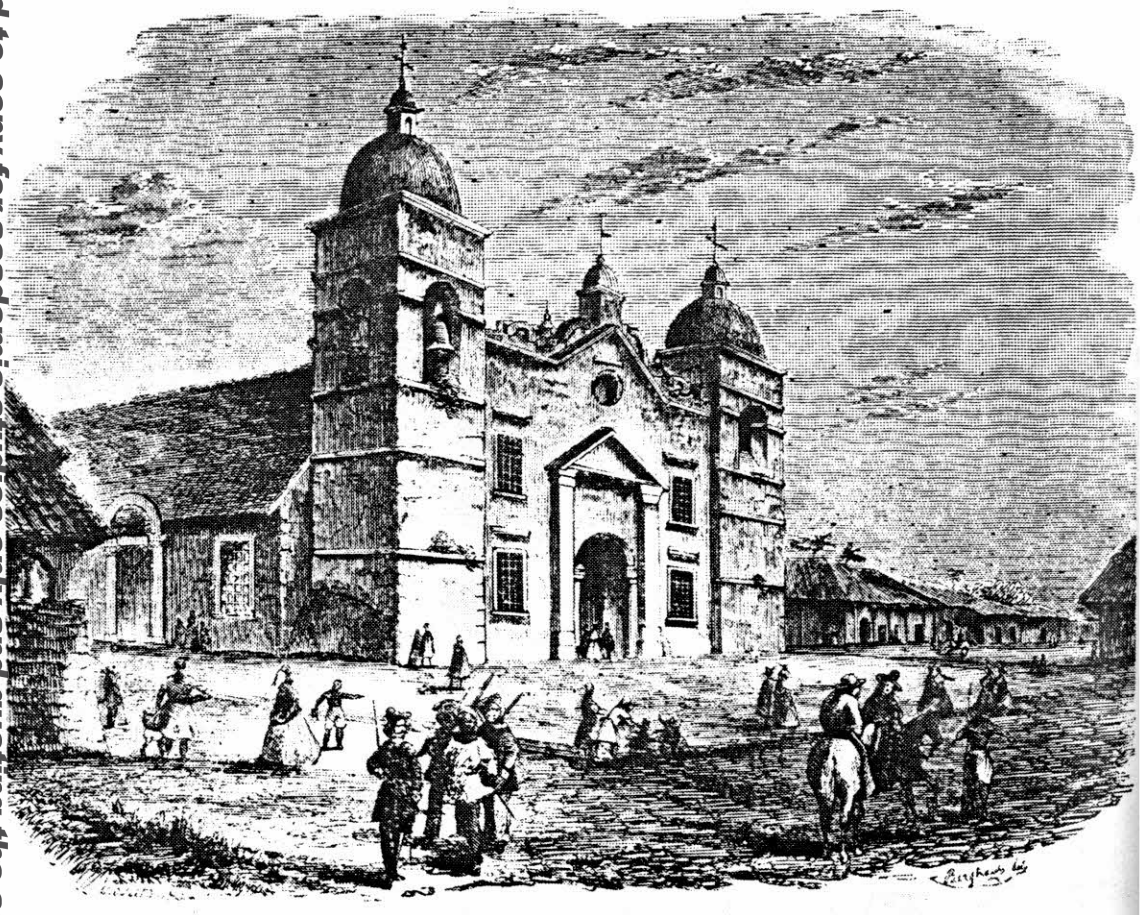
General Henningsen

"Henningsen burned Granada from the suburbs towards the Plaza . . . " (p. 180)



Granada

"Henningsen . . . appended a placard with the words, *Aquí fue Granada*" (p. 191)



La Parroquia

"Henningsen . . . placed two hundred pounds of powder in the northern church tower . . . the tower blew up" (p. 184)



Guadalupe

"Henningsen stopped at Guadalupe . . . " (p. 175)

17. Here Was Granada

Henningsen burned Granada from the suburbs towards the Plaza. He assigned a sector to each company of soldiers: Captains Dolan, McChesney, Ewbanks, Johnson, and O'Regan, took their men to the last limits of the city and set on fire the thatched cottages, adobe houses, and churches on both sides of the streets as they advanced towards the center. Fearing an Allied attack on November 23d, Henningsen built two lines of barricades within the burning perimeter.

In the process of burning, the fillbusters plundered, and "breaking into large stores of wines and brandies," they were soon all drunk.¹ Walker simply called the ensuing scenes, "a wild Bacchanalian revel."² Eyewitnesses described them:

The wildest orgies conceived in a drunken delirium, took place along the streets of the burned city. Some natives who tried to save a few belongings from their burning homes, were cruelly murdered in the streets; they died among merciless shouts of: "Damn you! we have come here for money, and we'll have it!"

People trembled in terror as they fled from the ruins of their dwellings; the cries of maidens raped inside bedrooms, were answered with obscene laughter by the drunks outside; the plaza, filled with women and children begging God's protection; others, cursing the

¹"Official Report of Gen. Henningsen," *New Orleans Picayune*, 1/17/1857, p.1, c.5.

²Walker, *The War*, p. 314.

plunderers; still others, in silent stupor of desperation.

A strange procession then came out the main door of La Parroquia church, while its roof caught in flames: the image of our Saviour, carried on their shoulders by four drunken disciples of the "Great Apostle," with a disorderly mob behind it; some wearing cassocks, others attired in rich liturgical garments, dancing, jumping and turning in fantastic shapes.

The outrageous procession marched with burlesque solemnity to the tavern known as the "Walker House," and there, amidst the shouts and screams of jeering laughter, they celebrated what, in appalling mockery, they styled "Our Lord's Last Supper."³

The last natives fled from Granada that day, as the news spread to the world: "Granada no longer exists! Walker burned it and reduced it to ashes on the 22d when he was forced to abandon it. The poor Nicaraguan families, terrorized, destitute, and homeless, wander almost naked about the countryside, seeking shelter and protection."⁴

Don Dámaso Sousa and don Chico Bravo went to Masaya. Don Chico was accidentally killed on the road, but Sousa gave Bellosa a detailed report of the situation and the Allied commander decided to attack Henningsen immediately. On the 24th, at dawn, the Allied armies marched out of Masaya and Dirlomo, towards Granada.

On Monday, November 24th, Henningsen drew in his lines protecting the Plaza as he burned the surrounding blocks, and detailed men to re-fire those houses in the distance which were only partially consumed. On inspecting his barricades, he found the ones at the Guadalupe church, on

³"Incendio y saqueo de Granada," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 4/22/1857, p.4, c.1.

⁴"Correo del Ejército, *Boletín Oficial* [San José], 12/3/56, p.4, c.3.

the road to the Lake, "very inefficient," and the soldiers, from Captains Hesse and Green on down, all drunk.

Both steamers waited at the wharf, not yet fully loaded. Two big guns taken from the plaza were still on the beach. They were said to be composed of "two and a half parts of silver and two and a half parts gold to five parts copper," and were on their way to the United States, to be recast.⁵ But all the church plate which Kissane had stolen from the seven Granada churches was already safely stored aboard the steamer *Virgin*, and Walker's Honorable *Confiscador General* merrily officiated at another spectacle on the Plaza that day. As told by Infantry Captain Horace Bell, who was then at Virgin Bay, with Walker:

About 9 o'clock in the morning a procession was formed, headed by the Minister aforesaid [Kissane] and followed by about fifty officers dressed in the priestly vestments taken from the churches. A coffin was elaborately ornamented and labeled "Granada," and the procession moved with the image of the Savior carried at the head, followed by the coffin and the bogus priests. They marched around the grand plaza in impious procession, finally deposited the coffin in a grave prepared for it in the centre of the plaza, and erected over it an immense headboard, bearing the same inscription left on the ruins of Carthage by the Roman destroyer: "*Aquí fue Granada!*" When the unholy procession filed away from the grave of Granada, they were met with a volley of musketry. Martínez was upon them!⁶

Martínez and Paredes' Allied forces suddenly appeared about half-past two p.m., simultaneously in two points: above

⁵"The big guns," *El Nicaraguense*, 11/1/1856, p.2, c.1.

⁶Horace Bell, "Confessions of a Filibuster," Chapter 13.

the Jalteva Church and back of the San Francisco Convent. Henningsen's Rifles hurriedly checked them in both fronts, but immediately afterwards a third Allied column attacked and captured the barricades at Guadalupe, and swiftly cut off Henningsen's access to the steamers.

Martínez had advanced outside the northern edge of the city toward the lake; Paredes, along the southern edge; both armies then converged parallel to the lakeshore and occupied Granada's eastern suburb, from Esquipulas to the wharf. The steamers instantly pulled away a mile and a half from the beach, beyond the range of Allied guns, leaving the fillbuster garrison at the foot of the pier completely isolated.

On Tuesday, the 25th, Henningsen erected additional defenses on the east side of the Plaza and down the street to the Esquipulas church, while the Allies occupied San Francisco after fierce house to house fighting. At 11 a.m., the *Virgin* left for Virgin Bay with the passengers and freight it had loaded before the Allied attack. At sunrise next morning, it was back in front of Granada, with Walker on board.

On Wednesday, the 26th, from the steamer, Walker saw "the red-star flag flying on the parochial church, and the smoke of the burning houses constantly rising in new directions." He got in touch with the defenders at the pier. They were "in good spirits, confident of holding the position."⁷ Thus reassured, at 2 p.m. Walker sailed back to Virgin Bay.

Throughout the day, pressed on by the Allies, Henningsen pulled in his defenses. He evacuated and burned all the houses on the plaza except the guardhouse, the Walker House tavern, La Parroquia church, and *El Nicaraguense's* printing office. He then began to move towards the lake: after three attacks, he captured the ruins of the Church of Esquipulas.

⁷ Walker, *The War*, pp. 321-322. In the book, Walker said that he was on the *San Carlos*, but the steamers' logbooks indicate otherwise.

But when he stormed the Guadalupe church, the Allies held on, inflicting heavy losses.

Paredes carried and occupied the fort at the pier that night. He launched a successful raid under the cover of darkness, aided by information gained from two deserters. Six alternating cannon shots from the Guatemalan and Nicaraguan camps served as signals to coordinate the raid. Upon the sixth shot, two hundred Guatemalan soldiers opened fire in front while an iron launch filled with men assaulted from the rear. After a short, sharp fight, the defense crumbled: over half of the twenty-seven man garrison were killed; a few survivors leapt into the water, and the others surrendered.

On Thursday, the 27th, before daybreak, Henningsen evacuated the sick and wounded to a house near Esquipulas and burned the remaining buildings on the plaza. He placed two hundred pounds of powder in the northern church tower and set fire to the nave and then to the houses on both sides of the street as he moved on towards the lake. Within minutes, the Allies entered the Plaza and occupied the barricades between the burning guardhouse and the church; the tower blew up, and fell right on them.

Shortly after noon, Henningsen stormed Guadalupe again. The Allies abandoned it without a fight. Thinking that Henningsen ignored the fall of the fort at the pier, they left his way open to the lake; they expected to catch him in the beach between two fires, and to annihilate him as he rushed to board the steamers. The strategy failed: one of the survivors from the wharf, hiding in the bush, reached Henningsen's camp and reported to him the loss of the fort.

Henningsen stopped at Guadalupe, but ordered Major Henry to advance and occupy the two last huts on the road, in the low ground between the church and the lake. In the afternoon and evening, the Allies attacked Henry's post and

were repelled several times, one of the charges led by a Nicaraguan priest who was shot down. On his body and some twenty more Allied dead in the plantain patch, the filibusters heaped the earth which formed the first barricade of the entrenched camp which they called "Fort Henry." Henningsen recorded the macabre scenes in his report to Walker:

Meanwhile, after entering and closing up in the Guadalupe Church, we found twenty unburied bodies of the Sappers and Green's Company, one charred and with the hands tied, supposed to be Capt. Hesse, ten or twelve unburied bodies of the enemy, and some thirty graves of their men, covered only a few inches with earth, and all killed in the preceding day's attack. Several of our own sick and wounded died.

Our trenching tools, consisting of four picks and twelve spades, were occupied in burying the latter and in entrenching at Fort Henry, so that some sixty bodies, putrefying about us, occasioned a most offensive and dangerous stench. We had several days' rations of flour and plenty of coffee, which I immediately saw the necessity of eking out by slaughtering our mules and horses. On this day (Saturday) we distributed our first rations of horse-meat.⁸

On Friday, the 28th, about 3 o'clock p.m., the Allies sent a flag of truce with a letter signed by Paredes, Belloso, Martínez, and Zavala. They told Henningsen that Walker had been routed at Rivas and Virgin Bay, and reminded him that the Allied troops covering the beach, sealed him off from the steamer. They asked his surrender, offering him and his men

⁸"Official Report of Gen. Henningsen," *New Orleans Picayune*, 1/17/1857, p.1, c.5. Henningsen reported that he occupied Guadalupe on Friday, Nov. 28; other sources indicate that it was on Thursday, Nov. 27. If so, he distributed the first rations of horse-meat on Friday.

full guarantees for their lives as prisoners of war; that they would be well treated and set free, with passports to return home. A crowd of filibuster deserters in the Allied camp accompanied the bearer, a deserter named Price. Holding them off at a distance by threatening to fire if they advanced any further, Henningsen penned the following answer, amidst the shouting of the hostile crowd outside:

To Zavala, Belloso, and the other rebels and pirate leaders whose names I cannot waste time to decipher:

Sirs--I have no parley to hold with men who I know lie. I regret for the good of the cause to be obliged to offer you, that if you lay down your arms in two hours your lives will be spared; if not within six months, I will, in the name of the Government I represent, hang you all as high as Haman. Price, as a traitor, I intend to detain and shoot, but I return one of your prisoners, captured yesterday.

C. F. HENNINGSEN.

Acting in the name of the Commander-in-Chief and President of the Republic of Nicaragua.⁹

As reported by Henningsen to his chief, he read aloud his answer by the sound of the bugle to his men, and "wasted two rounds of valuable ammunition to emphasize my reply, backed by three times three cheers for Gen. William Walker, which the soldiers translated into Uncle Billy." The Allies attacked twice in the afternoon and evening, but on both occasions were driven back with loss. The steamer *San Carlos* then left Granada for Virgin Bay, and at 1 a.m. on the 29th, apprized Walker of Henningsen's advance towards the coast.

⁹ibid. Henningsen then pardoned Price's life on being informed that Price "had a son who had fought bravely, was wounded, and afterwards died in our [Walker's] camp."

Walker instantly boarded the *Virgin*, and at 7 a.m. was back in Granada, watching the operations from the steamer. He could see distinctly Henningsen's camp some three or four hundred yards from the beach. He watched as the Allies attacked again on the 30th, "In the rear and in full force," but only to be repulsed, "with no doubt severe loss, as our troops came to the barricade and waved their flag in token of the enemy's defeat."¹⁰

On Dec. 1st, at 1 p.m., Walker was back in Virgin Bay, checking barricades and bracing for an Allied attack. He had 150 able men to defend the place; the other half of the garrison were in hospital with wounds and fever; provisions were scarce; but Cañas and Jerez remained entrenched in Rivas.

The Ometepe Indians attacked Moyogalpa that night. Over one hundred natives, led by the parish priest, Fr. Francisco Tijerino ("more soldier than clergyman") and armed with a boatload of weapons sent by Cañas from Rivas, raided the village in the darkness.¹¹ Women and children fled in all directions; the hospital patients overfilled the church. When daylight arrived, the filibuster garrison counterattacked, "killing about thirty [Islanders] and driving the balance off, with the loss of only two [Americans] killed."¹²

On the morning of Dec. 2d, Walker was aboard the *Virgin*, on his way to Granada, when he met a launch full of men, women, and children, drifting in the lake. After towing them back to Moyogalpa, and ascertaining the defeat of the natives, Walker arrived in front of Granada at sundown. He remained off the coast next day, watching Henningsen complete the

¹⁰"The News from Nicaragua," *N O Picayune*, 12/11/1856 eve., p.1, c.5.

¹¹Pérez, *Obras*, p. 293.

¹²"The News from Nicaragua," *N.O. Picayune*, 1/16/1857, p.1, c.5.

lines of his entrenched Fort Henry camp in the two huts, close to a creek, midway between Guadalupe and the lake.

An epidemic had broken out in the church: thirty cases of cholera, of whom twenty died. Henningsen had removed his heavy guns and his sick and wounded to where they could get good air and water. But the cholera had spread to the Allied camp, killing Gen. Paredes that day. Guatemalan corpses, thrown down the creek, nurtured the pestilence. The atmosphere was fearfully contaminated; the stench of dead bodies could be smelled on board of Walker's steamboat.

Walker left Granada on Dec. 3d at 8 p.m. Stopping for a couple of hours to check the situation at Moyogalpa, he landed at Virgin Bay at 6 a.m. on the 4th. The *Orizaba* had arrived at San Juan del Sur, and the passengers from California had crossed the Transit road the day before.

Upon arrival in New York, one of the passengers described Walker's soldiers at Virgin Bay as "the most wretched, emaciated, sickly looking body of men I have ever seen assembled." As for their chief, a filibuster Army surgeon remarked that "Walker appears to be in good spirits, or rather, you cannot tell anything about him, for he is always as cold as ice, not feeling the loss of his dearest friends."¹³

Walker's spirits brightened just then on account of seventy recruits brought by the *Orizaba* from San Francisco, thirty by the *Texas* from New York, and 250 by the *Tennessee* from New Orleans: 350 healthy soldiers, besides large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and provisions. On Dec. 4th and 5th he moved his headquarters to San Jorge: most of his men walked the distance; the *Virgin* brought the stores and the sick and wounded from Virgin Bay and Moyogalpa.

On Dec. 7th, at 6 a.m., the *San Carlos* arrived at San Jorge with the recruits from New Orleans; at 6 p.m., the *Virgin* left

¹³"Nicaragua," *New York Tribune*, 12/17/1856, p.6, c.3.

San Jorge with Gen. Sanders and troops, bound for Granada. Stopping for wood at Ometepe, the *Virgin* arrived in front of Henningsen's camp at 10 p.m. on Dec. 8th.

Henningsen had dug a deep trench connecting Guadalupe with Fort Henry, and both sides had thrown up innumerable barricades and breastworks. In daily skirmishing, inching their way towards the shore, the filibusters had thrown up a ditch and breastwork, supported by a small redoubt forty yards from the Lake, within two hundred yards south of the wharf. On Dec. 8th, Zavala sent another flag of truce, inviting Henningsen to parley. Henningsen's answer: "that I would hold no parley except at the cannon's mouth."¹⁴

Early in the morning on Dec. 9th, Sanders appraised the situation from the steamer; "he was altogether unable to communicate with the lake shore," and at 10 a.m. departed to report to Walker at San Jorge.¹⁵ At 8 o'clock a.m. on Dec. 11th, the *Virgin* was back in Granada, with Walker and troops on board. Henningsen was then touching the shore, with two lines of Allied barricades hemming him in. That day he slaughtered and distributed his own horse, and the last dog but one in the camp. That only left the mule of Major Henry, the horse of Major Caycee, and Walker's horse.

During the day, Walker observed from the steamer the Allied defenses and strength, while keeping his men carefully concealed in the lower part of the vessel. In the evening, the *Virgin*, quietly and with all her lights covered, moved about three miles up the lake, to the point where Walker had landed when he captured Granada a year earlier. Between nine and ten o'clock p.m., 170 men--elite Rangers and fresh troops from New Orleans--under Lieut. Col. John P. Waters, went

¹⁴"Official Report of Gen. Henningsen."

¹⁵Walker, *The War*, p. 335; steamer *Virgin* logbook.

ashore under fire from an Allied picket, and before midnight they were marching toward Granada.

They met and took an Allied barricade half a mile from the landing place, killing twenty and wounding forty Nicaraguans. They killed a few more in light skirmishes before they reached the "Coal Pits," three-fourths of a mile from the wharf. There they met Martínez with 500 men, including 200 Hondurans under Gen. Florencio Xatruch, who had arrived in Granada a few hours earlier.

The filibusters routed them: the Allied soldiers "looked quite formidable in the moonlight," but "the Americans, dressed in black and firing rifles and revolvers, overmatched the Central Americans dressed in white cotton and armed with flintlock muskets; the latter lit up each time they fired, and the former didn't miss a shot."¹⁶

Pushing on, Waters approached Martínez's headquarters at Las Pilitas, in the northeastern corner of the city. Finding the barricades more formidable than either of the two already passed, he flanked them on the right. But Beloso had withdrawn his Salvadoran forces and was retreating toward Masaya. Martínez had been almost blinded by poison ivy that had brushed his face at the Coal Pits. Unable to control his men overcome with terror, he retreated to Jalteva, leaving the way open for Waters to reach Henningsen and for the latter to reach the steamer. As a last resort, Martínez ordered his men to set the fort and the landing on fire, hoping to hinder the evacuation of the filibusters' heavy artillery.

Shortly after 5 a.m. on December 12th, Waters arrived at Forts Henningsen (Guadalupe) and Henry, the *Virgin* sent a boat to the shore, and the embarkation commenced. At 5 a.m. on the 13th, all the ordnance, stores, artillery, ammunition,

¹⁶"Official Report of Col. Waters," *New Orleans Picayune*, 1/17/1857, p.2, c.2.; Pérez, *Obras*, p. 295.

soldiers and civilians had been embarked, and the *Virgin* sailed away from the ruins of Granada. At leaving, Henningsen stuck up on a lance to which he appended a placard with the words "*Aquí fue Granada*"--"Here was Granada."

In his report to Walker, Henningsen wrote: "Your orders were to destroy Granada, and to evacuate the place with all the ordnance, stores, artillery, sick soldiers, and American and native families. Your order has been obeyed--Granada has ceased to exist."¹⁷ The ruthless operations decreed by the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny on the capital of Nicaragua had come to an end, but they left indelible impressions which Kissane recorded, many years later, in a letter to a friend:

My experience in the siege of Granada for ever keeps rising in my mind, and that fearful stench from our dead put under a few inches of clay within a few steps of our camp, for situated as we were we could do no better. The stench from it in that damp, hot atmosphere was overpowering. I can't think now how we stood it for those 22 days. It was Hell from end to end, that is all there was to it.¹⁸

In his report, Waters mentioned fourteen killed and thirty wounded out of 170 men in his command. Of the 419 under Henningsen when the Allies attacked Granada on November 24th, "120 died of cholera and typhus, 110 were killed or wounded, nearly 40 deserted, and 2 were made prisoners."¹⁹

Zavala placed American casualties at "370 dead, from the beginning of the siege; caused both by our bullets and by

¹⁷"Official Report of Gen. Henningsen."

¹⁸William K. Rogers to James C. Jamison (Berkeley, February 3, 1910), C-D 5012, Bancroft Library.

¹⁹Walker, *The War*, p. 339.

illness. They evacuated sick and wounded in considerable numbers. I hold a multitude of prisoners, some of them injured, others healthy, and I have ordered that they be treated with the benevolence that their situation merits."²⁰

Henningsen reported that the Allied forces numbered about 2,800 men, including reinforcements, but that their strength never surpassed the 1,200 to 1,500 men they had at the start of the attack, and on the day of evacuation. He estimated Allied casualties at 200 killed and 600 wounded, besides large losses from cholera, pestilence, and desertion.

Allied Generals Belioso, Zavala, and Martínez, each sent a separate dispatch to the Minister of War on Dec. 13-15, but nobody tallied Allied casualties. Up to December 6, Martínez had counted forty-two killed and sixty-five wounded in the forces under his command; adding other Allied casualties, and subsequent losses, Henningsen's estimate seems about right.

On top of all the losses, the Allied armies suffered a grievous lack of unity which Central American historians have pointed out as the chief cause of their debacle in Granada. Belioso accused Zavala and Martínez of insubordination, and abandoned the flight, in chagrin: on Dec. 12th he withdrew his Salvadoran troops to Masaya; on the 13th he recalled Jerez from Rivas and told Cañas to go back to Costa Rica.

Cañas and Jerez evacuated Rivas early in the morning on the 16th, and together joined Belioso at Masaya. Zavala went to Diriomo. Martínez remained in the ruins of Granada.

Walker, Henningsen, and Waters, touching at Moyogaipa, landed at San Jorge at 5 p.m. on the 13th. On learning of Cañas' withdrawal, on the 16th, Walker ordered the army to march upon Rivas. The same day all the companies, with flags flying, were marching out of San Jorge, except for the Second Infantry under Col. Jacques, left to garrison the lake port.

²⁰ Zavala to the Minister of War, Granada 12/13/56, Montúfar, p. 729.



Moyogalpa
the drill on the Plaza
"the Americans took possession of the village" (p. 168)



Moyogalpa

house of alcalde

"the natives fled on their approach" (p. 168)

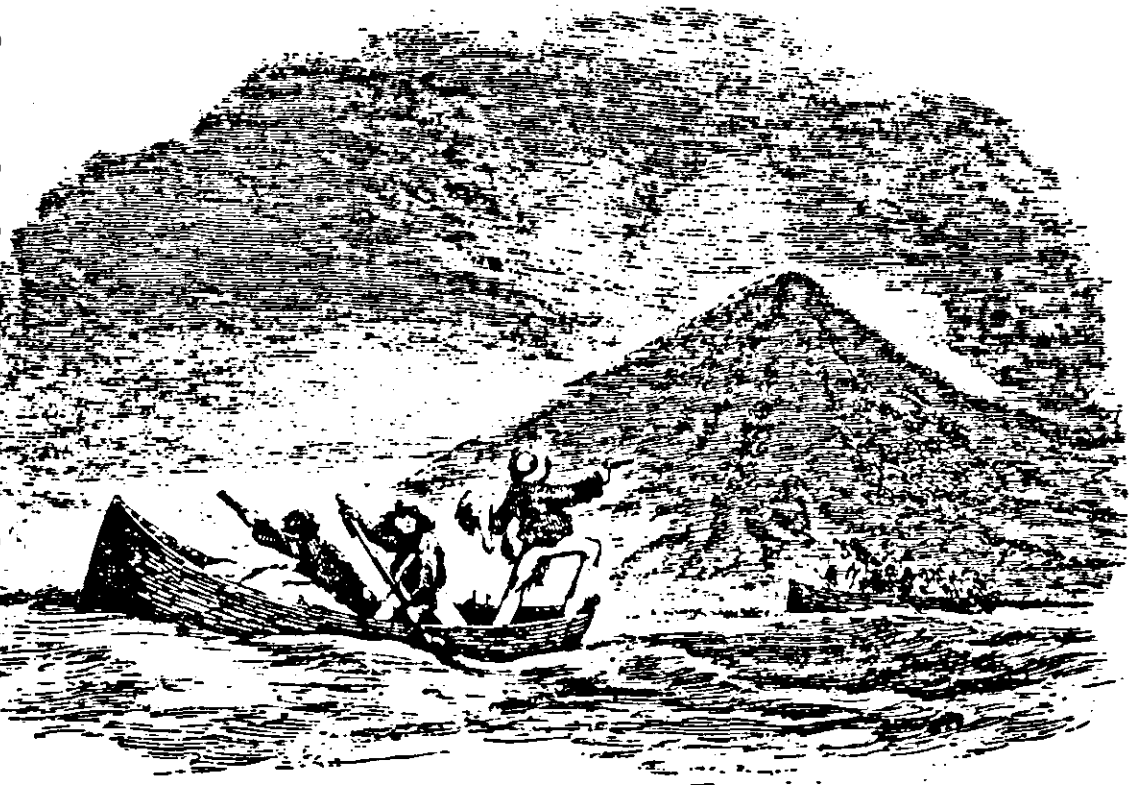


the ration house
"provisions were scarce" (p. 187)



night attack

"women and children fled in all directions" (p. 178)



escape

*"he met a launch full of men, women, and children, drifting
in the lake" (p. 187)*

18. Vanderbilt's Revenge

Capt. Charles Rakirlewicz, suspected Vanderbilt agent, died of the fever in Granada in mid-October, 1856, while still protesting his innocence before the court martial which cashiered him from Walker's army. Vanderbilt's friend, Don Domingo de Goicouría, was stricken from the rolls of the army on October 19, and he in turn severed all connections with Walker on the 25th. The Cuban not only disapproved of Walker's "retrograde step . . . re-establishing slavery in Nicaragua," but strongly resented Walker's refusal "to re-establish a connection with the ancient Transit Company," that is to say, with Vanderbilt. He warned Walker:

The injury you have already done yourself by your act towards the company, the evils you have suffered, which still you are suffering, and which threaten you with suffering hereafter, are so manifest that the mere mention of all these things will be sufficient for my justification when the mist which now blinds your eyes shall have disappeared.

You have shut your eyes, however, to truth; whether it is that you look upon yourself as divinely infallible in all you do, and are determined to pursue your course at all hazards, or whether it is that a third party has filled your mind with false suggestions, leading you to suspect the loyalty and faithfulness of my conduct, which has been in perfect harmony with my former services. But as it is, I cannot now in any way whatever continue my

connection with you.¹

Don Domingo was then fitting out an expedition of his own, allegedly for Walker, but without his knowledge, obviously for the benefit of Vanderbilt. In October he engaged the steamship *Suwannee*, late *Pampero*, to carry recruits from Texas to New Orleans. Early in November, he chartered the steamer *El Dorado* to take one thousand men from New Orleans to Central America. But John P. Heiss had learned during his visit to Nicaragua, in September, that Walker didn't regard Goicouría as a friend. Heiss saw Don Domingo as Vanderbilt's agent, and knew that the expedition was hostile to Walker. He spoke to Morgan and to the owners of *El Dorado*, and stopped the operation.

Chagrined, Goicouría gave to the *New York Herald* his correspondence with Walker--an exposé which made the headlines on November 21st and subsequent days. In particular, the following letter from Walker to Goicouría created a sensation:

Granada, Aug. 12, 1856.

My Dear General:

I send your credentials for Great Britain by General Cazeneuve. . . .

With your versatility, and if I may use the term, adaptability, I expect much to be done in England. You can do more than any American could possibly accomplish, because you can make the British cabinet see that we are not engaged in any scheme of annexation. You can make them see that the only way to cut the expanding and expansive democracy of the North, is by a powerful and compact Southern federation, based on military principles.

¹Goicouría to Walker (NY 10/25/56), *NY Herald*, 11/21/1856, p.1, c.5.

It is needless for me to impress you with the importance of this mission: for you, no doubt, feel it as deeply as I do.

I hope to hear from you every mail. Can you not make --- --- write me a letter? Tell --- --- he must send me the news, and let me know whether "Cuba must and shall be free," but not for the Yankees. Oh, no! that fine country is not fit for those barbarous Yankees. What would such a psalm singing set do in the island?

Remember me to your family, and believe me, yours,
sincerely, WM. WALKER.²

Walker's friends were pressing for Don Fermín Ferrer's recognition in Washington. When President Pierce decided against it, the press reported that Goicouría's disclosures had influenced his decision. Randolph was so angry for the exposure of his financial deals with the Transit, that he challenged Don Domingo to a duel. They agreed on the weapons: pistols. But his illness had made Randolph an invalid, unable to walk without assistance. He insisted that "the distance shall not exceed six paces," and the duel was postponed indefinitely when Goicouría refused to accept such murderous "distance and mode."³

Shortly before Christmas, the *Herald* revealed that it had "the positive assurance of Goicouría that Vanderbilt promised him aid to the amount of \$250,000, and the use of his steamships, in an attempt to get the control of the Transit route through Nicaragua."⁴ Other press reports named the steamer *Falcon* as the vessel being fitted for the expedition. Vanderbilt then issued a manifesto to the Transit Company stock-

²"More Nicaragua Revelations," *New York Herald*, 11/24/1856, p.1, c.1.

³"The News," *New York Herald*, 11/25/1856, p.4, c.1.

⁴"The News," *New York Herald*, 12/22/1856, p.4, c.1.

holders, announcing that "present appearances indicate a realization of my hopes that the company will be speedily restored to their rights, franchises and property upon the Isthmus of Nicaragua."⁵

The New York papers then revealed that Vanderbilt had sent an agent, "Mr. Webster, an Englishman, formerly resident at St. Petersburg," to negotiate a \$500,000 loan with Costa Rica, "to be used in exterminating Walker from Nicaragua--after which the Commodore is to have the right of transit over the old Nicaragua route."⁶ The *Herald*, in fun, remarked that, with Vanderbilt's loan, Costa Rica intended to establish "a magnificent steam navy, and has purchased and is now fitting out here the *Falcon* as the pioneer ship."⁷ But the *Falcon* turned out to be a red herring, while the Webster mission was the crushing blow for Walker.

William Robert Clifford Webster was a man of many names who told a different story to each acquaintance. To some he was W. Clifford; to others, W. R. C. Webster; or Simpson; or Waters; or Brown; or any number of aliases. To one, he was a Russian merchant; to another, a businessman in Paris; the owner of salt works in Chester, England; or of copper mines in Mentz; but everywhere he went, under any name, he was also known as "a scamp . . . a *chevalier d'industrie*, a fraudulent debtor, a swindler and a forger."⁸

He had arrived in New York in the fall of 1855, having stolen \$1,200 and three pianos from an office in Antwerp. He shipped the pianos with a false bill of lading in the name of

⁵"The Nicaragua Transit Route," *New York Herald*, 12/25/56, p.1, c.3.

⁶"Commercial Matters," *New York Tribune*, 12/31/1856, p.8, c.3.

⁷"The Filibustering Complications in Central America," *New York Herald*, 1/12/1857, p.4, c.3.

⁸"The Nicaragua Transit Route," *New York Herald*, 9/4/1857, p.1, c.3.

Waters, endorsed to Brown and then to Webster: he was, of course, Webster, Waters, and Brown, all in one. As soon as he landed, he swindled a firm in New York. He was later arrested for fraud in Baltimore, and again for swindle. Out on bail, he absconded to Canada and then to Louisiana, and committed fraud and/or forgery in both places.

Released from jail in New Orleans, in May, 1856, he decamped in the *Minnie Schiffer* to Nicaragua as a filibuster. In Granada, "putting an air of a diplomatist," he offered to supply Walker with immigrants, but the latter didn't trust him and rejected his offer. Webster left Granada in a great hurry, at the point of being arrested "for some swindle he practiced on Minister Wheeler."⁹ Finally, during his short residence in San Juan del Norte, he "left a very unfavorable impression behind him."¹⁰

In August he was back in New York, registered under the name W. Clifford at the Westchester House, in the Bowery. He then put in operation a plan developed in conjunction with a sailor who worked for the Transit Company in Nicaragua: Sylvanus M. Spencer, the mate on the San Juan river's *Machuca* steamboat.

Spencer was "a Yankee, active and shrewd": "a rather tall and not very stout man, with blue eyes and light chestnut hair, a prominent nose, high forehead and a piercing look which is at the same time frank and open. His lips are thin and finely set; were it not for these, one would be inclined to think him a dreamer." Another acquaintance added that he was forty years old, has "the air of a sailor . . . speaks like a Bostonian, and uses very emphatic language, well spiced

⁹"Latest from Nicaragua," *New York Tribune*, 2/28/1857, p.6, c.4.

¹⁰"Newspaper Accounts," *New York Herald*, 2/22/1857, p.1, c.3.

with good strong adjectives."¹¹

In 1855, Spencer was first mate on the American clipper ship *Sea Witch*, sailing from New York to Hong Kong to take a cargo of coolies for Panama. On June 5, the captain of the ship was murdered in the high sea and Spencer was indicted as the murderer. He was tried at the U.S. District Court in New York, but because of inconclusive evidence he was acquitted by the jury on December 22, 1855. He then went to Nicaragua, where he worked as longshoreman in San Juan del Norte before becoming the mate on the *Machuca*.

Spencer claimed that he owned \$40,000 worth of Transit Company stock, inherited from an uncle, and that Walker had robbed him of all his property when he annulled the charter and confiscated the steamers. His knowledge of the river allowed him to devise a daring plan to get it back and get revenge. He went to New York, proposed it to Vanderbilt, and the latter accepted it. The Commodore promised him that "he would pay all expenses, and that their stock would be alright when Walker was exterminated."¹²

On October 2d, at the Office of the Accessory Transit Company in New York, President Cornelius Vanderbilt and Secretary Isaac C. Lea issued a notarized Power of Attorney to "Capt. S. M. Spencer, . . . to take possession of all the steamers and other property belonging to this Company on lake Nicaragua, the river San Juan and other rivers tributary thereto, and to retain the same in safe keeping until further instructed by this Company."¹³

¹¹"The Passage of the River," *New York Tribune*, 1/26/1857, p.6, c.5; "Trial of Sylvanus M. Spencer for the Murder of Capt. Frazier," *Ibid*, 12/22/1855, p.7, c.4; "The Emigration to Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, 1/29/1857, p.1, c.1.

¹²"Statement of Captain Kruger," *N Y Herald*, 1/26/1857, p.1, c.1.

¹³Manuscript, Caja Relaciones 1856, Archivo Nacional, San José, C.R.

Spencer's plan needed the help of Costa Rica, so Vanderbilt put him in contact with Costa Rican envoy Don Luis Molina, in Washington. By then, Webster had joined Spencer and concocted a great plan of his own to cash in on the sailor's undertaking. With his usual skill, Webster secured for himself, from Molina, a very valuable letter of introduction to President Mora.

Webster and Spencer travelled together on a Vanderbilt steamer from New York to Aspinwall, and on a chartered small boat from Panama to Puntarenas. Upon arrival at San José, on November 23, 1856, they requested an interview with President Mora. Mr. Young Anderson, an Englishman, resident in Costa Rica, served as interpreter at the meetings. Anderson then became Webster's secretary and afterwards revealed the details of the negotiations:

Webster . . . said he was possessed of large pecuniary means in England and America, and mines in Germany; boasted of his acquaintance with Lord Clarendon; hinted at his being a confidential agent, (he had previously asserted to Mr. Perry, British consul at Panama, that he was a secret agent of the British government,) and approached President Mora with a mysterious proposition, in which he said the vital interests, the very existence of Costa Rica were involved.

. . . He offered to the President a loan of \$800,000 (for a million of Costa Rican bonds at 7 per cent per annum) to drive Walker from Nicaragua. He said he (not Spencer, who, however, had brought him from New York at his own expense, to negotiate) had "concocted" the plan to capture the steamers, for which he stipulated a reward of \$125,000.¹⁴

¹⁴"Mr. Young Anderson's Exposition," *N Y Herald*, 9/4/1857, p.1, c.2.

President Mora immediately granted Webster "a concession for 75 years of the Nicaragua Transit route." Webster got "all he wanted, on his own terms," except for "one little thing," which President Mora exacted as a *sine qua non* at the time of signing the contract. At his peremptory request, Webster counter assigned to a newly formed Costa Rican "Land Transportation Company" the exclusive privilege of land transit from Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific. The Costa Rican shareholders were thereby "entitled to receive for ten years heavy and highly profitable tolls from the Transit Company to be formed by Webster," and President Mora generously presented Anderson "with a share of the assignment."¹⁵

But the loan to Costa Rica was a mirage, for Webster never had any money of his own. In San José he lived on funds borrowed from various persons, on grandiloquent assurances and promises. He got \$8,000 from a Costa Rican capitalist through a Vanderbilt letter of credit for \$100,000, which turned out to be a forgery. The Commodore not only refused to pay the bill, but denied ever having met Webster; he maintained that "he did not know him, and did not wish to know any such G--d d--d rascal."¹⁶

Vanderbilt's agent, Spencer, had brought no money for Costa Rica, either. However, he had brought his skill for capturing the river and lake steamers, which would win the war. President Mora instantly approved Spencer's plan and set it in motion. When he signed at San José the one million dollar loan agreement with Webster, on December 4, 1856, the Vanguard Column to the San Juan River had already left the capital.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

19. Costa Rica Wins the War

Walker's river defenses consisted of sixty-four soldiers in two posts: twenty-four men under Capt. Charles W. Kruger at Fort San Carlos, on the lake, and forty men under Capt. Frank A. Thompson at Hipp's Point, at the Sarapiquí-San Juan river junction.

The Costa Rican Vanguard column consisted of 250 men under Lieut. Col. Don Pedro Barillier and Sergeant Major Don Máximo Blanco. On December 3, at 8 a.m., they marched from San José toward Sarapiquí; but on sealed instructions from President Mora, which Blanco opened along the way, they proceeded to the San Carlos river instead.

Spencer and an interpreter, Don Joaquín Fernández, joined the expedition on December 9 at the head of navigation on the San Carlos. Capt. George F. Cauty (son of Col. Thomas Henry Horatio Cauty, an Englishman resident in Costa Rica) was in charge of building rafts and boats. George was qualified for the job: in 1853, he had built the steamer *Flor de los Andes* for the Río Grande in the Gulf of Nicoya.

On December 14, Spencer, Fernández, and seven men went on the first boat down river, as lookouts at the San Carlos-San Juan river junction. The others followed later in rafts and on foot, and arrived at the junction at one p.m. on the 20th, except for a few that lagged behind. Spencer then ordered Barillier to take possession of the steamers' woodshed and landing place, half a mile down river, but the colonel refused to obey him. Blanco, (complying with Mora's secret instructions), thereupon heeded Spencer's command

and occupied the shed.

As they waited in ambush, two of their rafts cut adrift on the San Juan. The steamboat *Scott* was then approaching from Greytown; but it didn't stop at the San Carlos woodshed, and Spencer "was not willing to attack her [while cruising], as he was afraid she might get away and give the alarm."¹

On arrival at Castillo, the boat's captain reported that he had seen "two large empty rafts between the Sarapiquí and the San Carlos rivers, which he looked on as suspicious."² Nobody did anything about it. The *Scott* landed its heavy cargo of munitions sent by George Law to Gen. Henningsen on the bark *Governor Hubbard*, just in from New York.³ The *Ogden* took them to Change Bend, to the steamer *Virgin* which arrived from Virgin Bay at 7 a.m. on the 21st.

The passengers on the *Virgin* went to Castillo; among them, Lieut. Col. William Kissane Rogers, on his way to Greytown to buy Col. Kinney's press to replace *El Nicaraguense's*, lost in the siege of Granada, in order to publish the paper in Rivas; also Lieut. Col. Lockridge, on a recruiting mission to New Orleans, and Don Emillo Thomas. They proceeded down river the same day, on the *Wheeler*.

On passing the mouth of the San Carlos river, they saw a raft with men on it coming down, which satisfied them that the Costa Ricans were in the vicinity. Captain Thomas Townsend, of the *Wheeler*, thought it prudent not to stop, but at Hipp's point he told Captain F. A. Thompson what they had

¹Captain Harris' Diary, James C. Andrews' manuscript collection. (Harris, mate on the *Scott*, was afterwards appointed captain by Spencer).

²"The News from Nicaragua," *N.O. Picayune*, 1/16/1857, p.1, c.5.

³The shipment included 2 cannons, 6 boxes of ammunition, 17 boxes of bombshells, 100,000 cartridges, 300 flasks of gunpowder, and 400 Minié rifles. "From Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 2/13/1857 eve., p.1, c.5.

seen, and the *Wheeler* continued towards Greytown.

The Costa Ricans advanced down the San Juan river that day, stopping for the night at the Copalchí creek, three miles short of Hipp's Point. Next morning, the 22d, they landed one mile above the filibuster post, marched through the jungle, and attacked from the rear, divided in four columns. They caught the filibusters at lunch, entirely by surprise, for Thompson had negligently failed to post pickets or take any precautions when he received timely notice of the enemy's presence in the vicinity.

Blanco's men killed nine filibusters on the spot, and captured two wounded, one of them Thompson. The other thirty jumped into the river; six of them eventually reached Greytown; the remainder drowned or were shot on attempting to flee. Costa Rican losses: none killed, two wounded.

Leaving Barillier with thirty men at Hipp's Point, Blanco, Spencer and the rest sailed for San Juan del Norte at sundown. Their five rafts and/or canoes slid quietly into the bay at 2 o'clock in the morning on the 23d. Spencer immediately took the two American prisoners to a British warship lying in the harbor, to get their wounds attended to; he presented to the captain his power from Vanderbilt, and delivered dispatches from President Mora to the Commodore (Captain John E. Erskine, of the *Orion*), commanding the British squadron in port.

At dawn, directed by Spencer, the Costa Rican soldiers surprised and took possession of the four Transit Company riverboats in the harbor: the *Wheeler*, *Morgan*, *Machuca* and *Bulwer*. Transit Company agent Joseph N. Scott then rallied his employees and organized an armed squad to retake them. But three British gunboats, manned each with thirty sailors and one six-pounder, were posted in such a position as to completely command the Transit Company's buildings. The British captain warned Scott that he would tolerate no

violence, and Spencer was allowed to take away the four river steamers, unmolested.

Some Transit Company sailors agreed to work for the Costa Ricans, but others didn't. Forced to hire new hands for the boats, Spencer faced problems due to inexperienced crews. Two of the steamers, when cast off, drifted over on the Greytown shore, needing the assistance of British chains and anchors in order to sail. Once in the river, the *Wheeler* and *Machuca* suffered serious damage through mismanagement on crossing rapids and had to be abandoned at Hipps' Point.

On December 26th, the *Bulwer* ascended the San Carlos river to ferry reinforcements expected from Costa Rica, while Spencer took Blanco's troops, on the *Morgan*, to Castillo. As Walker had no garrison there, the Costa Ricans captured the post and the *Scott*, at anchor, without meeting any resistance.

The *Ogden* and *Virgin* were at Change Bend, a few miles upriver. Spencer made the Company agent, Mr. Hutchinson, under pain of death in case of refusal, write an order to Captain Charles Mahoney, of the *Ogden*, to bring his boat to Castillo. A Nicaraguan courier carried the order on foot.

When the *Ogden* docked at Castillo on the 27th, the Costa Rican soldiers, hiding in a warehouse, threw the doors open and marched on board. Spencer compelled Mahoney and crew to take the steamer back to Change Bend. Captain Thomas Bunker, of the *Virgin*, on seeing the *Ogden* approach with Mahoney and his crew, didn't have the least suspicion of anything wrong until Spencer and the Costa Ricans stepped on board his boat and seized it, too.

On the 28th, Spencer returned to Castillo. On the 29th, and again on the 30th, he went on the *Scott* to the San Carlos river, looking for the *Bulwer* with the reinforcements, without finding them. But the *Scott* could venture only three miles upriver, because the San Carlos was "very bad, shoal [shoal]

and full of snags."⁴

Spencer could wait no longer and decided to capture Fort San Carlos with the force at his disposal. His ultimate goal was to gain possession of the vessel *San Carlos*, the larger and faster lake steamer, due in a couple of days from Virgin Bay with the California passengers. Its possession would give the Costa Ricans mastery of the Lake, and cut off Walker from the river. Deprived of the *San Carlos*, the filibusters were doomed in Rivas. In order to surprise and hold the ship, Spencer thought it prudent first to secure the fort.

At sundown on the 30th, he took Blanco's 200 soldiers on the *Virgin*, towards the lake. About 10 p.m., Captains Jesús Alvarado, George Cauty and Francisco Quirós, and Lieutenants Francisco Echandi and Dionisio Jiménez landed with forty men just out of sight from the fortress.⁵ The steamer went on to moor at the regular spot, exchanging the signals, as usual when approaching in the night, that all was alright. Captain Kruger, commander at the fort, narrates what happened next:

I, in company with a boat's crew, put off to board the steamer, as is generally the case, to receive orders, send despatches to headquarters, (Rivas,) &c.

When I went alongside the steamer Mr. Spencer said, "Is that you, Captain Kruger?" I said, "Yes." He then told me to come aboard, and asked, "Don't you know me?" I said, "No." When I came on board I was surrounded by at least one hundred Costa Ricans, who before were crouched behind the bulwarks.

Mr. Spencer then told me that I must surrender, as

⁴Capt. Harris' Diary. Harris then observed and recorded: "The officers and soldiers of the Costa Rican army treat us all with respect and pay for all they get at the Hotels."

⁵"El Diario del Mayor Máximo Blanco," Angelita García Peña, *Documentos para la historia . . .*, p. 102. Other sources place the number at 70 or 100 men.

it was impossible to hold out against the overwhelming forces he had. I then asked leave for my First Lieutenant to go on shore, but was refused unless I first signed the surrender of the fort. Mr. Spencer then told me (when I hesitated) that the innocent blood of my men would fall on my head, as we would certainly be put to death by the Costa Ricans.

On seeing the determination of Mr. Spencer and his superior force, and not being able to parley or make time till I could send despatches to Rivas, a distance of one hundred and twenty-five miles, I concluded to surrender the fort.⁶

Blanco's soldiers occupied the fort. Spencer held Kruger and his men prisoners on board the *Virgin* for one day; he then sent them on a bongo to Castillo as the long-awaited reinforcements began to pour in from Costa Rica.

General José Joaquín Mora had marched from San José at the head of the main Expeditionary Army on December 15. His "Army of Operations" consisted of "two Infantry divisions, one artillery brigade, sappers and miners . . . each division made up of two battallions, each battalion of two companies, and each company of one hundred men."⁷ Upon arrival at the San Carlos river landing, on December 22d, Mora had 600 soldiers, most of them raw recruits from Alajuela. Altogether, "about 3,000 Costa Ricans were then marching on the river."⁸

Held back in shallow waters, the *Bulwer* waited several miles upstream. Rafts had to be built. On the 27th, the first Costa Rican float drifted towards the steamer. The soldiers on the raft, frightened by the noise and appearance of such a

⁶"Operations on the San Juan," *New York Herald*, 1/26/1857, p.1, c.1.

⁷Guerra 4357, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

⁸Guerra 4654, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

boat as they had never before seen, plunged into the water and five of them drowned in their efforts to reach the shore.

Hindered by such mishaps and delays, cruising slowly down-river on the *Bulwer*, and then on the *Morgan*, Mora reached Castillo on December 31st. He took 400 men to Fort San Carlos the same evening; aboard the *Virgin*, he seized "147 boxes belonging to the Nicaragua [Walker] Government, marked W & CFH [Walker & Henningsen] and also the arms belonging to the steamer."⁹

Mora mounted four new twelve-inch guns at the fort, distributed over 400 Minié rifles to his soldiers, and placed three smaller guns with 70 artillerymen and riflemen on the *Virgin*. By the New Year, as new waves of filibusters headed for Nicaragua on Transit Company ocean steamers, Spencer had given Costa Rica firm possession of the river and was ready to receive them.

On January 2d, the *Sierra Nevada* landed at San Juan del Sur about 400 passengers from San Francisco, of whom 75 or 80 were Walker recruits; also a large supply of provisions, which included 500 sacks of flour for his army. The recruits went to Rivas, while the passengers boarded the *San Carlos* at Virgin Bay together with a number of sick and wounded filibuster army officers going to the United States on leave; with them travelled the last five Cuban body guards, under Captain Manuel Pineda, who were then leaving Walker.

The steamer *San Carlos*' capture "was effected with the same consummate dexterity which has characterized all Spencer's proceedings."¹⁰ As it approached Fort San Carlos, about 10 o'clock a.m., on the 3d, Walker's flag waved on the fort. They exchanged the usual signals. Dr. Hardcastle and

⁹Steamer *Virgin*'s log.

¹⁰"English Account of the War in Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, 2/23/1857, p.8, c.2.

Lieut. Tyler, attached to the post, went on shore, and the steamer started down the river San Juan.

One mile downstream, Spencer with one hundred Costa Rican soldiers waited in the *Ogden*, lying close to the bank of the river, partly concealed by the bushes. He sent a message ostensibly to inform the captain of the *San Carlos* that he was detained by engine trouble, but really to ascertain whether he was likely to meet with formidable resistance. Finding that, with the exception of 30 sick and wounded filibusters, there were only Californians anxious to reach their destination on board, he ran his steamer alongside, and, to the astonishment of the passengers, informed them that he, together with fifty Costa Ricans, would be their escort to Greytown.

The *Ogden* took the passengers to Castillo, where they boarded the *Scott* next morning. Mr. I. C. Harris (Charles Morgan's son-in-law) and Transit Company agent Charles J. Macdonald were among them. Spencer warned them "that if he found them in conversation with passengers or trying to create a revolt he should put them under guard and take them to San José." Counting Kruger and his men, there were about fifty filibusters on board, guarded by seventy-five armed Costa Ricans and three pieces of cannon. Spencer placed them "aft on the lower deck, fully loaded and pointing forward so as to be able to sweep the deck." When landing at Greytown, late in the afternoon, he placed the cannons "so as to be able to sweep the dock."¹¹

Spencer had scarcely landed his passengers when he saw the *Texas* arriving from New Orleans. Knowing that it was bringing large reinforcements to Walker, he lost no time in preparing his escape up the river. Before doing so, however, he determined to ascertain the amount of the force, and crossing over to Point Arenas anchored in shoal water within

¹¹Captain Harris' diary.

200 yards of the ocean steamer.

On board the *Texas*, 250 armed men in the utmost excitement were making preparations to capture the *Scott*. The pilot had informed them as they crossed the bar of the state of affairs, and they knew that unless they got hold of the river craft, all chance of reaching Walker was hopeless. They had just decided on their plan of action when Spencer's boat got up steam and vanished slowly into the river at the head of the bay.

On January 6th, Spencer left the *Scott* at Hipps' Point and went up the Sarapiquí river in a canoe, to collect his reward from Webster and President Mora at San José. But Webster was no longer there. Upon receipt of the news of the capture of the river steamers, he had given President Mora and his Cabinet "an elegant banquet," (all expenses paid with money "borrowed" from Costa Ricans). At the happy gathering, he had made a speech, translated to the company by Anderson, assuring the President "that nothing should be lacking in the way of money and supplies to enable him to carry on the war successfully against Walker."¹² He then left for the States, to sell his Costa Rican Transit grant to the highest bidder. Accompanied by his secretary, Young Anderson, he boarded the steamer *Columbus* at Puntarenas on Jan. 6, and arrived in New York on the *Illinois*, from Aspinwall, on the 28th.

Spencer reported to President Mora in San José, and the latter sent him back to the river, on Jan. 16th, "to organize an expedition to San Juan del Norte in order to sweep away all filibusters from the Transit."¹³ Spencer went to General José Joaquín Mora's headquarters to get the troops for the expedition. But on arrival at Fort San Carlos, on February

¹²"Affairs in Central America," *N O Picayune*, 1/31/57 eve., p.1, c.5.

¹³Guerra 8876, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

1st, the General had gone on a Lake steamer towards San Jorge. Upon his return a few days later, he dismissed Spencer from the service and sent him back to San José. General Mora explained why in a letter to the Minister of War:

. . . Spencer came to ask me for men for this injudicious attack [against San Juan del Norte]. I cannot possibly take away troops from this fort, which is our last and secure resource for the success of our enterprise . . .

On my refusal to give him the troops, Spencer demanded that the steamers should be shut up in the San Carlos river, the mouth of which would soon be dry. This operation would not only deprive us of their use for our service, but also place them into the hands of the enemy, in the unfortunate case of losing Hipps' Point. Consequently, I openly opposed the operation. He goes to Costa Rica to see what success he may have with His Excellency, the President.

There is no doubt that Spencer has served us well, but I must warn you that the soldiers detest him, and suspect him of having assisted to liberate us from Walker for the purpose of selling us to others. This is probably unjust, and I know well that we must treat him with gratitude and politeness, not only in recognition of his services, but to oblige him to continue to serve us. I therefore beg you to keep him away from the army, because as a military man he can be of no use to us; and during the days that he was in the fort, when I was away on my second expedition to San Jorge, he committed outrages upon sentinels, insulted chiefs and officers, and created, in fact, such disorder that had I not returned soon some accident might have happened.¹⁴

Spencer went back to Costa Rica via Tortuga, on the

¹⁴ Guerra 9272, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

southeastern lake shore; the new route utilized by Mora as the San Carlos river was not navigable during the dry season. The Yankee sailor was no longer useful and hence was discarded after he had given Costa Rica firm control of the Nicaraguan river and lake. Thanks to the steamers captured by Spencer, General José Joaquín Mora at his Fort San Carlos headquarters suddenly became kingpin in the war against Walker, since Costa Rica ruled sovereign from Hipps' Point to Granada

Mora buttressed Hipps' Point with two big guns and 420 men under Sergeant Major Máximo Blanco. He gave the command of the Castillo garrison to Captain Faustino Montes de Oca. He placed all lake and river steamers under the control of Captain George F. Cauty. He served notice that "any individual of the Army or Marine whether a native or foreigner who shall manifest tendencies by word or deed in favor of the bandit William Walker shall be shot without mercy." And he ordered steamer skippers "that if any of the crew & officers on the steamer were not satisfied to remain on board and do their work, to cut off their heads & throw them over board and he would bear the consequence."¹⁵

On January 16, Mora went to Granada on the *San Carlos*. The Allied camp was in total disarray: Belloso had retreated to León, leaving General Indalecio Cordero with 125 Salvadoran soldiers in Masaya; Cañas and Jerez were in Jinotepe, hoping to raise an army of 1,000 men; Zavala with 400 Guatemalans stayed in Niquinohomo; Xatruch with 100 Hondurans, in Diriá; Martínez and Fernando Chamorro with 300 Nicaraguans, in the ruins of Granada.

Chamorro, Martínez, Cañas, and Zavala conferred with Mora on board the steamer and arranged a plan of operations for a combined assault on San Jorge and Virgin Bay. They offered

¹⁵ *Steamer Virgin's Log*, (January 6; February 6, 1857).

Mora the post of Commander-in-Chief, but he declined, and Xatruch assumed it at Nandaime on January 23d, when the Allied army was on the move. Besides setting in motion the final onslaught against Walker, Mora reinforced Cañas with 150 riflemen, and would reinforce him again later.

He also sent fifty muskets to the Nicaraguan patriots in Chontales, who had organized to supply his army as soon as they heard that Costa Rica had captured Fort San Carlos. Likewise the patriots in Ometepe, headed by the priest, received the Costa Rican liberators with open arms when they arrived aboard the steamers *Virgin* and *San Carlos*. As perceived by Cañas and communicated to Mora: "The government, Jerez, and all influential Nicaraguans are so grateful to Costa Rica, that they will accept anything I may propose in order to please Costa Rica and to tighten bonds with her."¹⁶

Much fighting yet lay ahead, but everybody knew that, with the capture of the steamers, Costa Rica had won the war.

¹⁶ Guerra 9271, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

20. The Door Is Locked

On December 23, 1856, numerous carts, loaded with boxes and barrels, said to be filled with provisions for Walker, were discharged in a steady stream on the *Tennessee*, at the foot of Beach street in New York. Many of the boxes, sent by William L. Cazneau, were marked "Bread--To the care of General William Walker." Since the filibusters needed revolvers as well as biscuits, the *Herald* surmised that the "bread" was likely destined, not only for "human food," but likewise for "human destruction."¹

The steamer sailed on the 24th, with about 300 recruits for Walker and over \$2,000 worth of provisions on board. But on meeting a gale in the evening it wound up in Norfolk with a broken shaft. The *James Adger* replaced it, sailing from New York on the 30th and from Norfolk on January 1st, with forty recruits for Walker under Gen. Chatham Roberdeau Wheat, the freight, and the California passengers of the *Tennessee*. The remainder of the recruits had marched back to New York, dispersed, and disappeared.

Upon arrival at San Juan on January 9, Wheat's contingent joined the 250 men brought by the *Texas* from New Orleans a few days earlier. At the Transit Company terminal across the bay from San Juan del Norte, Captain Joseph N. Scott was then hurriedly repairing the hull of a wrecked steamboat, the *Clayton*, and the boiler and machinery of another wreck, the *J. L. White*. Putting the pieces together, he patched up a

¹"The Nicaragua Movement," *New York Herald*, 12/24/1856, p.8, c.1.

vessel which the filibusters called *Rescue*. On January 23d, they sailed on it up the San Juan river under Col. Lockridge and set camp at the clearing around the ranch of a poor Indian named Petako, six miles below Hipps' Point.

The steamship *Texas* sailed from New Orleans on January 28, with reinforcements for Walker under the command of Col. Henry T. Titus. The fully organized military contingent numbered at least 250 armed men (some sources say 264, or 420). They carried artillery besides plenty of munitions and provisions. Col. Titus was married to a rich Southern lady, was the owner of slaves, and loved notoriety. He was "a Pro-Slavery man throughout," who had been "a filibuster all his life." He had gone with López to Cuba in 1851, and had gained recognition as the leading "Border-Ruffian filibuster" in Kansas in 1856.²

The *Texas* arrived at San Juan on February 4th. As soon as it anchored, the *Rescue* came alongside, took Col. Titus's command on board, and sailed up the river to reinforce Lockridge at Petako's ranch. On the 6th, the filibusters attacked the Costa Ricans at Hipps' Point. The 420-man Costa Rican garrison, counting with heavy artillery, would have seemed adequate to hold the post, had it not been decimated by disease and desertions. In his February 9th report to General Mora, Sergeant Major Máximo Blanco vividly painted the sorry plight of the defenders:

. . . It is impossible to stop desertion; all the men flee, leaving only the sick at the post. I send a squad on a scouting mission, and nobody returns: they all disappear into the jungle . . . these soldiers are terribly frightened, and since they are men who have never held a rifle, they know even less about duty. At the report of the

²"Later from Kansas," *New York Tribune*, 12/5/1856, p.6, c.1; "Titus," *Ibid*, 12/15/1857, p.7, c.2.

enemy artillery, they fall face down on the mud. I don't know what to do to keep at least enough men to take care of the sick . . . The situation at this post is extremely sad; all I see is long faces, afraid of bullets. I am ashamed and pained, General, on seeing the type of men I must lead into battle. Of the officers, no more than five are good. . . . My situation is sad indeed.³

Blanco evacuated Hipps' Point during the night of the 13th, retreating with the remnants of his force along the Sarapiquí, all the way to San José. Before leaving the post, he threw his heavy cannons into the river. At sunrise next morning, the filibusters took possession of Hipps' Point and threw into the river thirteen Costa Rican dead, left unburied by Blanco.

Hearing that the Costa Ricans had but a trifling force at Castillo, Titus moved on immediately to take it. On the 15th, he took three companies, amounting to about 160 men, up the river. He landed his troops next morning a mile and a half below the rapids, and marched overland to the rear of the fortress. He divided his men into two columns, to attack from different directions.

Captain Faustino Montes de Oca's garrison at Castillo numbered about twenty-five to thirty men. Captain George F. Cauty, commander of the steamers, was in the fort, with the *Machuca* and *Scott* moored below the rapids. Cauty had taken the precaution of besmearing the boats with tar, ready to be set on fire at a moment's notice.

As soon as the Costa Ricans received intimation of the filibusters' approach, on February 16, they set fire to the boats and to the buildings on the strip of land under the fort. The *Machuca* was a total loss, but Titus managed to save

³Sergeant Major Máximo Blanco to Gen. José Joaquín Mora, La Trinidad [Hipps' Point], 2/9/1857, Guerra 4763, Archivo Nacional, San José, C.R.

the *Scott*: "men having volunteered for the purpose, swam in to her and cut her loose, under a perfect hurricane of grape and canister shot, fired from the castle which frowned down upon them. She soon drifted off down the stream, out of range of their guns."⁴ The land assault on Castillo failed, with the Costa Ricans inflicting heavy casualties on the filibusters while suffering two dead and two wounded.

Titus laid siege, and on the 18th sent a flag of truce which led to an interview with Cauty, demanding the surrender of the fort. The Englishman asked for an armistice of twenty-four hours in order to communicate with Gen. Mora at Fort San Carlos. Titus granted it, while Montes de Oca wrote an urgent message, calling for reinforcements: his garrison was reduced to twenty men, including the sick, and they were running out of munitions and provisions.

On the 19th, fifty Costa Rican riflemen sent by Mora from Fort San Carlos, landed above Castillo, surprised the filibusters from the rear, and routed them. The Americans retreated to the San Carlos river junction. Having lost the confidence and respect of his men, Titus left, via Panama, to join Walker in Rivas. Lockridge waited at San Juan del Norte for additional recruits from the States; specifically from New Orleans, since he could expect nothing from New York.

In New York, on January 26, the *James Adger* had brought the news of the capture of the steamers and the closing of the Nicaragua route by Costa Rica. On the 28th, U.S. District Attorney John McKeon ordered the arrest of J. W. Fabens and other prominent filibusters in town, for violation of the neutrality laws. Despite the arrests, the *Tennessee* sailed on the 29th with sixty recruits under Col. George B. Hall and Capt. J. Egbert Farnum [Farnham]. On their arrival at San Juan, on February 8, they were of little use for Lockridge,

⁴"Additional from Nicaragua, *New York Herald*, 4/4/1857, p.1, c.4.

though, because "a few of these are good men, but the majority of them not worth the trouble of bringing out."⁵

On its next trip, the *Tennessee* sailed from New York on February 25 and arrived at San Juan on March 7, without recruits. Following the detention of Fabens, the "Nicaragua agency" had ceased shipping "emigrants." At the wharf, "many persons presented themselves as passengers with tickets procured elsewhere than from the owners of the ship, and they were refused a passage."⁶

Morgan & Garrison then stopped running the Nicaragua line. Since Costa Rica had closed the transit in December, the Nicaragua steamers from New York had taken their California passengers to Aspinwall after landing the Walker recruits at San Juan. On its last trip, the *Tennessee* sailed from New York on March 23d, touched at San Juan on April 2d, and delivered its California passengers at Aspinwall on the 4th.

In New Orleans, nobody interfered with the filibusters. On March 11, the *Texas* left port with 145 recruits for Walker, headed by General C. C. Hornsby, Major W. C. Capers, and Captain Marcellus French. On their arrival at San Juan, on March 18, they were said to be "the greater part old Texans, of the right stripe for settling and civilizing," and hence would be "of great service in opening the transit . . . determined to help in whipping the Costa Ricans on the river, so as to be able to go and select their lands."⁷

On the 21st of March, the *Scott* and *Rescue* took the recruits up the river and landed them at Machuca Rapids, twelve miles below Castillo. On the 23d and subsequent days

⁵"Arrival of the Texas," *N.O. Picayune*, 2/18/1857 eve., p.1, c.5.

⁶"The steamship Tennessee," *New Orleans Picayune*, 3/4/1857, p.3, c.2.

⁷"Additional from Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, 4/4/1857, p.1, c.4.

the steamers took the troops which had been stationed at the mouth of the Sarapiquí river (Hipps' Point) and at the mouth of the river San Carlos (called Fort Slatter by the filibusters), together with their provisions and ammunition, and landed them also at Machuca. Lockridge's entire force of 400 men, had about 300 fit for duty. Among them were oldtimers like Capt. Julius DeBrissot, Capt. L. Norvell Walker, and Lieut. Col. Charles W. Doubleday.

"Commodore" DeBrissot could not get the *Scott* over the Machuca rapids, while the *Rescue* had to be lightened of all weight to cross. The men, provisions, ammunition, and artillery went over on bungoes. On the 28th, all 300 able bodied filibusters were finally aboard the *Rescue*, cruising above Machuca, on their way to attack Castillo. They landed upon the right bank of the river, about one mile below the fort.

The filibusters advanced to within fifty yards of the Costa Rican positions. They found the Costa Ricans had fortified Nelson's hill, 250 yards in the rear of the castle, with strong breastworks, ditches, several large guns and 500 men.

Early on the morning of the 30th, Lockridge held a council of war with his officers, presided by Gen. Wheat. Lockridge told them that he had received a letter from the head of Nicaragua affairs in New Orleans, stating that he should expect no more steamers, emigrants, or provisions, from New York or New Orleans. Lockridge estimated that it would cost about 100 men to capture the Castle; but since the *Scott* could not cross above the Machuca rapids, nor the *Rescue* over the Castillo rapids, even if they took the Fort they would not be any better off than they then were. Without a steamer above Castillo, they could never reach Walker in Rivas.

The filibuster council of war unanimously decided to go to Walker via Panama. They retreated without making an attack on Castillo, abandoning all hope of opening the river. On April

2nd, they were back on the *Scott* and the *Rescue*, cruising downstream toward San Juan.

About a mile above Hipps' Point an explosion burst the boiler of the *Scott*, carrying away all the upper deck, the larboard wheelhouse, and a portion of the bow of the boat. Many filibusters on the second deck were blown into the river, and one or two were blown on to the shore. Altogether, sixty were killed and twenty-five injured. The survivors described the horrible scene:

The groans of the wounded were heart piercing . . . I was lying there among the wounded . . . some of whom ran about the boat after the explosion with the skin of their arms and hands hanging in strips, shrieking and groaning and begging to be put out of misery.⁸

The cause of the explosion was unexplained, but several eyewitnesses believed that it was "caused by some miscreant, who threw a flask of powder into the furnace. It is not known who it was. We know it must have been powder, from the fact of the faces of the wounded being a great deal blackened with powder. We had at least two tons of powder on board the *Scott*, but not a bit of it was disturbed by the explosion. The side of the boiler must have been first blown in, and the steam did the rest of the damage."⁹

A story soon spread in the Costa Rican camp, that Captain George F. Cauty, commander of the Costa Rican lake-and-river navy, "had filled the wood in Hollenbeck's woodshed with powder; that the boat with the filibusters had wooded there;

⁸"Arrival of the *Tennessee*," *New York Herald*, 4/17/1857, p.10, c.1.

⁹"Statement of Orderly Sergeant George W. Sites, of Philadelphia," *New York Herald*, 4/17/1857, p.10, c.1.

that when they used the wood it blew up the boiler."¹⁰ The only problem with the story is that it blew up the wrong boat, for the *Rescue* was the only filibuster vessel that came near the Hollenbeck woodshed, at Castillo.

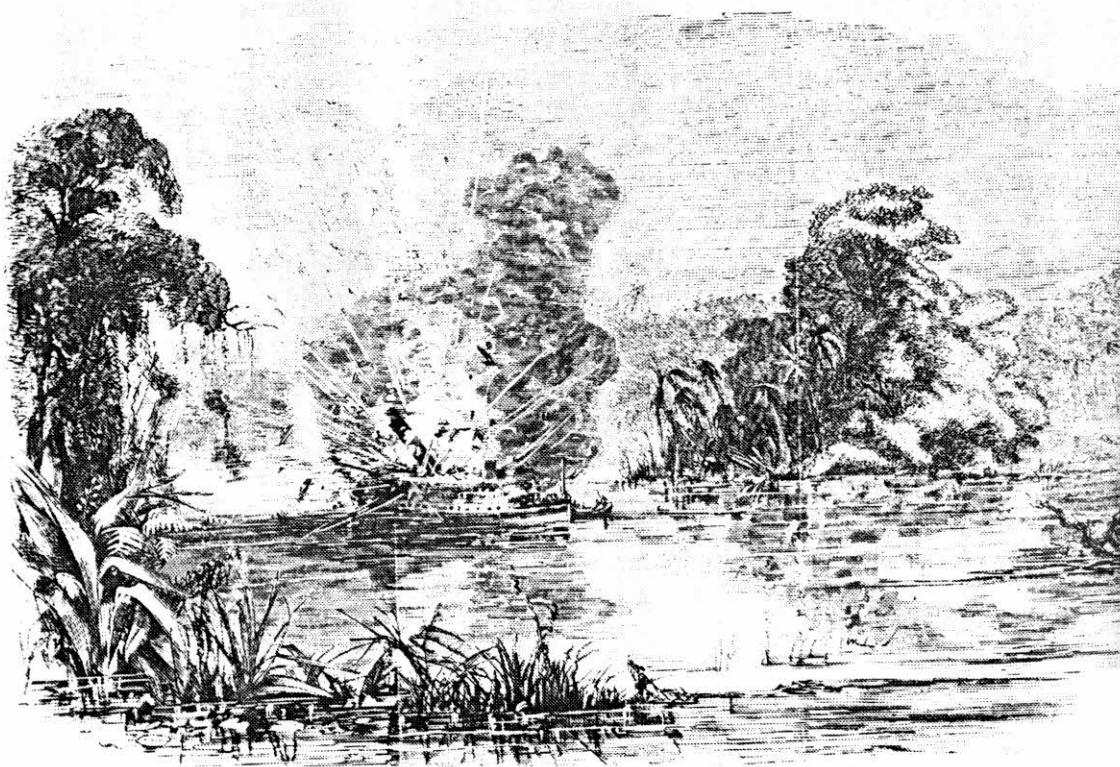
What probably happened is that Cauty also filled with gunpowder the wood in Kelly's woodshed, at the Machuca rapids, where the Scott would have wooded.¹¹ Be that as it may, the explosion disrupted Lockridge's plans to join Walker via Panama, for most of the scalded men, were the very ones who had agreed to go with him. The *Rescue* took the survivors to San Juan, where the injured were treated by the surgeons on the English warships in the harbor.

On April 7th, the whole force under Col. Lockridge had arrived at San Juan and were disbanded. Thereupon, they entered into an agreement with the British commander, to give up their arms (six pieces of ordnance, 400 rifles, two tons of gunpowder, etc.), in exchange for their passage to the United States. On the 10th, they delivered the steamer *Rescue*, together with the provisions, arms and ammunition, to Mr. Thomas Martin, the Mayor of Greytown.

On the 12th, Cauty arrived in San Juan with eighty Costa Rican soldiers on the steamboat *Morgan*. They immediately took possession of the *Rescue* which was lying anchored in the river. On the 14th the British warships *Cossack* and *Tartar* took 374 filibusters to Aspinwall, where they arrived on the 17th and remained until the 20th, not being permitted to go on shore. On that day 68 were taken on board the *Illinois* for New York and over 100 on board the *Granada* for New Orleans. The remaining 200 waited on the *Tartar* for a passage home.

¹⁰ Capt. Harris' Diary, (April 18, 1857).

¹¹ For the woodsheds' location, see my *El Testimonio de Scott*, p. 254.



explosion of the steamer Scott
"sixty were killed and twenty-five injured" (p. 224)

21. Closing In for the Kill

On January 1st, 1857, Walker's army in Rivas was said to number about one thousand men, rank and file, healthy and in good spirits. On January 2d, the *Sierra Nevada* brought eighty fully equipped recruits and a large supply of provisions from San Francisco. At San Juan del Sur they were met by forty Rangers, well mounted and well armed, all dressed in blue shirts on the breast of which were the initials "M.R." (Mounted Rangers). They all appeared cheerful, and, "Speaking of Walker, they expressed the confident belief that he would not only be able to retain possession of Rivas, but that León would also fall into his hands."¹

The lake steamers were due on Virgin Bay on the 5th or 6th. As the hours and days passed by, and no steamer arrived, the excitement became intense. The anxiety to hear something became so palpable that on the 12th, a small boat, procured from the *Sierra Nevada*, at San Juan del Sur, took eight filibusters from Virgin Bay on a voyage of discovery across the lake. The Costa Ricans captured them at Fort San Carlos on the 15th.

In Rivas, that day, there was a wedding at Gen. Walker's quarters: "Gen. E. J. Sanders was united in the holy bonds of matrimony, by Gen. Walker, to Miss Elizabeth Swingle. The ceremony was performed by Gen. Walker in the most impressive manner, in the Episcopal service. After which the usual quantity of dancing and feasting took place, and a casual

¹"Statement of Mr. John G. Mitchell," *NY Herald*, 1/26/1857, p.1, c.3.

observer never would have imagined that anything but peace reigned where there was so many happy and smiling faces."²

The smiling faces faded next morning, when it was reported that one of the steamers had been seen in the lake. Many filibusters went to the beach, with glasses, to look at it, lying at anchor off the Island of Ometepe. Walker then realized that the steamers had fallen in the hands of the enemy, who must be in possession of the entire river, and that his communication with the Atlantic States was entirely cut off.

On the 18th, the *Sierra Nevada* went to Panama to look for its California-bound passengers from the East. It returned to San Juan del Sur on the 24th, and brought to Walker the details of the Costa Rican operations on the river.³ Walker's only vessel on the lake, a twenty-ton schooner, decayed and rotten, at Virgin Bay, was then considered and promptly discarded as a means of conveyance to regain the river and the steamers. His only hope was for Lockridge to do it from the other end.

The Allied Army, commanded by Honduran General Florencio Xatruch, on January 25th consisted of 2,445 men at Nandaime--200 Hondurans under Xatruch, 1,300 Guatemalans under Zavala, 500 Costa Ricans and Leonese under Cañas and Jerez, and 445 Legitimists under Fernando Chamorro. On the 26th they advanced to Obraje, a village eight miles from Rivas. Walker promptly sent Col. O'Neal with the First Rifles, followed by Gen. Henningsen with the First Infantry--440 men altogether--who attacked repeatedly but unsuccessfully on the 27th and retreated back to Rivas at midnight.

Henningsen reported three Americans killed and nine

²"Further from Nicaragua," *New Orleans Picayune*, 2/19/1857, p.1, c.7.

³See Appendix D.

wounded at Obraje, against twenty enemy bodies left on the field.⁴ Cañas reported one killed and seven wounded on the Allied side, against thirty American casualties.⁵ American reporters claimed that eighty Central Americans had been slain, but only five or six filibusters.⁶

Bracing for an Allied attack on Rivas, Walker concentrated all his forces there. On the 28th, he called into town the men he had stationed at Virgin Bay to watch the movements of the lake steamers and to guard the transit road. He also burned the schooner (which he had been endeavoring to repair,) for fear it would fall into the enemy's hands.

Instead of attacking Walker, on the 28th, at nightfall, the Allies marched into St. George, two and a half miles from Rivas, and immediately threw up strong barricades around the Plaza in front of the church. Henningsen attacked them with the whole filibuster force on the following morning, while Walker remained at headquarters with the so-called "citizens" and the sick. The filibusters launched successive assaults with considerable strength, but were repulsed, time and again, until they retreated back to Rivas at dawn on the 30th.

In his official report, Cañas listed six Allied killed and twenty-eight wounded, and estimated that the filibusters had suffered at least one hundred casualties. Henningsen reported seventy-nine American casualties, including fifteen killed on the field and several mortally wounded. He estimated Allied losses at above 200 killed and wounded (between 60 and 70 killed), besides large numbers of desertions. Filibuster

⁴"Extract of a Letter from Major General Henningsen to a Friend in New York," *New York Herald*, 3/27/1857, p.1, c.1.

⁵"Official Report of the Battles of El Obraje and San Jorge, received Feb. 11 at the Ministry of War in Costa Rica," *Ibid.*, 4/1/1857, p.11, c.4.

⁶"Intelligence from Walker and His Army," *NO Picayune*, 2/18/1857 eve., p.1, c.6.; "Further from Nicaragua," *Ibid.*, 2/19/1857, p.1, c.7.

correspondents improved on Henningsen and reported only forty-nine American casualties (sixteen killed, mostly officers, and thirty-three wounded,) while placing Allied losses at a staggering 200 killed and 400 wounded.

On the evening of the 30th, Walker started with 300 men for San Juan del Sur, to meet the *Orizaba*, due from San Francisco. Expecting large supplies and reinforcements from California, he carried several carts and 200 spare muskets. The *Orizaba* arrived on February 1st, but it brought only a small lot of provisions and fifty recruits, twenty of whom were found stowed away, hoping to escape to New York. Walker finally managed to press forty-three men into his force and on February 2d took up his line of march for Rivas.

That morning, the Allies entered Virgin Bay and the steamer *Virgin* docked at the wharf, but on learning of Walker's presence on the Transit road, they merely posted up notices offering free passages to deserters, to the States, and returned to San Jorge. Walker entered Virgin at sunset, and next day, February 3d, returned to Rivas.

Before daybreak on the 4th, Walker advanced with 200 men, without artillery, for he intended to take San Jorge by surprise, and penetrated into the suburbs of the village. He would have succeeded, but his plans were frustrated by the mutinous conduct of the men. He caught the Allies entirely off guard. The streets were empty, the garrison in the plaza asleep; but when they came within shot of the barricades, Walker's men refused to advance further. Neither curses nor threats had any effect upon them.

When a few finally volunteered and advanced with Walker to storm the barricades, it was too late. The garrison had been aroused, and under a heavy fire of musketry and cannon, Walker was obliged to retreat, suffering the loss of at least four killed and eleven wounded, although some accounts place his losses much higher. Filibuster sources

counted at least twenty Allied dead and mentioned Gen. Jerez among the wounded. Back in Rivas, Walker harangued his troops on the plaza:

On the 6th Walker addressed his men. He is an eloquent speaker on any public occasion. His ordinary low, measured tones are dismissed, and he becomes more animated and fluent. But on this occasion he seemed to have no eloquence for them. Mortified and indignant at their conduct before San Jorge, he had no cordial words of approbation, and no tone of hopefulness for the future.

His remarks were confined to drawing a parallel between his condition a year ago and now--a year ago, when with a smaller number his band were daring, ardent and faithful; and now, with a larger force, better arms, abundant ammunition and good food, he found them despondent, disaffected and insubordinate.

His speech could not do any good to his cause. The men who held back at San Jorge were too large a part of his little army to be punished, and he gained nothing by this expression of his displeasure. The truth is, he has lost his hold upon them.

A few months ago their spirits were kept up pretty well by occasional successes; and the certain punishment awaiting deserters if retaken, served to deter most from attempting it. But now, everything in their circumstances is calculated to dishearten, and the disaffection is so general that they can go off in numbers large enough to make them much more secure against capture.

They desert as many as ten at a time. No less than one hundred and fifty have deserted in the last three months. The band of music which was sent out last year have all deserted. The only music now is of the drum and fife.

All deserters are fired upon by any scouting party that falls in with them, or, if brought in alive, their

capture is reported to Walker, who orders them to immediate execution. "Take them to the plaza and shoot them," is the order given in his slow, quiet way, without any emotion, and hardly looking up from his occupation.

These are the laws of war, and of course cannot be laid aside; but even this certainty of death, if taken, seems to have failed at last to put a stop to desertion. Death appears almost as certain to them if they remain, for Walker would probably hold out to the last; at least his friends believe that he would not yield if every hope was gone.⁷

Walker attacked again on the 7th. He went down with Henningsen's artillery to cannonade San Jorge, fired 100 rounds from 600 yards distance, without any material effect, and returned to headquarters in Rivas. In his official report to Guatemala, Zavala said that Walker's 110 cannon shots killed one man, two women and a child, and wounded two officers and nine soldiers. Most of them were hit by a single ball, inside the church. On the Plaza, six horses and four oxen were killed.

Cañas sent Walker a note of thanks, "saying that his cannonade had killed three bees, thereby saving his butcher the trouble of slaughtering them; and that his men had picked up about fifty of his round shot, which were found to fit their cannon exactly, and which he should have the pleasure of returning to him some time."⁸

⁷"Report and Remarks on Gen. Walker's Affairs and Condition, by a Late Resident of Nicaragua," *New York Herald*, 3/21/1857, p.8, c.1.

⁸"San Jorge Cannonaded," *New York Herald*, 3/21/1857, p.8, c.2. On the other hand, Henningsen asserted that "The result of this cannonade was a loss to the enemy of between seventy and eighty killed and wounded, without the loss on our side of a man" ("Extract of a Letter . . . , *New York Herald*, 3/27/1857, p.1, c.1). Henningsen didn't say why he didn't continue cannonading San Jorge thereafter. In *The War* (p. 383), Walker explained that he had a scanty supply of cannon balls.

Walker made no further attacks on San Jorge in February. During the rest of the month there were only skirmishes between the Rangers and small parties of the Allies. "A few riflemen, too, would go out at night and alarm the camp of the Allies by firing on their pickets, and the enemy would, in the same manner, scatter small parties among the plantain patches and fire up the streets of Rivas."⁹

On February 16th, Walker's Secretary of Hacienda and right-hand man, William Kissane Rogers, showed up in Rivas. Stranded at San Juan del Norte in December, Kissane took a British steamer to Aspinwall, crossed on the railroad, and bought a five-ton schooner in Panama. He set sail for San Juan del Sur on January 11, was blown out into the broad Pacific by a storm, and was picked up by the schooner *Granada*, on February 15, when heaving round in rough waters outside the San Juan harbor. Upon his arrival in Rivas, Walker issued a remarkable decree:

The President of the Republic of Nicaragua, by virtue of authority in him vested,

DECREES:

Art. 1. All duties, both of import and export, are hereby abolished.

Art. 2. The Secretary of Hacienda is hereby charged with the fulfillment and publication of this decree.

Given at Rivas this 18th day of February, 1857.

WILLIAM WALKER, President.¹⁰

As there was no printing press in Walkersdom, Secretary of Hacienda Kissane sent the decree by way of Panama to be published in New York; and since there was no trade, the

⁹Walker, *The War*, p. 388.

¹⁰"Decree of General Walker," *New York Herald*, 4/6/1857, p.4, c.6.

abolition of duties was senseless, to say the least. By then, Walker's situation (described by an eyewitness in Appendix E) was desperate, as filibuster desertions increased and the Allies prepared to close in for the kill.

Of the 126 filibuster deserters held in Costa Rica, in February, seventy were Mounted Rangers, "picked men and the flower of Walker's army."¹¹ Twenty Rangers had deserted in one body Feb. 4th and eleven Feb. 7th, taking with them their horses, carbines, knives and revolvers.

Walker's situation worsened on March 5th, when the Allies at San Jorge finally went on the offensive against the remnants of his "Nicaraguan Army" in Rivas.

¹¹"Late and Interesting from Central America," *New Orleans Picayune*, 3/30/1857 eve., p.1, c.7.

22. Last Stand in Rivas

On the night of the 4th of March, Col. Caycee went with forty-five Rangers to San Juan del Sur, as an escort to the widow of Major Dusenbury, who was on her way to the United States. At dawn on the 5th, General Fernando Chamorro left San Jorge with 500 men, to ambush the filibusters on their return from San Juan. They waited at the farm of Jocote, less than a mile from the Transit road's Half-way House, on the road to Rivas. When Caycee approached, early in the morning, they forced him to retire to San Juan, with a loss of two killed, two wounded, and three taken prisoner by Chamorro, who suffered only one wounded.

Upon learning in Rivas that an Allied column had marched out of San Jorge towards the Transit road, Walker instantly sent Gen. Sanders with 160 Rifles and Rangers, to give them battle. The filibusters approached the Jocote ranch, which is ten miles from Rivas, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. A pitched battle ensued on the prairie, about a league before the ranch, ending with a bayonet charge in which Chamorro routed Sanders. The American rifles had no bayonets, and the filibusters disbanded, in panic.

Chamorro reported that Sanders left twenty-eight dead on the field while he had three dead and nineteen wounded. Walker wrote in *The War* that Sanders lost twenty killed and eight wounded. Pérez claimed thirty-five filibusters killed and an undetermined number of wounded, against eighteen Allied casualties. A *Picayune* correspondent gave the same figures as Chamorro: that the Americans left twenty-eight

dead on the field and a large number badly wounded, while the Allies suffered three dead and nineteen wounded.

When news of the battle at Jocote reached San Jorge, General Xatruch sent a strong force towards Rivas in order to keep Walker from reinforcing Sanders. The Allied column attacked the Rivas barricades about 10 p.m. and retired before midnight, once Chamorro had returned to San Jorge, victorious. As told by Walker, in *The War*, the Allied night attack was "short and rambling," and only one filibuster was wounded. In his official report, Xatruch claimed that several filibusters were wounded and admitted six Allied casualties.

On the 7th, the *Sierra Nevada* arrived at San Juan del Sur with seventy-five recruits from California. They went on to Rivas accompanied by Col. Cayce and his men. Their Captain, William Frank Stewart, described the scene as they crossed the plain of Jocote, two days after the battle:

Our route to Rivas was directly through the battle ground, and on the very day of our advent into the country, we were compelled to witness the soul-sickening spectacle of a host of unburied Americans blackening and festering in the torrid sun; affording at once a double ration of food--first, to the buzzard, then to the philosopher.¹

Captain Stewart's recollection of his first meeting with Walker, on March 8th, is transcribed in Appendix F. In *The War*, Walker labeled Stewart "a noisy, talkative man."² But in Rivas he was glad to receive his company as the first (and last) of a new battalion, which he styled the "Red Star Guard"

¹William Frank Stewart, *Last of the Filibusters; or, Recollections of the Siege of Rivas*, (Sacramento: Henry Shipley & Company, 1857), p. 9.

²Walker, *The War*, p. 391.

after the lone Red Star in his flag. He ordered a Parade of the troops at 5 p.m. that day; Stewart recorded the scene:

A general review of the troops was ordered, and every soul in the garrison who was able to walk or crawl into the plaza came out upon the memorable occasion. There was a *bone*, at least, if not the *sinew* of the army of "manifest destiny"--and such an army! Notwithstanding the menacing dangers by which we were surrounded, I could not repress a smile at that ludicrous mockery of military pomp--it was so strikingly Quixotic in all its appointments!

After the soldiers and citizens were properly arranged in a square, General Walker availed himself of the opportunity to make us a little speech, in which he briefly recounted the vicissitudes and struggles through which he had passed since his advent into the country; justified his conduct in connection with the existing difficulties, and concluded with a peroration which was vehemently cheered by the army.

Said he: "We have sent them the olive-branch, and they have sent us the knife in return; then, since nothing will do them but the knife, *the knife let it be!*" And the soldiers loudly responded, *the knife let it be!*³

At early dawn on the 16th, Walker led his entire disposable force--400 men--with Henningsen and artillery, on another attack, which would be his last, on San Jorge. He again took up a position about 600 yards from the church and opened fire with four mortars, two sixes, and a twelve-pound howitzer, sending into the Plaza 400 rounds of six-pound shot and eighty shells. Simultaneously, his riflemen launched a fierce assault on the Allied barricades.

The Allies not only held on, but, in the midst of the battle,

³Stewart, *Last of the Fillibusters*, p. 13.

General Jerez took 500 men by a circuitous route and occupied the *Cuatro Esquinas* farmhouse, on the road, half a mile from Rivas. At 11 a.m., Jerez attacked Walker from the rear while another column under Lieut. Col. Joaquín Cabrera sallied on a flanking movement and attacked him from the other side. The filibusters held their ground and continued cannonading the Plaza until they ran out of shot and shell.

Walker retreated at 3 p.m.. He fought his way back to Rivas through Allied forces scattered all around in the plantain and cacao fields along the way, protected by impenetrable growths of cactus on each side of the road. A pitched battle occurred as the Americans passed by the *Cuatro Esquinas* farmhouse, which Jerez had fortified and from which they were unable to dislodge him.

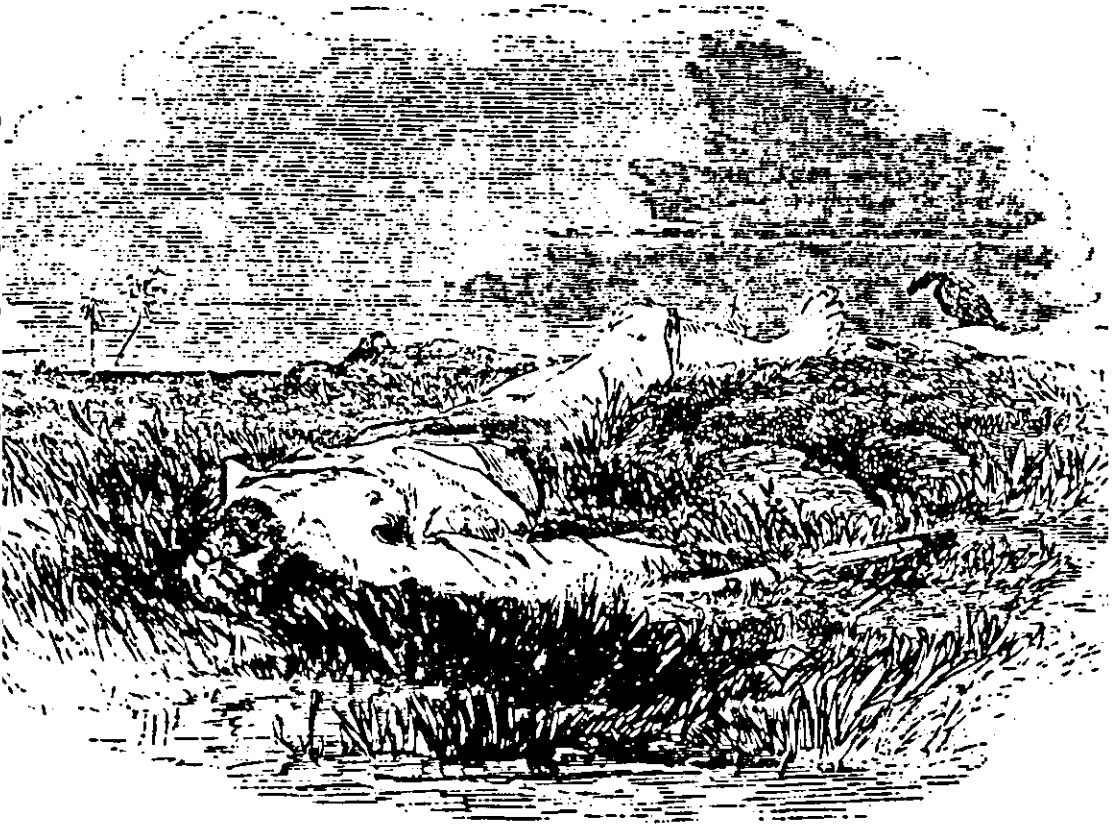
There was great slaughter on both sides. The filibuster army trekked back into Rivas, in disjointed units and through roundabout routes, under the cover of darkness.

Allied official figures listed 132 Allied casualties--thirty-six killed and ninety-six wounded, and claimed "a multitude of filibusters slain."⁴ Pérez listed thirty-three Allied dead and ninety wounded; forty filibusters killed and over seventy wounded. The Costa Rican *Album Semanal* reported twenty-two Allied killed and sixty wounded; at least 125 filibusters killed and many more wounded.

Walker placed his loss that day at fourteen killed and fifty wounded, most of the latter slightly. He afterwards revised the figures to thirteen killed and sixty-three wounded, four of the latter mortally. He estimated Allied casualties at above 500 to 600 killed and wounded.

Filibuster reporters improved on those figures. New York papers published that the Allies admitted losses of 327 killed

⁴"Parte Oficial," *Boletín Oficial* [León], 3/25/1857, p.8, c.2; Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, p. 908.



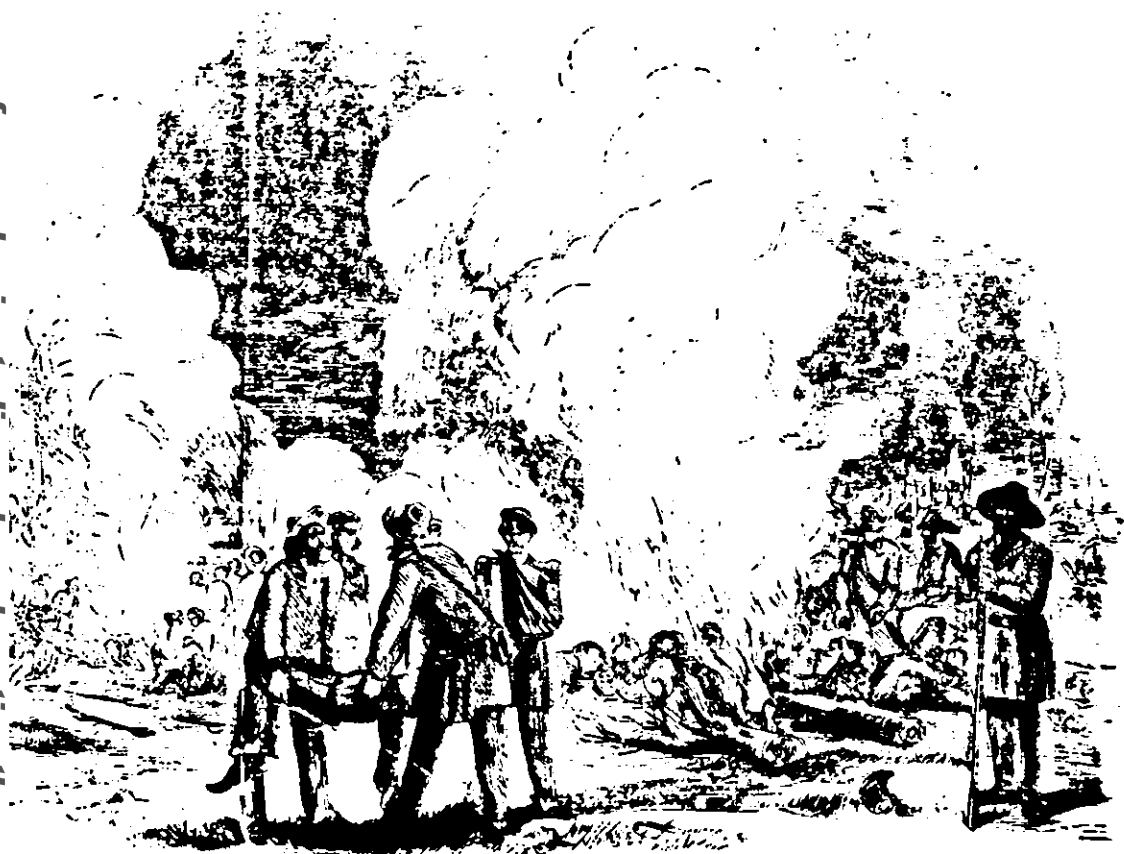
THE "IMMIGRANT."

the knife at El Jocote

"a double ration of food--first, to the buzzard, then to the philosopher" (p. 236)



the knife at Cuatro Esquinas
"the knife let it be!" (p. 237)



the knife at Rivas

*"leaving to us the unpleasant task of burying and burning
dead Greasers" (p. 243)*

and over 300 wounded, but that Walker estimated Allied casualties at 1,100 (600 killed and 500 wounded), while he suffered only two killed and twenty-one wounded.

On March 18th, General José Joaquín Mora landed with 560 Costa Rican soldiers at San Jorge and next day took over as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies. He named his brother-in-law, Gen. José María Cañas, second in command, and under him he placed Guatemalan General Victor Zavala, Honduran General Florencio Xatruch, and Nicaraguan General Fernando Chamorro.

On the 19th, the *Orizaba* arrived in San Juan del Sur, from San Francisco. Walker sent Col. Waters with sixty Rangers to meet the large contingent of reinforcements, munitions and supplies expected. The steamer brought 500 cannon balls sent by Crittenden, but only nineteen recruits--a printer, a cook, a baker, a moulder, a blacksmith, a tinsmith, an apothecary, five farmers and six miners--led by Captain A. F. Chatfield, a California merchant born in Red River, Texas.

Walker assigned the new arrivals to Company B, First Infantry, and renamed the battalion the "St. George Fusiliers," as a reward for its "gallantry in the actions of the 29th January and 16th March at St. George."⁵ But the time for offensive operations had passed for Walker.

On March 22d, Mora began to cannonade Rivas with a 24 pounder from an eminence near Allied headquarters at Cuatro Esquinas, while a column under Chamorro occupied the Hacienda of San Esteban on the Obraje road and set up barricades on the brow of a hill about 200 yards from the filibuster pickets. The siege of Rivas had commenced.

Mora launched a general assault at dawn on the 23d. Chamorro's forces attacked the Maliaño farmhouse (which the

⁵Special Order No. 49 (3/25/57), General Order Book, Nicaraguan Army.

filibusters used as hospital) at the northwest corner of the city, while Cañas with five columns moved towards the Plaza from the front, right flank, and rear of the filibuster stronghold.⁶ After seven hours of fierce, house to house fighting, during which Henningsen's artillery wiped out entire units of Allied soldiers, the latter suffered a catastrophic defeat and withdrew.

From the number of dead and wounded left behind, Walker judged an Allied loss of between 300 and 400 men, while he had only four killed and four wounded.⁷ In *The War*, he revised the figures to 600 Allied casualties, against three Americans killed and six wounded. Official individual lists of Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, and Costa Rican losses add up to fifty-eight dead and sixty-three wounded, for a total of 121 casualties.⁸ Pérez asserts that they surpassed 200. In Stewart's words:

. . . on the morning of March 23d, just as our reveille was beating, the attack commenced. The assault was first made upon the hospital . . . the enemy now made a general assault upon the town, but was beaten back at every point, and after an immense waste of ammunition, and a loss of about four hundred men, killed and wounded, together with two field officers, one brass howitzer, and twenty prisoners, retired from the field, leaving to us the unpleasant task of burying and burning dead Greasers. Our loss, in comparison, was trifling--being only two killed and three wounded.⁹

⁶Gen. José Joaquín Mora to the Minister of War (Las Esquinas, March 24, 1857), Guerra 9259, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

⁷"News from Nicaragua," *San Francisco Herald*, 4/21/1857, p.2, c.4.

⁸Guerra 8941, 9254, 9255, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

⁹William Frank Stewart, *Last of the Filibusters*, p. 28.

One of the prisoners was Don Federico Maheit, the Italian artillerist blown up on the *Once de Abril* in November, 1856. After several months service in a Walker chain-gang, he had knocked the sentry on the head and escaped to San Jorge, where he rejoined the Costa Rican army. He had charge of two four-pound pieces in the action, and was recaptured by Walker, mortally wounded.¹⁰

At dawn on the 24th, Chamorro launched another assault at the northwest sector of Rivas, against the Santa Ursula farmhouse next to Maliaño's. His men set the roof on fire and forced the filibusters to temporarily abandon it; but he was finally repelled after suffering five dead and eight wounded.

At dawn on the 26th, Xatruch, with 450 men, occupied a hill on the San Juan road in the southern section of Rivas called La Puebla. American counterattacks were unsuccessful, and soon thereafter a 24-pounder began to cannonade the filibuster camp from Xatruch's post, teaming up with the one at Cuatro Esquinas.

When Costa Rican Major Juan Estrada with 100 men took up a position (the Zamora farmhouse) in the southeastern Apataco sector, on the 27th, Mora had completed the encirclement of the city by occupying four strategic points around it, blocking the roads to Obraje, San Jorge, Virgin Bay and San Juan.

In his April 1st report to the Costa Rican Minister of War, Mora exuded optimism:

¹⁰ Walker identified Maheit in a letter to Randolph written on the day of the battle (published by the *San Francisco Herald* on 4/21/1857, p.2, c.4). Maheit was then alive and Walker interrogated him. In *The War* (p. 400), Walker wrote that the Italian gunner "was dangerously wounded and made prisoner." Fabio Carnevalini, Italian artillerist in the Nicaraguan Allied forces in Rivas that day, and translator of Walker's book into Spanish, changed it to *herido mortalmente* (mortally wounded).

. . . The investure of Rivas is more complete than I had hoped for, with the disposable forces under my command. The good selection of the posts contributes to this, as well as the service of flying columns established from post to post, who do not give the besieged breathing time. . . .

They are now reduced to eating mule and dog flesh, with sugar instead of salt, and of this they have only a limited quantity. Those who, driven by hunger, come out to look for plantains in the neighborhood are hunted by my troops, who compel them to retire without effecting their object.

Every night small guerrilla [*sic*] parties from each post, under my orders, sally out, and reaching the barricades of the Plaza, raise the alarm among the filibusters, causing them to pass the night in suspense, without any risk to our men.

The causes joined to the certainty they now know of their being completely surrounded, causes a desertion of about five men a day, who come to my quarters. I estimate that those who take the road to Costa Rica, must be at least three times as many.

They have arrived at such a state of weakness that one of the deserters, returned to-day from my camp to the Plaza, entered in his barrack, circulated a number of the proclamations of his Excellency, (the President of Costa Rica,) took a rifle and returned freely to my camp.

Yesterday and to-day fourteen deserters have arrived.

I am assured that a Guatemalan force will be soon in Granada, and I send the steamer San Carlos to-morrow to bring them up.

Everything portends our speedy triumph.

JOSE J. MORA!¹¹

¹¹"The Siege of Rivas," *New York Herald*, 4/30/1857, p.4, c.3.

On the same day, in a letter to Randolph, Walker was also *optimistic*:

Wednesday, April 1st.

After the attack of the 23d, the enemy recovered their strength sufficiently to retain their position at the Cuatro Esquinas. They have gone to work vigorously, barricading in all directions, and are now occupying four points around this place. As I do not care about losing more men than is absolutely necessary, I merely occupy Rivas without attempting to dislodge the enemy. Their presence subjects us to no inconvenience except in the matter of beef; and we have enough of other meat to last for more than forty days.

The enemy gives unmistakable signs of weakness and dissolution. Every now and then they attempt to drive their men up to an attack, but it is impossible to get them within rifle range. A very slight blow would, I think, dissolve them; and although it may be necessary for us to strike it in a short time, I delay it until something definite is heard from Lockridge. W.W.¹²

But Walker was then striking a secret blow, hoping to dissolve the Allies. Mora discovered it and on April 5th reported it to the Costa Rican Minister of War:

. . . Up to eight o'clock this evening, 151 filibusters have deserted, including Dr. Cole, who surrendered this afternoon. . . . Minister of Hacienda Rogers, too, has asked for guarantees, but I think it is a Walker ploy to gain time.

The villain filibuster leader offered ten thousand dollars to a Lieutenant to present himself as a deserter and to assassinate Cañas and me, and together with others to capture the steamer on which they would be

¹²"News from Nicaragua," *San Francisco Herald*, 4/21/1857, p.2, c.4.

sent to Tortuga. The Lieutenant, either because he had a change of heart, or perhaps out of extreme cleverness in order to seize the steamer, rather than to commit a double murder which besides being difficult would carry him to his death, too, confessed the plot to me and showed me a paper, written by Walker's own hand, dated yesterday, guaranteeing payment. He told me that my generosity had disarmed him. . . . Instead of sending him on the steamer to Tortuga, I sent him to San Esteban where General Chamorro will hold and watch him, in isolation from the others.¹³

Walker had murder in his mind precisely then. In his letter to Randolph narrating the battle of March 23d, he wrote: "Jeres [*sic*], it seems, was with Joaquín Mora at the house of the Cuatro Esquinas. Neither of them ventured into the action. I hope Jeres will not be so lucky as to catch a rifle ball in battle. He richly deserves hanging; for he is a plotter of assassinations and all sorts of iniquities."¹⁴

Walker's plot failed, and his fate was sealed. On April 5, the Allies in Rivas received the news that Lockridge had abandoned all attempts to capture Castillo. In the evening, General Zavala celebrated: he took the Liberia brass band to the barricades near the Plaza, and serenaded the filibusters with martial music. The besieged wasted no bullets on musicians and allowed them to play a full repertoire.

Meanwhile, the Allies received reinforcements. On April 3d, Martínez arrived from Granada with 300 men; 300 more came from León on the 6th, and then 200 from Managua and Masaya. Over 500 Guatemalans arrived on the 9th. Mora then

¹³Guerra 8942, Archivo Nacional, San José, Costa Rica.

¹⁴"News from Nicaragua," *San Francisco Herald*, 4/21/1857, p.2, c.4. Walker's remarks make clear that he was then aware of Jerez's plot to murder him in León, when the rift with Rivas, narrated in Chapter Five.

decided to strike the final blow.

He chose an auspicious H-hour: *Sábado de Gloria* (Saturday of Glory, or Holy Saturday), April 11, 1857, the first anniversary of the Second Battle of Rivas. At the staff meeting on Good Friday, the other Allied generals opposed him, judging unnecessary the shedding of more blood, opting instead for starving Walker into surrender. Mora silenced them: "I am not asking you whether we should assault or not; I only wish to arrange the details on how we will do it."¹⁵

The fourth battle of Rivas began before daylight, just like the third three weeks earlier, and likewise it ended in an Allied rout. It lasted only four hours, and it was a vivid replica of the March 23 catastrophe. Summed up by Stewart:

. . . They [the Allies] attacked the Hospital, the Cathedral, the Arsenal--in fact, almost every approachable quarter of the city, and were at every point driven back, with terrible slaughter. Thus ended the last battle of Rivas--one of the most unequal contests ever fought by Americans, and one of the most triumphant.

Notwithstanding our beggarly condition, and that we were not only fighting the united armies of Central America, but we were also battling against a far more formidable foe--the prejudices of the world--yet, I say, notwithstanding all this outside and internal pressure, that little world-neglected, world-despised band withstood the united efforts of 3000 resolute foes, and maintained every inch of their ground, with the trifling loss of only three men killed and five slightly wounded! while, on the other hand, the enemy sustained a loss of 400 killed--more than that number wounded, and 100 prisoners!¹⁶

¹⁵Pérez, *Obras*, p. 332.

¹⁶William Frank Stewart, *Last of the Filibusters*, p. 34.

In *The War*, Walker set his losses at three killed and six wounded, the same as on March 23d, and Allied losses at 700 or 800--over 200 killed--surpassing those of the previous attack. He added that the Americans buried 110 Allied dead, that he sent the wounded prisoners to the Allied camp under a flag of truce, and that he retained "upward of 70 unhurt prisoners."¹⁷

General Mora gave no casualty figures in his official report, allowing only that "the Allies suffered considerable losses."¹⁸ Pérez wrote that Walker's loss was insignificant and Allied losses very great: over sixty Costa Rican, ninety Guatemalan, and 170 Nicaraguan casualties, for a total surpassing 320.

The April 11 Allied debacle set the stage for Walker's surrender under acceptable conditions for him and his cause.

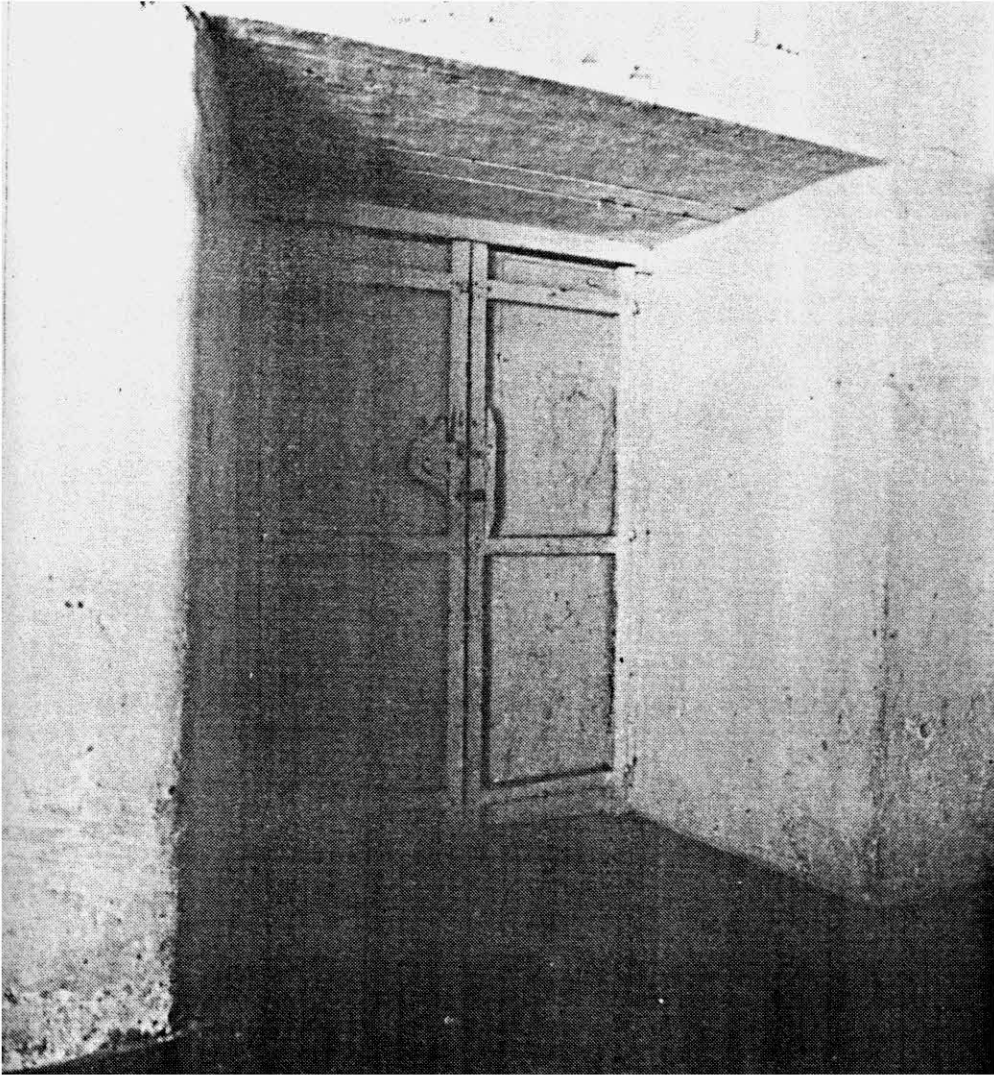
¹⁷Walker. *The War*, p. 408.

¹⁸Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, p. 930.

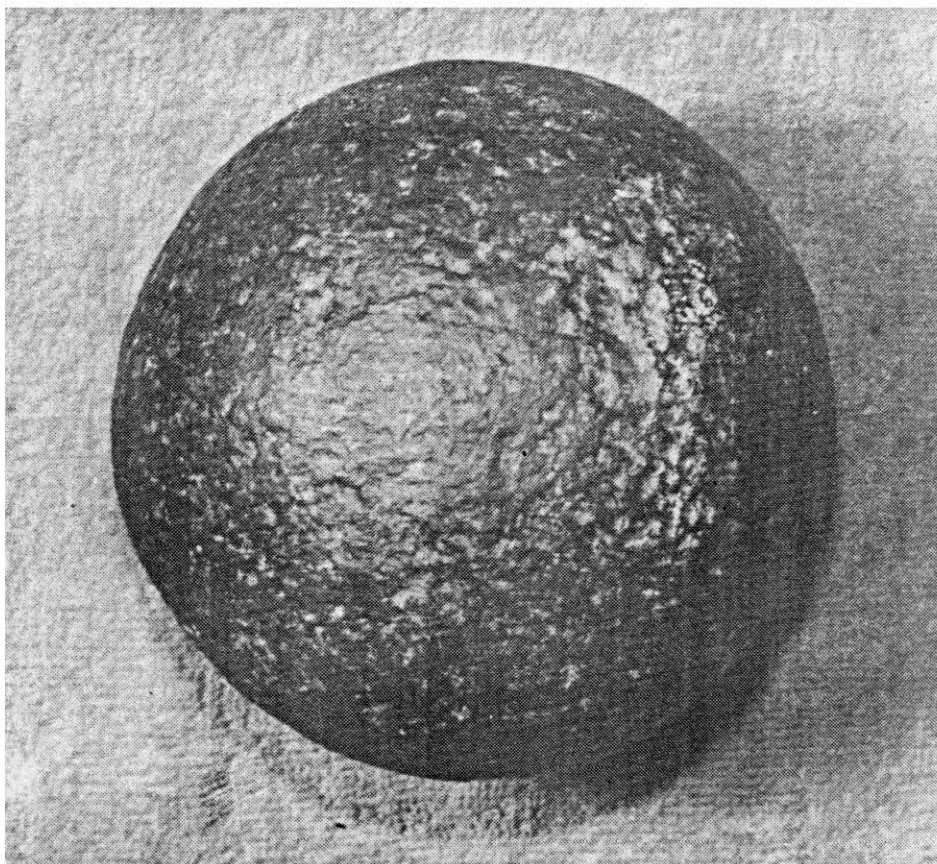


Walker's arsenal

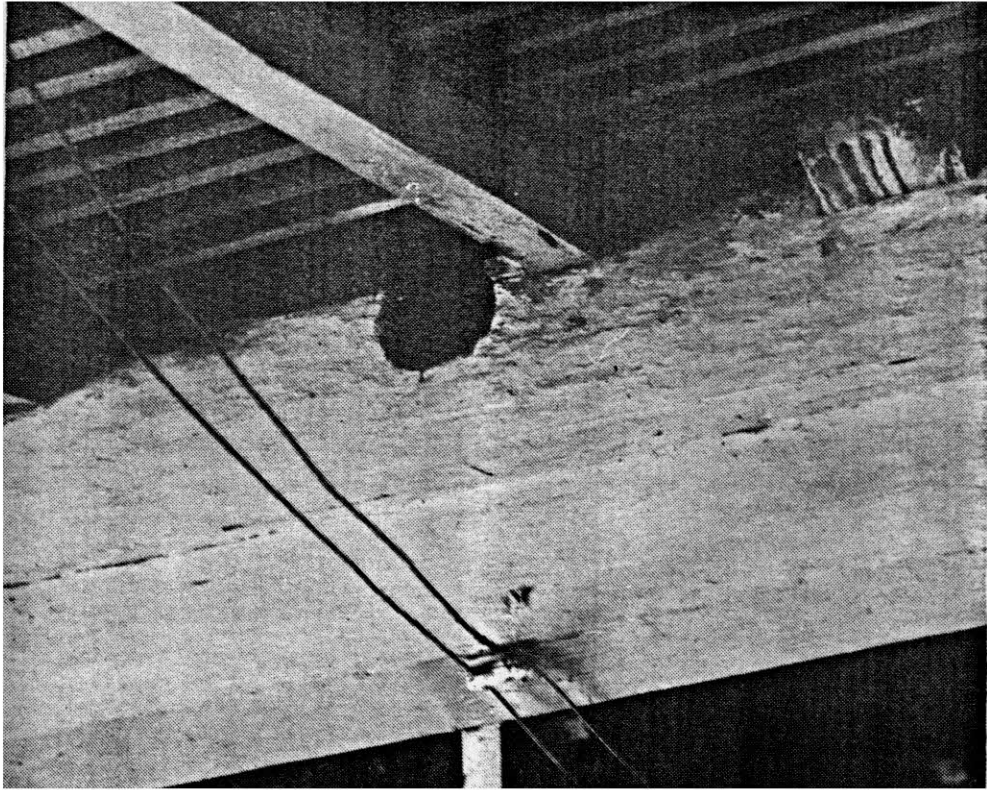
Adobe house which served as Walker's arsenal during the siege of Rivas. Afterwards site of the first high school in Nicaragua, established by Gen. Máximo Jerez in 1870. When this picture was taken, in 1977, it was a school for girls.



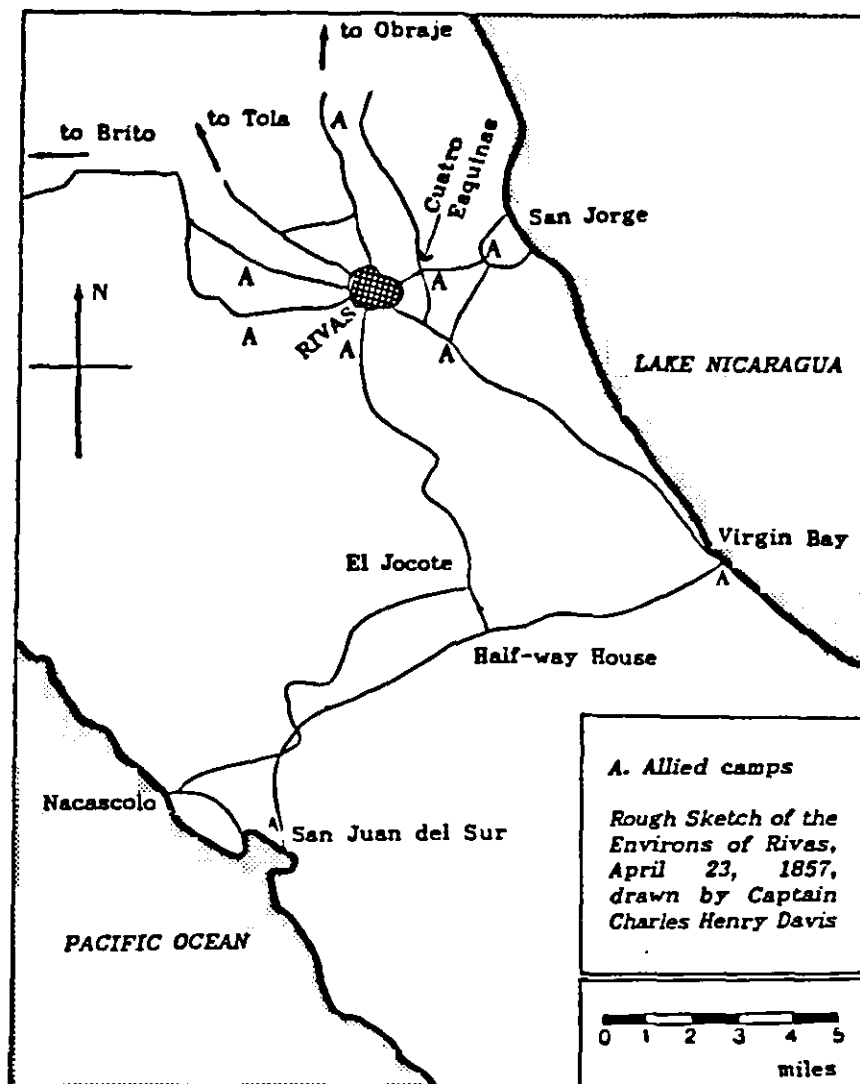
The forty-inch thick adobe walls, effectively protected Walker's ordnance from Allied artillery and rifle bullets.



Cannon ball found buried in the ground in Rivas. It weighs 13 lbs. and measures 11 cm. in diameter, just under the size of the ball that hit the rafter over Walker's arsenal.



relics of the Siege of Rivas
Cannon ball hole in a rafter over Walker's arsenal



the siege of Rivas

"Mora had completed the encirclement of the city" (p. 244)

23. Surrender

Commander Charles Henry Davis, of the U.S. sloop-of-war *St. Mary's*, originated, arranged, and accepted Walker's surrender in Rivas. Thereupon, he removed Walker and the remnants of his army, from Nicaragua, for repatriation to the United States.

Davis' involvement in the Walker war began on February 6th, 1857, upon arrival at San Juan del Sur, on the *St. Mary's*, under precise orders from the Pacific Squadron commander, Commodore William Mervine, to do two things:

1. To prevent and restrain "depredations upon American citizens" in Nicaragua, which Walker might attempt in the "precarious and straitened condition" of his forces.

2. To take what measures shall be required for the adequate protection of American citizens, "in the event of the expulsion of Walker and his forces from Nicaragua, by the allied armies, and of his departure to adjacent territory in Central America, for the purpose of hostile and aggressive operations."¹

Upon entering the harbor at San Juan del Sur, Davis received a call from Captain John Edmonds, of the American coal ship *Narragansett*, in port. Edmonds explained that Walker had "borrowed" two boats from his ship, for use on the Lake in efforts to capture a steamer. When the Allies entered San Jorge, Walker carried one of the boats to Rivas;

¹Mervine to Davis, (U.S. Flag Ship *Independence*, Bay of Panama, January 19, 1857), Microfilm M-89-38, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

the Allies seized the other one, left abandoned on the beach. Captain Edmonds urged Davis to recover them for him, for they were essential to his business.

Davis promptly sent messages to San Jorge and Rivas, inquiring about the boats and expressing his desire to visit both camps. Cañas and Walker, in turn, answered courteously, each expressing his willingness to satisfy his desires, and welcoming his presence.

At sundown on February 10th, the British steam frigate *Esk*, making a regular round of Central American ports, came into the San Juan harbor. Next morning, on seeing Walker's colors on the schooner *Granada*, alongside, Sir Robert McClure, commander of the *Esk*, asked Fayssoux his authority for flying a flag. Fayssoux recorded in his log:

. . . He was answered by the authority of our Government. At 6 p.m. he again sent on board using threats that he would take me prize, or sink me if I did not proceed on board of him with my commission, which I refused to do. After making me three visits and threatening every thing, without effect, he invited me to make a friendly visit which I did.²

At 11 a.m. on the 13th, Captain Davis paid an official visit to Fayssoux aboard the *Granada*. McClure followed suit at noon, and on the 14th went to see Walker in Rivas (see his interview with Walker in Appendix F). Davis went to Rivas on the 18th, when the *Esk* was getting ready to depart for Puntarenas, Costa Rica. He was escorted on the road by a party of Mounted Rangers sent by Walker.

From Rivas, Davis went to San Jorge. Both Walker and the Allies received him cordially and assented without hesitation

²Schooner *Granada's* Log, Item 134, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

to his wishes. He sought to be neutral, but his observations, transmitted to Commodore Mervine, displayed the tenacious racial ideology that connected him to the Walker camp:

. . . If there is one thing in Rivas more noticeable than another, it is the unaffected quiet, the homelike manner of everybody.

The truth is, Commodore, if the Americans establish themselves here, it will be by the same law that the Turks govern the effete races of Asia Minor, the Tartars the Chinese, the British the wealthy but enervated nations of India--a law of nature.

When I passed immediately from the American camp to that of the Allies, and observed the strong contrast between the serious and marked countenances, and the personal proportions of the men of northern origin I had just left; and the mild unthoughtful faces (with large womanly eyes) and the full round forms of the guard drawn up to receive me, half of whom stood with their mouths open, I discerned at once the secret of Walker's frequent successful resistance against such great odds --the possibility of Henningsen's masterly retreat from Granada.³

Davis chatted with his countrymen in the homelike atmosphere of Rivas. Walker told him he could send for the *Narragansett's* boat any time he wished. But he and Charles J. Macdonald, agent of Morgan & Garrison's "Nicaragua Transportation Line" (the very agent who collaborated with Walker in the capture of Granada in 1855) also asked Davis to demand from the Allies the delivery of the Transit Company steamers to Macdonald; that as Guardian and Protector of American property, Davis should undertake to recapture the

³Davis to Mervine (March 4, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives.

river and lake steamers just as he recovered the coal ship's boats. Davis told them that he would think about it.

After returning to San Juan, he decided that such an undertaking would be beyond the province of his duty and, on February 23d, said "No" to Macdonald. Walker retaliated by going back on his word and refused to deliver the boat when Davis sent for it next day.

In San Jorge, the Allied Generals evinced a constant and consistent disposition to oblige Davis in all respects. On the 24th, they delivered the boat in their possession in the exact manner he desired. Commander-in-Chief Xatruch on that date wrote a very temperate letter to Davis, begging him to help enforce the U.S. neutrality laws by preventing the landing in San Juan del Sur of the Walker recruits due to arrive on the next Transit Company steamer from San Francisco.

Davis refused to do it. On March 3d, he replied to Xatruch that the Neutrality Law enacted by the Congress applied only within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States. "And besides, it must be as apparent to you as to me, that if my Government had designs that this ship should take any such active part as you propose in the contentions which at present disturb the peace of this country, it would not have failed to provide me with suitable instructions."⁴

When the *New York Tribune* published the Xatruch-Davis letters, it pointed out several particular instances showing Davis' partiality in favor of the filibusters, and commented:

The correspondence . . . affords abundant evidence, if any were needed, of the disgraceful complicity of our Government in the filibustering robberies and murders of which during the past year Nicaragua has been the scene.

⁴Davis to Xatruch (March 3d, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives.

. . . Capt. Davis is undoubtedly right. Had he been sent to Nicaragua for any other purpose except to afford aid and comfort to the filibusters, he would no doubt have been told so. . . . in all this, Captain Davis must be understood as acting not for himself, but for his Government. Doubtless he conforms to his instructions.⁵

Secret Instructions from Commodore Mervine, or from Secretary of the Navy Dobbin or other filibuster friends in Washington, may have influenced Davis, but it is clear that in Nicaragua he acted in accordance with his own sympathies and convictions.

Early in March, he believed that General Wheat, on the San Juan river, was about to reach "the shore of the lake, around which he has an easy march, through a fine grazing country, filled with provisions and free from the enemy." As for Walker, in Rivas, he had "no doubt, that the arrival of every steamer at this port, adds something to his comfort and efficiency in men, clothing, ammunition, hospital and other stores." On the other hand, he saw the Allied forces demoralized and losing strength: "an army originally ill-constituted," made up of "effeminate people," on the verge of becoming "an undisciplined mob." Hence, he expected a Walker victory, provided that "the external aids he has hitherto relied upon do not fail him."⁶

Under those circumstances, favorable to the filibusters, Davis decided not to interfere. He changed course in April, when he saw Walker's camp collapsing in Rivas.

Despite the April 11 debacle, the Allies had continued to gain ground. On the 15th, they occupied San Juan del Sur. Davis then arranged and became the guarantor of a tem-

⁵"The correspondence . . . ," *New York Tribune*, 5/1/1857, p.4, c.4.

⁶Davis to Mervine (March 4, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives.

porary suspension of hostilities between Colonel Juan Estrada, commanding the Allied forces in town, and Captain Fayssoux, of the schooner *Granada* in the harbor.

On the 22d, with permission from both camps, Davis sent Lieutenant Thomas T. Houston, U.S.N., to evacuate the American women and children from Rivas. Through Houston, he informed Walker that he could command his services. Walker replied, "that if he had occasion to do so, he would request them in writing."⁷

Towards the end of April, Davis knew that Walker was reduced to a few days' provisions in Rivas, and that his ranks were rapidly thinned by desertion. He also knew that the Transit Company intended to send no more steamers to San Juan del Sur. He then learned that Lockridge's forces had retired to the United States, leaving the Costa Ricans in undisputed possession of the San Juan river.

On the 28th, he sent Lieut. D. Porter McCorkle, U.S.N., to Rivas, to obtain the latest and most authentic information from the Allied and the Walker camps, which would determine his future course. The information brought by McCorkle, on the 29th, convinced Davis that Walker's position in Rivas was untenable, and he intervened at once in order to stop the impending massacre of his countrymen. In his own words:

. . . The information brought by Lieutenant McCorkle, who returned on the 29th ult., determined me to go to Rivas the next day.

. . . As soon as certain [unquestionable] information was received of the departure of Colonel Lockridge from the river San Juan, it became apparent that General Walker, now deprived of all possibility of receiving reinforcements, and rapidly consuming his mules and

⁷Davis to Mervine, (April 28, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives.

horses, must either succumb to the superior force of the enemy, or try his fortune in a change of place.

. . . towards the end of April the only resort left to General Walker was to cut his way down to the coast, and take refuge, if possible on board the schooner *Granada*. Here again I am citing the opinion of his friends. According to the best intelligence, such an attempt would only have been the last effort of despair, and would have terminated fatally in less than five miles from Rivas.⁸

Davis reached Allied Headquarters, at Cuatro Esquinas, on the afternoon on the 30th. After half an hour's conference with General Mora, he exchanged several notes with General Walker, followed by three interviews with Henningsen and Waters representing Walker. At the last of them, on the morning of May 1st, they signed an Agreement, reproduced here in Appendix G, to which Walker affixed his signature, in Rivas, later in the day.

Not a single Central American signed the document. Mora simply wrote a letter to Davis, expressing his approval of the terms of the agreement, and thanking him in the name of the governments of Central America for his good offices in bringing the war to a close.

Although both sides welcomed the end of hostilities, they could never have done it alone: neither pure-white American William Walker could have surrendered to a member of the mixed Hispano-Indian race, nor Central American Commander-in-Chief José Joaquín Mora could have signed an agreement with a pirate. On that account, U.S. Navy officer Charles Henry Davis had to originate, arrange, and accept Walker's capitulation in Rivas.

Throughout the negotiations, Davis was impressed by

⁸Davis to Mervine (May 13, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives.

Mora's personality--by his "candor, truthfulness, and, above all, humanity."⁹

Pérez asserts that Generals Xatruch, Martínez and Chamorro wanted Walker to pledge that he would never again invade Central America, but Mora didn't insist on it, because he "wished to end the war and return home, no matter what." Moreover, Salvadoran General Gerardo Barrios was on his way to Rivas with a large force, allegedly to finish Walker. Mora, "whose notorious vanity had been magnified by his triumphs [on the San Juan river], which he flaunted so blatantly that it lowered their merit," was afraid that Barrios might arrive in time to steal from him the glory, and accepted the document that ended the war without the Walker pledge that his brother generals demanded.¹⁰

Davis found less candor, truthfulness, and humanity in his fellow countryman than in the Costa Rican general. In his first note to Walker, Davis told him: "if you will abandon Rivas, I will answer for your personal safety, and for the lives and safe removal of all others, under your command, without exception of rank or nation."¹¹ Walker demurred,

⁹In his May 13, 1857 official report to Commodore William Mervine, Davis recorded: "During all the transactions related in the report, my intercourse with General Mora, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies was intimate. His conduct towards me was marked by freedom, ingenuousness, candor, truthfulness, and, above all, humanity. No frivolous pretenses, none of that turgescence in unessential things which is the attribute of small minds, were ever to be observed in him. His language was simple and intelligible, and being designed to convey no other than an honest purpose, was free from disguise or reservation. The frankness of his manners commanded my entire confidence, and the elevation of his sentiments, my entire respect. I saw in him no less decision than reflection, no less firmness, than kind feeling. Of all the various persons I have met in the Department of Rivas, there is none more estimable and agreeable than General Mora. I have experienced special pleasure in bearing this testimony to his intrinsic worth." Document 85, Microcopy M-89, reel 38, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰Pérez, *Obras*, pp. 315, 333.

¹¹Document No. 86, M-89-38, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

saying that the proposal was vague. But when Davis informed Henningsen of his inalterable determination not to allow the schooner *Granada* to leave port, Walker had nowhere to go except to meekly understand and accept Davis' terms.

During the talks, one more murder in Rivas allowed Davis to assess Walker's (and Kissane's) humanity. The New York press reported it:

WALKER'S RIGHT HAND MAN.

On the 30th day of April, while Gen. Walker, without the knowledge of his men, was negotiating his capitulation, knowing that he was to surrender the next day, one of his soldiers, contrary to a general order, went outside of his lines. He shortly after returned, he having only gone out to get a bottle of aguardiente.

Walker called him up, when he acknowledged his fault and prayed for forgiveness.

"If you have any message to send to your friends," said Walker, in his mild but sarcastic way, "you had better prepare it, for at sundown you die."

Punctually at sunset a platoon of soldiers was drawn up for the execution, and just as the order was given to fire, the soldier appealed to his comrades:

"Boys, you wouldn't shoot a fellow soldier for such a thing as that, would you?"

They raised their rifles and fired over his head. The poor fellow broke and ran, when he was brought to his knees by Lieut. Col. [William Kissane] Rogers, an Irishman, who figures in the list I send you, by a pistol shot. Stepping up to the man, *while in this position*, Rogers placed *his revolver at his forehead and blew out his brains!*

May be there *isn't* a hell. There ought to be, if there is not.¹²

¹²"Walker's Right Hand Man," *New York Tribune*, 5/30/1857, p.6, c.5.

Walker signed his surrender next morning (May 1st). Meanwhile, Henningsen had the cannon, foundry, and ammunition destroyed: by breaking the trunnions and sewing through the carriages of the former, by breaking up the steam engine, fan and cupola of the foundry, and throwing the ammunition and powder into the arsenal yard wells.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, Davis entered Rivas in company with General Zavala and his staff, who attended General Walker and his staff to San Juan del Sur, where the latter embarked on board the *St. Mary's*.

Henningsen stayed behind with Davis. The remnants of Walker's troops--the 240 men able to walk--paraded on the plaza, and the Agreement was read to them in General Orders No. 59, Walker's last at Rivas:

Reduced to our present position by the cowardice of some, the incapacity of others, and the treachery of many, the army has yet written a page of American history which it is impossible to forget or erase. From the future, if not from the present, we may expect just judgment.¹³

Henningsen then transferred the men to Davis, who sent them to Virgin Bay the next morning (May 2d), for repatriation to the United States via Costa Rica and Panama. Lieutenant McCorkle, who accompanied them, found them "In a very destitute condition: many of them were without shoes or clothes necessary for their comfort, wounded, sick, and miserable; many suffering from inveterate ulcers upon the feet and legs; and it seemed almost impossible for them to be conducted through the long march that was before us. All,

¹³ Walker, *The War*, p. 429.

however, were eager to undertake it."¹⁴

Sixty American sick and wounded remained in Rivas, forty of them bedridden in the hospital. The appalling conditions in the hospital, which held as many as 238 patients on January 30th, are vividly described in Appendix H.

Forty natives under Col. Mateo Pineda, the last Nicaraguans loyal to Walker, whom he protected in Article Four of the Agreement, then disbanded and went home. Though few in numbers, they had served him well until the end, especially against the Costa Ricans. Walker acknowledged it in his chronicle to Randolph of the battle of March 23d:

. . . The native boys--for most of them are young Nicaraguans--with us behaved well. They were fierce against the Costa Ricans, and wanted to slay the prisoners who had come hither to ravage and desolate their "país" [country]. We have got, however, about 15 of them--Costa Rican prisoners--well and hearty, and will put them to better use than filling graves. They are excellent for laborers; and I think it well to get our officers and men into the habit of directing native workmen.¹⁵

The 102 Allied prisoners held by Walker were released on May 1st. General Cañas took possession of Rivas on May 2d. Davis and Henningsen went to San Juan, and Davis sent Lieut. John S. Maury, U.S.N., to take possession of the schooner

¹⁴ McCorkle to Mervine (U.S. Flag Ship *Independence*, Bay of Panama, June 18, 1857), M-89-38, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵ Walker then confided to Randolph that it was "remarkable that so many of the poorer class of people have adhered to us," and explained it as follows: "Ignorant as they are of the resources and the feelings and sympathies on which we rely for support from the United States, their confidence in our power is due to the constancy with which we have borne up against famine, pestilence and the thousands the Allies have sent against us" ("News from Nicaragua," *S. Fco. Herald*, 4/21/1857, p.2, c.4).

Granada, in the harbor. Fayssoux refused to give it up without an order from Walker, and Walker at first refused to issue any such order. But when Davis sent Maury accompanied by 100 armed sailors and a howitzer to take immediate forcible possession of the vessel, Walker relented and hurriedly wrote to Fayssoux: "Deliver the *Granada* to the United States."¹⁶

On May 2d at 4:30 p.m., Walker's Nicaraguan flag was hauled down and the United States' Stars and Stripes was run up, in its place, on the schooner; Fayssoux went aboard the *St. Mary's*, and his crew went on shore.

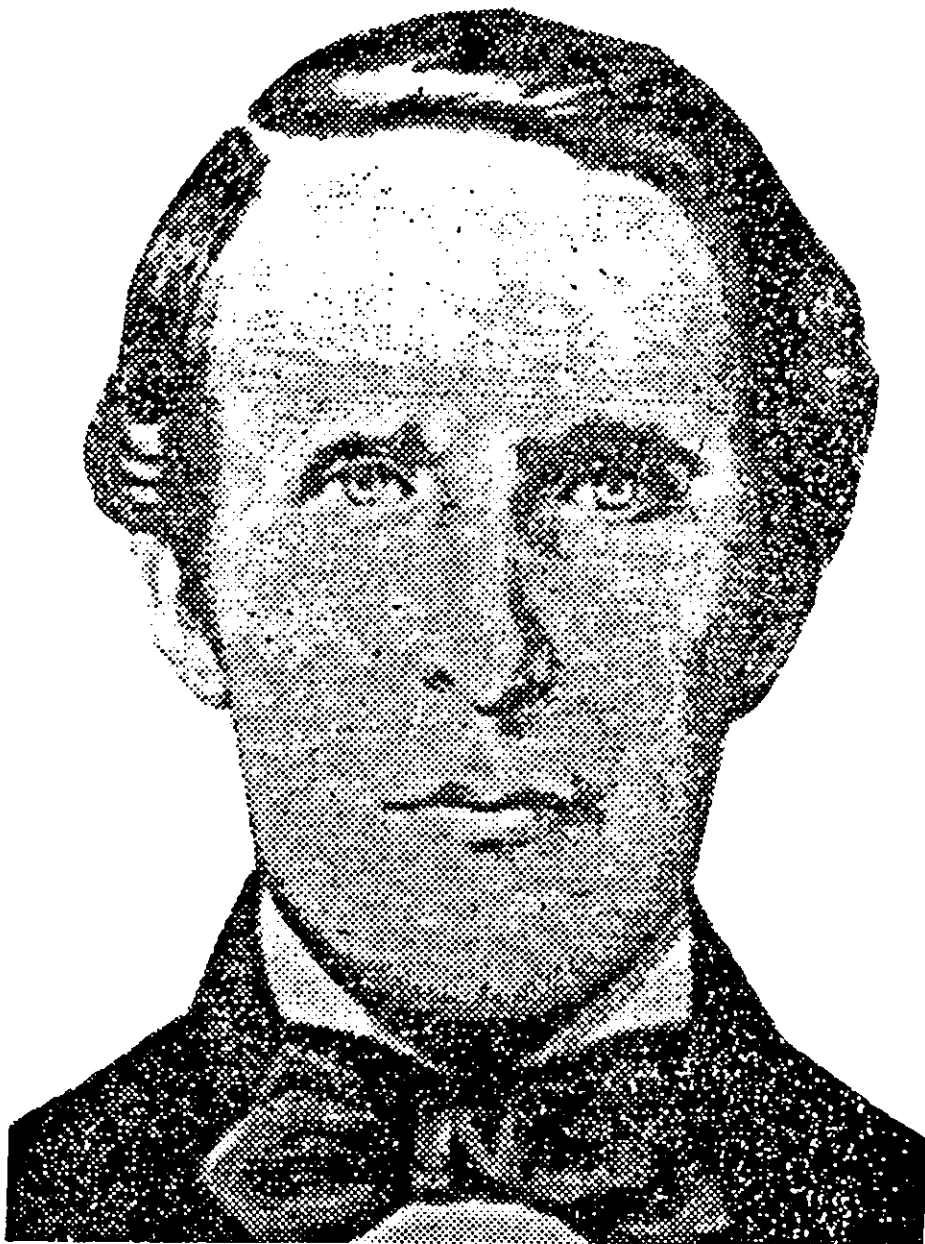
On May 3d, Davis wrote to General Mora, transferring the schooner to him, and ordered Lieut. Maury to give possession of the vessel to any person appointed by Mora to receive it.

On May 4th, at 4:45 p.m., Costa Rica took possession of the *Granada*.

On May 5th, at 8 p.m., the *St. Mary's* left the harbor of San Juan del Sur, for Panama, with Walker and retinue on board--Henningesen, Kissane, Fayssoux, etc.--thirty persons all told.

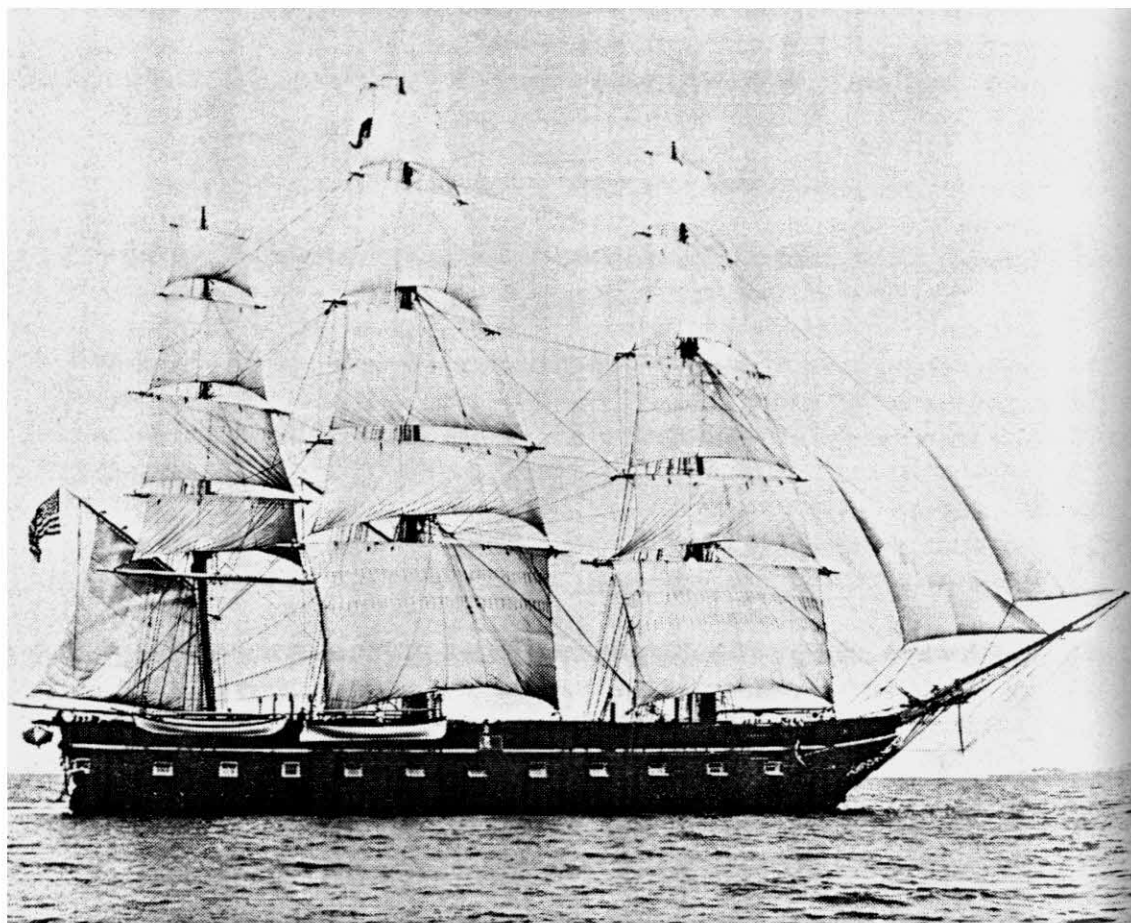
Two years and one day after he sailed from San Francisco, on the *Vesta*, for Nicaragua, the *St. Mary's* took Walker away from its shores. The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny was gone. Central Americans rejoiced. But he would be back, and with him would return, to haunt them, the unasked pledge demanded by Xatruch, Martínez, and Chamorro.

¹⁶ Document No. 95, M-89-38, National Archives, Washington, D.C.



General José Joaquín Mora

"Davis was impressed by Mora's personality--by his 'candor, truthfulness, and, above all, humanity'" (p. 261)



sloop-of-war St. Mary's

"On May 5th, at 8 p.m., the St. Mary's left the harbor of San Juan del Sur, for Panama, with Walker and retinue on board"
(p. 266)



Commander Charles Henry Davis

"originated, arranged, and accepted Walker's surrender in Rivas" (p. 255)

American filibuster

*"When I passed
immediately
from the
American camp
to that of the
Allies, and
observed the
strong contrast
between the
serious and
marked
countenances,
and the
personal
proportions of
the men of
northern origin
I had just left;
...*



... and the mild unthoughtful faces (with large womanly eyes) and the full round forms of the guard drawn up to receive me, half of whom stood with their mouths open, I discerned at once the secret of Walker's frequent successful resistance against such great odds"

(p. 257)

Nicaraguan
lieutenant

