

Spring 5-2017

## **William Walker and the Seeds of Progressive Imperialism: The War in Nicaragua and the Message of Regeneration, 1855-1860**

John J. Mangipano  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

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WILLIAM WALKER AND THE SEEDS OF PROGRESSIVE IMPERIALISM: THE  
WAR IN NICARAGUA AND THE MESSAGE OF REGENERATION, 1855-1860

by

John J. Mangipano

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
and the Department of History  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

---

Dr. Deanne Nuwer, Committee Chair  
Associate Professor, History

---

Dr. Heather Stur, Committee Member  
Associate Professor, History

---

Dr. Matthew Casey, Committee Member  
Assistant Professor, History

---

Dr. Max Grivno, Committee Member  
Associate Professor, History

---

Dr. Douglas Bristol, Jr., Committee Member  
Associate Professor, History

---

Dr. Kyle F. Zelner  
Department Chair, History

---

Dr. Karen S. Coats  
Dean of the Graduate School

May 2017

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## ABSTRACT

### WILLIAM WALKER AND THE SEEDS OF PROGRESSIVE IMPERIALISM: THE WAR IN NICARAGUA AND THE MESSAGE OF REGENERATION, 1855-1860

by John J. Mangipano

May 2017

For a brief period of time, between 1855 and 1857, William Walker successfully portrayed himself to American audiences as the regenerator of Nicaragua. Though he arrived in Nicaragua in June 1855, with only fifty-eight men, his image as a regenerator attracted several thousand men and women to join him in his mission to stabilize the region. Walker relied on both his medical studies as well as his experience in journalism to craft a message of regeneration that placated the anxieties that many Americans felt about the instability of the Caribbean. People supported Walker because he provided a strategy of regeneration that placed Anglo-Americans as the medical and racial stewards of a war-torn region. American faith in his ability to regenerate the region propelled him to the presidency of Nicaragua in July 1856.

However, a prolonged war against an ever-growing international coalition of Central Americans diminished his ability to maintain both the territory and resources necessary to keep Nicaragua sanitary and stable. By February 1857, most Americans abandoned any sentiments of support that they once held for Walker. Lacking support, Walker retreated to the Gulf South as a defeated regenerator. Nevertheless, the continued public discourse concerning Walker as a regenerator continued. Such debates allowed Walker to amass enough followers to launch three more expeditions into Nicaragua before finally being captured and executed in Honduras in September 1860.

Though William Walker did not ultimately succeed as a regenerator, American progressives, such as Theodore Roosevelt, revived his focus on medical and racial stabilization through their own policies in the Caribbean, starting in the 1890s. They did so precisely because they shared the same anxieties about disease and political disorder that originally compelled thousands of Americans to intervene in Nicaragua during the 1850s. The continuity existing between these groups of imperialists suggested that the regenerators, despite their temporary failures, succeeded in nurturing ideas about why Americans needed to intervene in the Greater Caribbean.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Deanne Nuwer for bringing me to the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Nuwer demonstrated great interest in my research while I was still a student at the University of New Orleans. I would also like to thank her for serving as both my major professor and my committee chair. I am honored to be her student.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee. I am grateful that Dr. Matthew Casey and Dr. Heather Stur served on both my comprehensive exam and dissertation committees. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Max Grivno and Dr. Douglas Bristol for joining my dissertation committee. I would not be where I am if not for the proactive, professional mentoring that each of my committee members granted me.

I would like to thank my comprehensive exam committee. Dr. Douglas Chambers has shown incredible devotion to my professional development. I am grateful for his efforts as my professor and comprehensive exam committee member, for he helped me achieve my first publication. I am also grateful for the time spent serving as his teaching assistant, for he has taught me how to help students turn information into knowledge. I would also like to thank Dr. Susannah J. Ural for serving on my comprehensive exam committee as well as for the earlier training I received under her guidance during my first semester here.

I am also grateful for the efforts of Dr. Kyle F. Zelner, Dr. Kenneth Swope, and Ms. Cindy Warren. Their dedication to the professional development of the graduate students is a testament to the integrity of this university.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family. My wife, Sasha Chaudron Mangipano, has been my emotional anchor throughout this dissertation. Her love and support invigorated me to push through the tough spots and work harder. I have never felt a day of academic stress since marrying her that her presence could not cure. I would also like to thank my step-children, Christian, Isaac, and Eliana Orr. They could and did surprise me with their often-colorful commentary, such as “no one wants to hear about disease.” In truth, their criticisms reminded me that I had to convince others why they should want to hear about my research.

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, Darryl and Janice Mangipano. They have provided me unmitigated support throughout my academic career. I am driven to work hard because I know that they take such pride in seeing my progress unfold. I am proud to be their son.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION: CONNECTING WILLIAM WALKER AND THE  
REGENERATION WAR TO EARLY-AMERICAN PROGRESSIVE IMPERIALISM

To our mind, the North, save in invention, is behind the age. The South is the great champion of American Progressiveness . . . We hold that Walker and every man who goes to Nicaragua are champions of the down-trodden; the ignorant; the vilely degraded and oppressed. *New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.<sup>1</sup>

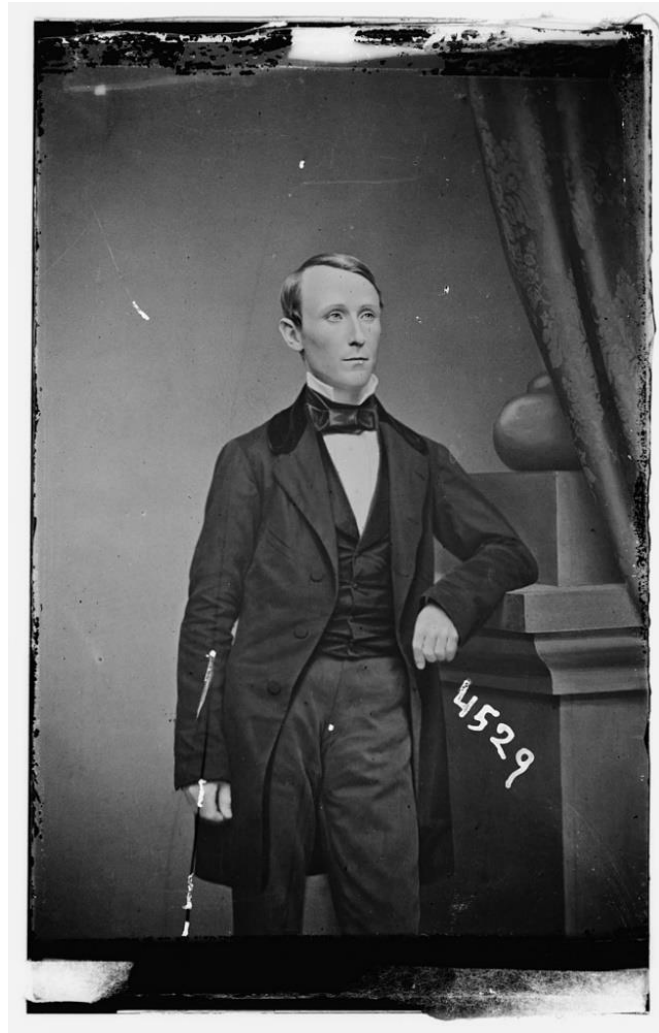


Figure 1. General William Walker<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “The Northern Press and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856. This article will be re-examined in Chapter 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Gen. William Walker*. [Between 1855 and 1865]. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/brh2003002849/PP/>.

## Introduction and Argument

William Walker and his 58 immortals landed at Realejo, Nicaragua on June 11, 1855. They arrived to assist the *Democraticos* in overthrowing that party's rival political enemies, the incumbent *Legitimistas*, in a civil war that had been raging since May 1854. In the same month that they arrived, cholera appeared in the military camps, causing an epidemic that lasted for the duration of Walker's presence there and ultimately caused the death of thousands of soldiers and civilians throughout Central America. Walker, a physician, lawyer, and journalist, utilized his understanding of healthcare, law, and public anxieties to fashion himself the savior of Nicaragua through a campaign that relied on both a racialized restructuring of Nicaraguan society as well as Anglo-American sanitation policies. He portrayed himself as the Providential regenerator of the region.

Walker understood that the American public valued both the political and medical stability of the region, for it offered Americans the safest route to California. The war and disease that came with it alarmed Americans, and Walker responded to such concerns with exacting maneuvers meant to highlight his awareness of these problems. He did not go to Nicaragua to regenerate the people but the region because the American public feared the dilapidation of the land and the Transit Route. Such a nuance represented a shift in thought from earlier regeneration messages that focused on the salvation of Spanish American souls.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Crowe, *The Gospel in Central America, Containing a Sketch of the Country, Physical and Geographical – Historical and Political – Moral and Religious: A History of the Baptist Mission in British Honduras: and of the Introduction of the Bible into the Spanish American Republic of Guatemala* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850). Written in 1850, Crowe's work emphasized the regeneration of Central American people and serves as a marker for understanding how subtle but important the change in emphasis was from people to region. This work will be referenced again in the conclusion.

By October 1855, Walker and the *Democraticos* had defeated the rival *Legitimistas*. Walker negotiated a peace treaty between the two warring parties, one that granted elites from both sides important positions in the new cabinet. This helped solidify his image as a stabilizing agent. However, Francisco Castellón, the *Democratico* leader who brought Walker to Nicaragua and promoted an American colonization policy, died from cholera before the war ended, leaving Walker's fate in an ambiguous position. He utilized his credibility as an emerging regenerator to position himself as the general of the new, post-treaty army. While doing so, he helped Patricio Rivas, an important Nicaraguan ally, become the new president. He also made certain that the fledgling government under Rivas would honor the colonization policies of Castellón, which satisfied his American supporters. Through this new government, Walker hoped to colonize Nicaragua with Anglo-American leaders capable of maintaining an order that would guarantee the region's stability, which he equated with the regeneration of the region.

However, the continuous presence of United States and European expatriates made neighboring states uneasy. Soon many *Legitimist* exiles aligned with Costa Rica, which, in March 1856, declared war specifically on William Walker and not on Nicaragua, itself. The Rivas government lost legitimacy as the war divided its members over its support of Walker, which was further exacerbated by suspicious elections held that June. Walker utilized the naturalization clause of the 1838 constitution to amass enough naturalized Nicaraguans to win a rushed election and became president of Nicaragua in July 1856. For Walker, the election offered the only solution to secure Nicaragua's regeneration from the fate of perpetual disease and instability, which he and

others assumed Spanish American leaders could not help but guarantee for their citizens due to their own leadership faults.

As president, Walker witnessed dramatic socio-political turbulence. He recruited thousands of Americans and Europeans across the United States, though most came from the South, bringing Southern ideas about development and civility. Unlike most “filibustering” campaigns, women and children joined the movement in Nicaragua, a pattern that evinced the confidence that many had in his leadership. President Walker and his literary allies utilized the re-occurring presence of cholera to craft a healthcare message that portrayed Anglo-Americans as successfully overcoming the medical and sanitary shortcomings of the region, which, they believed, justified their presence. His legitimacy in Nicaragua thus rested on his abilities to combat belligerent forces and disease, which Americans deemed necessary for their own future, as well as the introduction of Anglo-American leaders and values that would effectively colonize Nicaragua into civility.

However, these three aspects, healthcare, warfare, and racial order, proved too intertwined for Walker to manage. He continuously lost support and territory as Americans realized that he failed to provide the proper medical care necessary to stabilize Nicaragua. Furthermore, continuous warfare engulfed the sovereign republic into an international crisis that pitted it against both its neighbors and the British Empire. Such failures encouraged previously sympathetic media outlets to rally against his regeneration efforts, which effectively stunted his ability to acquire the reinforcements necessary to defend against an ever-growing international coalition of enemies. Once he lost both

American media support and reinforcements, Walker had little choice but to stall for his retreat, which occurred in May 1857.

Despite lingering doubts about both his stewardship and the legalities surrounding his presence, which collectively hampered his recruitment efforts during subsequent campaigns, he still had moderate success employing his image as a regenerator. He led two more expeditions for Nicaragua, both of which failed. In 1860, as William Walker prepared for what would become his final campaign into Central America, he published *The War in Nicaragua*, a memoir of his military expeditions into both Mexico and Nicaragua.<sup>4</sup> In it, Walker outlined how the regeneration of Nicaragua would protect the Southern way of life, particularly its slave civilization. Walker encouraged his readers to correlate the health, economic, and political problems of Central America to their own economic and social development. Most importantly, he racialized intervention in Spanish America by outlining what he saw as a needed racial hierarchy that could stabilize the region, one which he argued required Anglo-American leadership over Black laborers. With funds and soldiers replenished, he launched his final expedition that summer in 1860, this time under a regeneration banner to liberate the Bay Islands of Honduras from both British and Honduran rule. He hoped this maneuver would justify his right to continue leading Americans on one last campaign to regenerate all of Central America. The attempt led to his capture and execution in September of that year.

Notwithstanding his seemingly inevitable failure, both the support that William Walker received as well as the public discourse surrounding his campaigns evinced a set of ideals, motives, and anxieties that encouraged thousands of Americans and European

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<sup>4</sup> William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (New York: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1860).



immigrants to join him and tens of thousands more to support him with funds and materials as well as with votes for his American political allies. During his six years of campaigning in Central America, and particularly during his tenure in Nicaragua, Walker existed as a reification of American desires to combat Spanish American instability, which they understood as regional elements that jeopardized their own wellbeing. Americans, and especially Southerners, understood that their world was connected to the Greater Caribbean. They feared that instability of any kind in that region would affect them both at home and abroad. Because of such fears, American media inundated the American public with daily news of the actions and hopes of William Walker, his soldiers, his colonizers, and his political friends as they collectively tried to make sense of the Nicaraguan regeneration mission that they enacted.

Approximately thirty years later, early-Gilded Age progressives attempted to make sense of William Walker as they tried to grasp their own roles in the Caribbean. Yet, for almost a century, scholars ignored how the motives and anxieties of Walker, the most notorious American imperialist of the 1850s, echoed into the twentieth century through the words and policies of American Progressives, particularly those of Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>5</sup> Starting in the 1880s, Roosevelt and other progressives utilized almost identical language to describe the need for American intervention throughout Latin America. He and other like-minded progressives manifested these beliefs into the creation of the Platt Amendment in 1901, which provided the United States the right to intervene in Cuba anytime that country's health, economic, or political policies

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<sup>5</sup> The conclusion will cover in greater detail the types of continuities that existed between Walker and his progressive-minded imperial heirs of the Gilded Age.

threatened the wellbeing of the United States.<sup>6</sup> Their policies and speeches effectively revived the Walker regeneration effort.

How Roosevelt influenced the foreign policies of the United States is a keystone of the American imperial story. For decades, historians treated his policies as part of the American exceptionalism narrative, a tale that championed the benevolence of the United States, which was demonstrated as civilizing missions. Most scholars now contend that the use of armed intervention during the Gilded Age evinced a new chapter of economic and cultural imperialism for the still-young republic, even expeditions that did not involve territorial annexation.

Though scholars have periodically offered proof of certain types of connections between Walker and the Gilded Age progressives, there have been significant periods of historiographical silences that have collectively diminished the extent, and sometimes the presence, of the continuities between the two periods and peoples in the greater narratives about American history. All imperial narratives of the United States detail the era of the “Banana Republics,” but most, at best, only glance at antebellum affairs. Almost all general American historical narratives at least cover “big stick diplomacy,” but almost none even cover the filibustering historiography that examines the War in Nicaragua. Though early progressive-era writers, such as Richard Harding Davis and James Jeffrey Roche, captured many of the shared anxieties and desires that motivated Americans to intervene in the Greater Caribbean, during both the 1850s and 1890s, most continuities that survived twentieth-century historiography concerned strategies and results, when

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<sup>6</sup> “Translation of the Proposed Constitution for Cuba: The Official Acceptance of the Platt Amendment, and the Electoral Law” (Washington: Division of Insular Affairs War Department, 1901).

they do appear at all.<sup>7</sup> Until recently, the literature often either treated the filibustering and colonizing efforts of antebellum Americans as isolated harbingers of an imperialism still to come or, worse, as unrelated incidents with only cosmetic similarities and coincidences.

Drastic differences concerning the series of campaigns directed by Walker and the interventions that led to the establishment of the Banana Republics hindered scholars from linking Walker to the progressive era. When Walker wrote *The War in Nicaragua*, many Northerners, Europeans, and Spanish Americans saw him as a war criminal. When Theodore Roosevelt presented what has now become known as the “Roosevelt Corollary,” Americans viewed him as a national hero. Walker failed in his attempt to gain federal support for the removal of Europeans from Central America while Roosevelt used the power of Washington, D.C. to dissuade further European encroachment into the Americas and Caribbean. Walker attempted to attract national support for his wars while honing in on a language that distinctly illuminated his concerns for Southerners. Roosevelt, in turn, successfully drew the entire nation’s attention to Central America while promoting the need to protect the wellbeing of the South. Roosevelt found success by adopting and adapting the Walker message, a parallel lost in the scholarship.

In fact, an equal amount of parallels exist that should have encouraged these connections. Both Walker and Roosevelt landed military forces in Honduras, Walker in 1860 and Roosevelt in 1903 and 1907. Roosevelt even landed troops in Nicaragua in 1907. Roosevelt became the symbol of American exceptionalism with his leadership in

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<sup>7</sup> James Jeffrey Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1891); and Richard Harding Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906). Both of these works will be examined in great detail in the conclusion.

Cuba during the Spanish-American War as well as his subsequent involvement in the peace treaties that granted Cuba its liberation from Spain. Walker conspired with Cuban liberators, such as Mateo F. Pineda and Domingo de Goicouria, to liberate Cuba from Spain fifty years earlier. Americans celebrated Roosevelt as the famous Rough Rider who led the charge on San Juan Hill. Walker mesmerized the public with his daring feats of battlefield courage. And, most importantly, both obsessed over a transit route through Central America. Walker desired control over the route through Nicaragua while Roosevelt ultimately established the Panama Canal. Yet, awareness for such similarities has mostly stemmed from the works of foreign writers, such as Eduardo Galeano.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, William Walker has been left out of the American narrative. Despite the efforts of writers like Galeano, few United States citizens even know who he was. Regardless of his accomplishments and mistakes, scholars have silenced the contributions of Walker to America's foreign policy. The American public's lack of awareness of this man and his exploitations highlights the failure of the field to properly address his significance as a seed of American progressive imperialism.

The principal fault in the historiography rests not in the literature concerning what motivated Gilded Age imperialists, such as Theodore Roosevelt, but instead in the treatment of the motivations of the antebellum colonizers and filibusters. Because most of the filibustering and antebellum colonization attempts did, in fact, fail, their cultural legacies have been more difficult for scholars to pinpoint. Writers have not focused on

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<sup>8</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997 [1971]), 107. In particular, Galeano states that the procession of interferences by the United States in Latin America commenced with William Walker's Nicaraguan campaign. This work will be further mentioned in the conclusion, which explores the nuances and implications of this earlier focus on actions at the expense of ideals.

what inspired people to invade particular locales except in broad approaches that reveal potentially misleading similarities. When they have examined motives, they have focused on general reasons why people became filibusters but have not examined what compelled men to join specific filibustering missions. This has led scholars to attribute the strategies of these civilizers, colonizers, and regenerators as existing as their primary motivating factors without explaining how they chose which locales to conquer. Filibustering, slavery, annexation, colonization, and conquest are all strategies not motives. The question about involvement should move away from why people filibustered to why people filibustered in Nicaragua with Walker.

Often, scholars portray such men, who have almost always been categorized under the umbrella term of filibuster, as pursuing the acquisition of new lands to perpetuate a Southern slaving society. Their conquest and liberation missions of the 1850s have largely been subsumed by historiographical questions concerning secession and the impending crisis.<sup>9</sup> Scholars often treated these missions as an outlet for Southern expansionists to annex new slaving lands. This simplification has silenced the other nuances associated with the inter-dependence to Spanish America that Southerners felt connected them to the region. It dismisses health concerns, racial anxieties, and pursuits for political stabilization in the region, which Southerners found so enticing, as mere sideshows to economic expansion.

While it is certainly the case that many earlier filibustering expeditions into Spanish-America were about annexation to the United States, Walker never planned to

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<sup>9</sup> Eric H. Walther, *The Shattering of the Union: America in the 1850s* (Wilmington, Delaware, 2004). Walther particularly frames the War in Nicaragua as a sectionalized crisis.

annex Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, or Cuba for the direct benefit of the United States. In Mexico, Walker desired to form a sister republic that would share Southern ways of life. In this light, he fashioned himself to be an expansionist of the Southern civilization, but he was not attempting to add a new slave state to the Union. Likewise, in Nicaragua, he ultimately desired a Central American republic that would work with Southern States to revitalize the African slave trade. In Honduras, he hoped to liberate the Bay Islands from British and Honduran rule. In Cuba, he wished to eliminate the Spanish while propping up a sovereign Cuban state that would take part in the slave trade. Walker pursued slavery because, as will be addressed in chapters Five and Six, he saw it as a medical and racial solution to the instability and development problems of the Caribbean. He saw Black labor as being Providentially assigned for slavery in tropical climates; thus, he saw the installation of slavery as a fulfillment of God's plans. Therefore, the standard annexation explanation silences an entire dream of a revitalized Caribbean that relied on the strategy of slaving but not motivated by the actual goal of slavery.

This holds true, to an extent, for William Walker and many of his regenerators. Walker and his supporters embodied a zealous belief that they had to regenerate Nicaragua because it needed stabilization. Economic benefits were not the goals but the rewards for achieving the regeneration of the entire region. Walker did contend that his success depended on the re-installation of African slavery in Nicaragua. However, the regenerators' desires to revive the institution of slavery in Nicaragua should not be viewed as the motivating factor in why thousands of Americans and Europeans, as well as thousands of Nicaraguans, rallied to William Walker's side. Many of his supporters, as will be demonstrated in the proceeding chapters, either did not know that Walker would

pursue slavery or, in many cases, outright demonstrated contempt for the strategy of slaving while still retaining support for Walker. As a result of Walker's own emphasis on the necessity of a successful reinstallation of slavery, scholars glossing over his campaigns have unjustly treated him and his supporters as people pursuing "Slave Power" or, at least individual power through the accumulation of labor and resources. Such an emphasis, in turn, has dissuaded exploration into what motivated that pursuit.

Instead, this dissertation contends that most of Walker's supporters valued the broader pursuit of Nicaragua's regeneration over the more specific pursuit of African slavery in Nicaragua. Participating in a regeneration mission, these men saw themselves as attempting to improve the condition of Nicaragua, which, in turn, would improve the condition of the entire Greater Caribbean. The need for a secure and healthy route to reach California combined with the perceived political stability and healthiness of Nicaragua drew Americans to the region. However, political discontent, a civil war, and the presence of cholera along the newly acquired Transit Route encouraged Americans to perceive Nicaragua as in need of regeneration. Thus, the political and medical stabilization of Nicaragua, and not the acquisition of new slave territory, encouraged Americans to intervene in the regions. Walker provided solutions to such fears and concerns.



Figure 2. Henry Lawrence Kinney<sup>10</sup>

William Walker led one of three American colonization efforts in the region during the 1850s. Americans, for each of these missions, responded to other Americans' medical and political concerns. Cornelius Vanderbilt, as part of his strategy of promoting his newly acquired transit line through Nicaragua, portrayed Nicaragua as a healthy and stable alternative to the disease-ridden Caribbean. Henry Lawrence Kinney promised a civilizing mission along the British-controlled Mosquito Coast, a region inhabited by what Americans perceived to be Black and Indian savages. For the Kinney supporters, his presence, they hoped, would stabilize the region through the economic development that

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<sup>10</sup> Brady, Mathew B., *Henry Lawrence Kinney, half-length portrait, three-quarters to the right*. [Between 1844 and 1855]. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004664117/>.



he promised would be led by Anglo-American political leaders. Kinney centered his government in Greytown, a small port city near the Transit Route, and Americans understood that such a location would ensure the protection of the Route from both savages and the civil war. William Walker arrived in Nicaragua under the premise of protecting the political rights of the liberal party of Nicaragua against tyrannical aristocratic enemies. He built his reputation as a regenerator by combatting diseases, particularly cholera, along the Transit Route. Such concerns, as will be discussed in the conclusion, also encouraged Gilded Age progressives to intervene in the Caribbean. While it is certainly true that William Walker sought the re-installation of African slavery in Nicaragua, Walker perceived such a plan as a means for establishing the regeneration of Nicaragua. Slavery was not the goal but the means for obtaining it. Walker, a physician more so than a military tactician, offered the strategy of slaving as one of several prescriptions for the region's suffering and instability. Walker and his supporters understood the interconnectedness of the Americas. They feared that the occurrence of any sort of imbalance in one region could affect other regions. For the regenerators, the presence of the new Transit Route ensured such ramifications. If Nicaraguans could not guarantee balance in their own nation, the regenerators would. And believing that Anglo-American civilization embodied the pinnacle of civilization, they sought to remedy Nicaragua's troubles by remodeling the region after their own, which they believed to reify success. They chose the Southern civilization as the model for the re-molded Nicaragua.

In conjunction with this belief, many Southerners, by the 1850s, had come to understand themselves as being distinct. Several socio-medical scholars have

demonstrated that Southerners lost faith in Northern medical studies and treatments.<sup>11</sup> They often turned to Caribbean studies to cure diseases that they shared with the Caribbean but rarely with their Northern brethren. Yellow fever and malaria, as they understood the diseases, particularly evinced their interconnectivity with the Caribbean. Throughout the Greater Caribbean, malaria was endemic. Although Southerners understood that yellow fever was not endemic to the United States, they knew that it often came with ships arriving in Southern ports from Caribbean countries. As a result of such beliefs, William Walker and his allies prescribed the development of Southern leaders, Southern physicians, and Southern institutions as treatments for all of the woes that the regenerators encountered in Nicaragua. They believed that such a strategy would defeat disease.

However, it is equally important to realize that William Walker and other regenerators did not seek the regeneration of Nicaraguans as much as they sought the regeneration of Nicaragua. They did not feel obligated to guarantee a place in Nicaragua's social structure for any one person or type of person. They would seek any means possible to achieve the stability of the region, for its instability, both political and medical, threatened Anglo-Americans and Europeans throughout the hemisphere. They

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<sup>11</sup> Ronald L. Numbers and Todd L. Savitt, *Science and Medicine in the Old South* (Baton Rouge and London: LSU Press, 1989); and Todd L. Savitt and James Harvey Young, *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1988). Both of these edited collections include several chapters dealing with this topic. For a more focused examination of the relationship between disease and Southern distinctiveness, please see John Harley Warner's and James H. Cassedy's contributions in *Science and Medicine in the Old South*. Both of these authors demonstrate that Southerners and their respective physicians gravitated towards regional approaches to medicine and away from national ones. Such findings are reinforced in *Disease and Distinctiveness*, which collectively contends that Southerners started perceiving themselves to be distinct from Northerners as a people due to their medical differences. James H. Cassedy, "Medical Men and the Ecology of the Old South." In *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, 166-178; and John Harley Warner, "The Idea of Southern Medical Distinctiveness: Medical Knowledge and Practice in the Old South." In *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, 179-205.

did not automatically seek the removal of Spanish Americans, Indians, and mestizos, as much as they found such inhabitants to be the culprits for the civil war and its subsequent cholera epidemic, two entities that jeopardized both American travel to California as well as the port towns that shared trade and passenger lines with Central America. Walker eventually sought the elimination of Spanish American and *mestizo* leadership, but such plans represented solutions to problems and not visions of power or grandeur.

The pursuit for stabilization by the regenerators served as the seeds for American progressive imperialism, a form of imperialism that defined American diplomacy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the conclusion will demonstrate, Theodore Roosevelt and contemporary progressive-era writers exhibited the same anxieties about racial order, political instability, and sanitation that compelled Americans to intervene almost half a century earlier. These continuities represented the fermenting of a greater progressive mission to bestow idealized American values and methods both domestically and around the Americas. Where the Gilded-Aged progressive diverged was on the specifics behind their strategies, not their ideals. Both groups sought a transit route through Central America. Both groups feared that Caribbean inhabitants and rulers could not hold up to American standards of medical care and sanitation, issues which they both believed jeopardized American safety at home and abroad. Both groups thus utilized such concerns to justify their own interventions. Likewise, such anxieties came engulfed in scientific racism as the antebellum regenerators and the Gilded Aged imperialists shared beliefs in the racial limitations of specific ethnic groups and races as they judged people based on how they could perceive their participation in civilization.

The similarities found in examinations of the anxieties and strategies that the regenerators and Gilded-Age progressives shared suggest continuity and not mere coincidence. Theodore Roosevelt, progressive-era historians, and even fiction writers understood that Walker's exploitations in Central America served as a model for understanding future interventions by Americans into the Greater Caribbean. Writers frequently employed either historical or fictional versions of his affairs as they poked at the ethical boundaries of imperialism. Even when finding Walker to be too ambitious, many writers still agreed with the same medical and racial concerns that the regenerators once displayed in their justification for colonization. As the conclusion will also show, Theodore Roosevelt consistently justified both American intervention and America's post-intervention success based on an almost identical language of sanitation that Walker once used.

Ultimately, this dissertation focuses on the War in Nicaragua and not on the Gilded Age. It highlights how Americans became concerned with Nicaragua as a result of reactionary concerns to developing problems in the sovereign country. Though it would certainly be disingenuous to suggest that no filibustering expeditions occurred as a way to protect the interests of slavers, American intervention in the War in Nicaragua resulted from concerns about political and medical instabilities that manifested after a suspect election led to political dissent, a *coup d'état*, and eventually a civil war. What this dissertation hopes to do is demonstrate that William Walker did not manufacture fear but responded to political, racial, and medical anxieties that encouraged thousands of people to join him and the other colonizers, and even more importantly to financially support him in a quest to "regenerate" a fallen region.

Walker provided a path for regeneration through the racial and medical reordering of Nicaragua, which Americans following his escapades could envision as a plausible solution to Nicaragua's instability. This dissertation, therefore, focuses on the parallels between how participants wrote about their participation in the colonization effort and how contemporary American media either promoted or attacked Walker and his efforts. It will demonstrate that concerns about Nicaragua's sanitary conditions predated William Walker's entry into Nicaragua. It will show that concerns about a need to regenerate Nicaragua also predated his arrival. Through memoirs and journals, it will reveal that regenerators and other colonizers consistently described their efforts as part of a regeneration mission while highlighting shared concerns about Spanish Americans failing to combat disease and maintain civil order in the region. Through an examination of contemporary newspapers and manuscripts, it will prove that journalists and scholars narrated the success of Walker's campaigns in a lexicon focused on the same issues of racial and medical stability that the regenerators espoused in their own writings. It will also demonstrate that, aside from abolitionist newspapers, many newspapers ultimately judged Walker as a regenerator and not a slaver.

This dissertation does not necessarily assume that any one participant or media correspondent necessarily believed in every aspect of the regeneration message nor that they even believed in every word that they wrote. However, Americans entrenched themselves into a belief that other lands could be regenerated. Participants of the public discourse concerning William Walker understood that the parameters for swaying support to or from him rested on control of his image as a successful or fraudulent regenerator. The slavery argument rested within this framework.

Thus, the public discourse about Walker evinced the importance of a regeneration mindset in the mid-nineteenth century. As other scholars, particularly Richard Slotkin, have shown, this regeneration mentality fueled an expansionist attitude that led to the augmentation of Anglo-American territory. In particular, Slotkin demonstrates that American narratives about the need for regenerated lands often connected Puritan emphasis on the salvation of souls to the denigrated conditions of savage lands, which Americans utilized to justify their violently attained acquisitions.<sup>12</sup> What made Walker such an attractive model for Americans to explore regeneration as an imperialist policy rested in the nuances of his message. Walker embodied an evolution of an American mythology, one that stressed the exportation of this vision to lands beyond what Americans considered their own frontier. His vision deemphasized the salvation of the savages at the expense of the regeneration of the land. The exported regeneration narrative of the Walker colonizers emphasized the region, despite earlier Protestant missionaries' attempts to emphasize the souls of the natives there. Though he and his followers discussed Providence throughout their writings, they no longer focused on the salvation of the inhabitants but, instead, on their potential to participate in civilization. Therefore, the Walker regeneration plan evinced a strand of regeneration that would ferment into America's foreign policy, a strand that emphasized the region's wellbeing over the peoples'.

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 21. Richard Slotkin demonstrates how colonial Puritans developed an American narrative that depicted colonists as participating in the salvation of their savage neighbors by conquering them and their lands.

To demonstrate the importance of how Walker portrayed his regeneration message, this dissertation is divided into six more chapters. The next three chapters offer a chronological account of the War in Nicaragua. Chapter Two chronicles when Americans took interest in Nicaragua and why they did so. Using both newspapers and travel monologs, particularly those of Ephraim George Squier, it highlights the timing of the arrival of yellow fever in Brazil to demonstrate that the presence of this disease in a locale once thought to be immune to it encouraged Americans to seek out a new “healthy” Caribbean alternative.<sup>13</sup> It will demonstrate how Cornelius Vanderbilt utilized a sanitary message to promote both Nicaragua and his newly acquired Transit Route that passed through it, which encouraged Americans to see Nicaragua as a healthy locale. It will then establish, using contemporary American newspapers, how political unrest in Nicaragua, the subsequent civil war, and the arrival of cholera created racial, political, and sanitary anxieties among interested Americans. Finally, it will reveal how William Walker prioritized order over battlefield stratagem as a way to portray himself as an agent combatting disease.

Chapter Three shows how the American public viewed the Walker-Rivas administration, the post-civil war government that championed itself as bringing order to a war-torn nation. It demonstrates that, during this period, both the American media and William Walker’s supporters explicitly attached a regeneration message to William

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<sup>13</sup> Ephraim George Squier, *Nicaragua: Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal* (New York: D. Appleton, 1856); Squier, *Notes on Central America: Particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador: Their Geography, Topography, Climate, Population, Resources, Productions, Etc., Etc., and the Proposed Honduras Interoceanic Railway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855); Squier, *Travels in Central America, Particularly in Nicaragua* (New York: D. Appleton, 1853); and Squier, *Waikna: Or, Adventures on the Mosquito Shore* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855).

Walker's colonization plan. This chapter chronicles the ebb and tide of support that Walker received from both Northern and Southern media outlets to reveal that regeneration narratives consistently appeared for public consumption in American print culture. It will link the flow of this discourse to the particular events and policies that captivated the media as well as his allies to explain why Walker lost and gained media momentum. In doing so, it will highlight that Americans understood regeneration in terms of how much current and future access they would have to a healthy Transit Route. Both the American media and Walker's allies responded to these concerns by looking for signs of disease and political uprisings to predict the success of this new administration, which they saw as intricately tied to the Transit Route. Underneath the surface of these claims rested uncertainty about the ability of the three Anglo-American colonizers, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Henry Lawrence Kinney, and William Walker, to work together, fears that proved true. This tension encouraged Americans to take sides and choose which form of regeneration they would support as the rivalries led to a schism over control of the Transit Route and a new, international war led by Costa Rica and funded by Vanderbilt against the Walker-Rivas regime. As such events unfolded, the American media judged the Walker-Rivas regime by its ability to maintain a healthy and orderly Nicaragua during this crisis. This new invasion ultimately led to both the splintering of the Walker-Rivas regime and Walker's subsequent ascendancy to the presidency.

Chapter Four reconstructs the wavering support that Walker received after ascending to the presidency. It demonstrates that Walker's strategy of regeneration, one of off-field racial ordering and healthcare, failed to stem the tide of international aggression led by Costa Rica and backed by both Commodore Vanderbilt and Great



Britain. It highlights that Walker faced criticisms concerning his legitimacy as a regenerator before and after his call to reinstitute slavery in Nicaragua. It demonstrates that, aside from the abolitionist newspapers, much of the criticisms that the American media presented concerned not moral questions about slavery but political questions about Nicaragua's potential as a member of the Union. It shows that the American public could and did distinguish arguments about Walker's legitimacy from those about his possible relationship with James Buchanan as the media tended to promote Walker as a regenerator while criticizing Democrats for trying to annex Nicaragua as a slave state. It shows that most of the criticisms that cost Walker support concerned his inability to maintain land, order, and sanitary conditions. As Walker lost territory to the Allied Coalition that combatted him, Walker failed to maintain sanitary towns and camps as well as the necessary supply lines to do so, which resulted in desertion and disease. For many of his supporters, especially those such as *The New York Herald*, who wavered in its support of Walker since his arrival in Nicaragua, Walker's eventual decision in November 1856 to destroy Granada as part of his regeneration policy served as proof that Walker could not succeed in stabilizing Nicaragua. From December 1856 until his retreat to the Gulf Coast in May 1857, newspapers criticizing Walker increasingly portrayed him not as a slaver but as a failed regenerator as they searched for a new solution to end the wars and disease in Nicaragua. Upon returning to the United States, Walker and his supporters continued to utilize print culture to revitalize Walker's image as a regenerator as they placed blame for his failures on Vanderbilt, the British, and European immigrants. Such a strategy encouraged hundreds of recruits to join him on three more expeditions between 1857 and 1860.

Chapters Five and Six thematically analyze the regeneration message that fueled six years of colonization attempts under William Walker. Chapter Five examines the medical message attached to the public discourse concerning Walker and focuses on how Walker utilized his medical expertise to craft an image of himself as a savior of Nicaragua. It demonstrates his focus on studying the spread and virulence of different perceived strands of cholera, information which Walker used to maintain sanitary conditions within his American camps and settlements as well as the Transit Route. It shows that Walker utilized his own soldiers to serve as sanitary agents, which provided him a favorable reputation among Nicaraguan peasants whom Spanish American officers previously made responsible for the disposal of the diseased corpses that cholera left behind. It highlights Walker's use and promotion of a large and highly respectable medical staff in his newly designed hospitals, which served as the crux of his sanitation message. Finally, it reinforces that Walker's ultimate failure to maintain sanitary conditions lost him credibility in the eyes of many Americans, particularly in the Northern media.

Chapter Six examines the particulars of the racial re-ordering that Walker attempted in Nicaragua as part of his regeneration message. Walker and his allies portrayed Spanish Americans, Indians, *mestizos*, *mulattos*, and Blacks as incapable of administering a civilized society. In the place of such groups, the regenerators insisted that only Anglo-Americans could stabilize and develop the region. While doing so, they also offered warnings against other white European civilizations, particularly the British, arguing that the Castilian and British rulers did not desire a developed region, which, they felt, eliminated Europeans from consideration. The colonizers, prioritizing the

regeneration of the region over that of the people, concluded that Anglo-Americans needed to govern African labor for Nicaragua to reach its Providential potential. Walker linked the desired arrival of African slave labor and the governance of them by Anglo-American leaders to a, if only incidental but perceived inevitable eugenics policy. Walker contended that such changes would facilitate the breeding-out and eventual extinction of the mixed-races in Nicaragua, which he portrayed as anathemas to civility by relying on scientific racism espoused by the famed physician Josiah Nott of Mobile, Alabama. Similarly, this chapter also illuminates that such conversations blurred scientific racism with environmental determinism, making such contestations about race attractive to a large swath of the American population.

The conclusion offers an extended look at the continuities that existed between how the Gilded Age progressives wrote about their presence in the Greater Caribbean to how Walker and his supporters wrote about their regeneration campaign in Central America. It first examines the political speeches and policies associated with two major events: the creation of the Platt Amendment and the development of the Panama Canal. It especially highlights the consistent emphasis that Theodore Roosevelt placed on sanitation to demonstrate the parallel concerns that he and his constituents shared with William Walker and his respective supporters by illuminating what both groups saw as the inevitable necessity for Anglo-American control over sanitation in the region. It then examines how both historians and fiction writers of the era who wrote about Walker tried to make sense of future American involvement in the region. They did so by establishing their awareness of the importance of the racial and medical aspects of Walker's regeneration message as being relevant to their own future interventions in the region.

Accordingly, it contends that the active utilization of Walker as a point of debate revealed that the similarities in public discourse evinced continuity and not coincidence.

Ultimately this dissertation does not argue that the Nicaraguan colonizers of the 1850s were Progressives but that their anxieties and concerns served as some of the seeds of progressivism. It argues for a greater need to link the War in Nicaragua to the larger American narrative of Banana Republic imperialism. Walker and Roosevelt spoke of the same problems and offered the same strategies to justify Anglo-American presence in the Greater Caribbean. Likewise, Walker's supporters and detractors fought over a public debate that Gilded-Age writers found so familiar that they felt obliged to resurrect Walker as either a historical or fictional character to discuss American involvement in the region decades later. They looked to this campaign for answers and found both inspiration and wariness in the evidence they uncovered or, especially in the case of the fiction writers, manifested as literary tools.



Figure 3. Government Map of Nicaragua approved by General Walker<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Jocelyn, Albert H. *Government map of Nicaragua: from the latest surveys ordered by President Patricio Rivas and Genl. William Walker; executed under the supervision of the Señor Fermín Ferrer,*

## Bibliographic Essay

This bibliographic essay focuses on the major contributions to this subfield after the 1920s to understand why there is a disconnect between the Walker literature and the greater American imperial narrative.<sup>15</sup> Regrettably, outside of the dedicated scholars in this subfield, American historiography has too often only glanced at the significance of William Walker and his interests in Latin America.

Unfortunately, many writers after 1920 relegated the War in Nicaragua to a “great man” history that underscored his successes and catastrophes. Professional historians sought to explain the failure of Walker to retain possession of Nicaragua, a question which they valued at the expense of questions concerning why he did it. Many retained racist assumptions originally posited by Walker’s allies about the inevitability of American civilization, while looking for reasons to explain why Walker failed, usually by attacking his personal character or the shortcomings of those whom he trusted with important positions of power. Many stressed dishonorable personnel while highlighting their military and political blunders to explain why Walker failed.

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*Governor of the Western Department, 1856*. New York: A.H. Jocelyn, 1856. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004629018/>.

<sup>15</sup> Some of the important American writers before 1920 will be examined in the conclusion, where their writings are treated as primary sources that highlight the relationship between early-Progressive era discourse and American imperial ambitions.

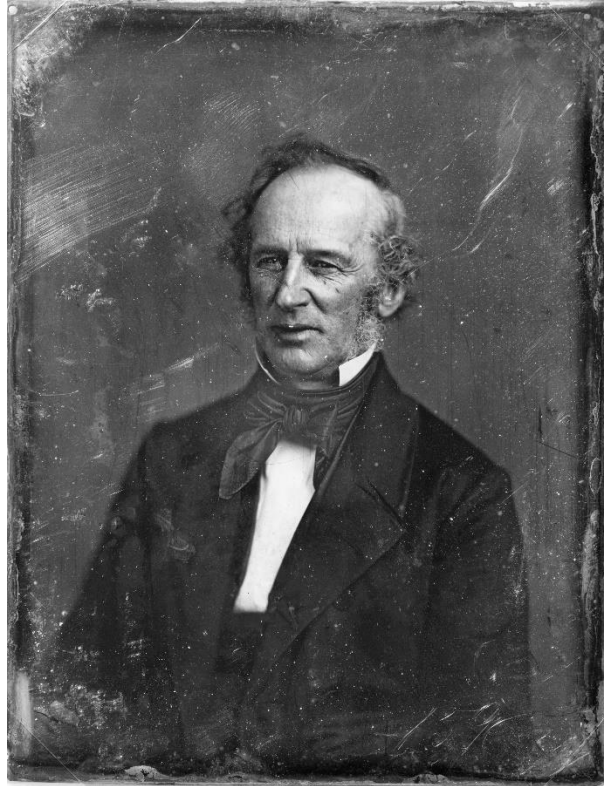


Figure 4. Cornelius Vanderbilt<sup>16</sup>

Though popular history writers, such as Merritt Parmelee Allen, Albert Z. Carr and Frederic Rosengarten maintained a biographic approach for examining the war, these writers did shed light upon social and cultural reasons as to why Walker did not succeed, but they did not stray far from that ultimate question nor from the “great man” formula. Allen highlights Walker’s inability to understand the cultural norms of Nicaragua.<sup>17</sup> Carr emphasizes political rivalries within the United States stemming from diplomatic failures around the world.<sup>18</sup> Rosengarten takes a more objective stance on racial factors and

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<sup>16</sup> Brady, Mathew B., Approximately. *Cornelius Vanderbilt, head-and-shoulders portrait, slightly to left, with side whiskers*. [Between 1844 and 1860]. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004664073/>.

<sup>17</sup> Merritt Parmelee Allen, *William Walker: Filibuster* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1932), 82-83.

<sup>18</sup> Albert H. Z. Carr, *The World and William Walker* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

Manifest Destiny than his predecessors by illuminating how both internal and external factors allowed for both Walker's success and eventual retreat. Rosengarten also frames Walker's conquest as one to "regenerate" Central America through the reinstallation of slavery in Nicaragua.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, Rosengarten's analysis has not experienced the proper attention that it deserves as it received unfavorable book reviews for its lack of new primary sources and became lost in the shuffle of popular history that consumed this small subfield.

Though the history of Walker was dominated by popular history accounts, starting in the 1970s, United States historians began analyzing how cultural attitudes about Manifest Destiny influenced how filibusters, financiers, politicians, and the general public viewed filibustering missions. In doing so, they redirected the study of filibustering away from the biographical military histories that dominated the field and towards academic explanations that attempted to frame filibustering as part of United States history.

In particular, Robert E. May and Charles H. Brown provide two different approaches to studying filibustering that reveal both the magnitude and frequency of filibustering as a cultural phenomenon. In *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire*, May argues that filibustering increasingly shifted from an American strategy into a Southern one to protect slavery while examining Southern reactions to the failures of the United States to annex Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua to reveal why Southerners increasingly turned to filibustering.<sup>20</sup> In *Agents of Manifest Destiny*, Brown observes the

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<sup>19</sup> Frederic Rosengarten, *Freebooters Must Die! The Life and Death of William Walker, the Most Notorious Soldier of Fortune of the Nineteenth Century* (Wayne, PA: Haverford House, 1976), x.

<sup>20</sup> Robert E. May, *The Southern Dreams of a Caribbean Empire* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1973).



diplomatic and political dealings of the administrations and politicians concerned with the promoting and stopping of filibustering missions. He highlights the tensions within the Pierce and Buchanan administrations, especially over the Ostend Manifesto, that affected both Walker and Narciso López in their respective campaigns.<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, Brown argues that the personal motivations of all involved filibustering parties were so complex and diverse that no thematic interpretation can accurately explain the filibustering trend. Both May and Brown explore how filibustering polarized the belief in Manifest Destiny, which, in turn, encouraged a sectionalized approach to understanding the War in Nicaragua.

Over the last twenty-five years, scholarship on Walker has examined the cultural significance of his expeditions. Scholars have begun examining how filibustering illuminated gendered tropes connected to expansionism and Manifest Destiny. Scholars now provide a social and cultural analysis of the United States military's relationship to the filibustering expeditions to explain why men filibustered. Current scholarship examines how people described filibustering and filibusters. Modern writers show that United States citizens often perceived filibustering as an alternative embodiment of United States principles that accentuated chivalrous characteristics.

Once more, in "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny," May provides a demographic analysis of filibustering to explain who joined on such expeditions, particularly the Nicaraguan campaigns. Many filibusters had previous experience in the military and often left it to serve on expeditions. The comparable pay

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<sup>21</sup> Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 1980), 49, 98-119, 425.

and promised benefits of land enticed many men desperate for work. Others were either very young or foreign.<sup>22</sup> For many foreigners, May argues that filibustering shielded them from nativism and job discrimination.<sup>23</sup> But it also served as a chance to explore new lands during an era when the military was not engaged in overseas conflicts. He reveals how many perceived it as a chance to establish military careers while serving for good causes under manly leaders. However, he contends that, for the vast majority, filibustering served individualistic needs, which ultimately reinforced Brown's earlier assertion. Most, he contends, could not discern a difference between it and the many other career choices that Americans made, such as settling the West or fighting Indians on the border of Mexico.

Amy S. Greenberg augments the cultural and social analyses that Brown and May established by exploring how people understood the war. She illuminates how Walker became a "key cultural icon" of the 1850s.<sup>24</sup> Greenberg argues that a "national conflict over the relationship between character and appearance" affected domestic reception of Walker's conquests.<sup>25</sup> Greenberg reveals how United States citizens scrutinized Walker's dress, mannerisms, poses, writings, and actions to determine his manliness. She shows how both supporters and detractors found Walker's character difficult to grasp.<sup>26</sup> She also demonstrates how close the public came to creating a cult of personality around Walker, which required attacks on his sexuality and gender to combat support for his cause.

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<sup>22</sup> Robert E. May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny: The United States as a Cultural Mirror," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 3 (Dec. 1991): 861.

<sup>23</sup> May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny," 863.

<sup>24</sup> Amy S. Greenberg, "A Grey-eyed Man: Character, Appearance, and Filibustering," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 674.

<sup>25</sup> Greenberg, "A Grey-eyed Man," 676.

<sup>26</sup> Greenberg, "A Grey-eyed Man," 675.

Greenberg furthers May's study of gender by exploring how men envisioned Nicaragua and their roles in it. She compares the gendered understanding of Walker and his mission to travel narratives of Nicaragua and other locations subject to filibustering. Greenberg reveals how national magazines and newspapers portrayed the lands as feminine and fertile. She reveals how many Americans perceived Walker as fulfilling a manly duty that Central American men could not by conquering Nicaragua.

Robert E. May, in *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*, examines both the actual attempts by filibusters as well as the fear of potential international incidents that swept the media throughout the United States.<sup>27</sup> He argues that filibustering had more of an impact on the daily lives of United States citizens than anywhere else. Though men came from all parts of the United States and the world to participate in filibustering expeditions, May reveals how politicians such as Henry Clay and Pierre Soulé altered the demographic support of filibusters through their campaigns, rhetoric, and actions. He also places the War in Nicaragua into a transatlantic diplomatic context. He reveals how, despite efforts by several presidents to combat filibustering, limited federal resources prevented Washington from stopping many expeditions, which strained diplomatic relations with many European and Spanish American states. May also demonstrates how filibustering weakened British hegemony in Central America.<sup>28</sup> He shows that because of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, the presence of Vanderbilt, and that of Walker, Great Britain relinquished its presence on the contested Mosquito Coast, which granted more sovereignty to Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

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<sup>27</sup> Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 238-247.

In “Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women’s History,” May returns to social questions about who supported Walker and highlights female participation in filibustering. Though considered a masculine activity, many women supported the mission with parades, songs, and political discourse. Women like Anna Ella Carroll vocally supported Walker through her publications.<sup>29</sup> Unlike most filibustering expeditions, women migrated with soldiers and settlers to Nicaragua under Walker’s administration. United States citizens perceived migration under Walker as an alternative form of family settlement.<sup>30</sup> May examines the discourse between men and women to demonstrate the morale boosts that these women gave filibusters. Thus, United States politicians and ambassadors had to account for entire families when deciding upon how they would diplomatically handle the war.

Scholars have also focused on other cultural aspects, such as identity building and the significance of propaganda in imperial discourse, to better understand the War in Nicaragua. In particular, Jeffrey H. Solomon demonstrates how Walker carefully sanitized his actions in his autobiographical account of the war. Solomon’s study contextualizes the gendered discourse examined by May and Greenberg by showing how Walker crafted a “subjective imperialist view of the occupation.”<sup>31</sup> Solomon reveals how Walker used the third-person narrative to promote the legitimacy of his rule. Though Walker detested being called a filibuster, he did associate himself with the social construct of Manifest Destiny. Walker fashioned his literary self as the embodiment of

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<sup>29</sup> Robert E. May, “Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women’s History: Gender, Filibustering, and America’s Quest for Empire,” *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (Dec. 2005): 1170.

<sup>30</sup> May, “Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women’s History,” 1166.

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey H. Solomon, “Tortured History: Filibustering, Rhetoric, and Walker’s ‘War in Nicaragua.’” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 31 (2011): 112.

Anglo-American civility by masking actions that the public could and would otherwise deem barbaric.

North American scholars have also examined the memory of the war in the late nineteenth century. Historians today explore how the War in Nicaragua affected the social constructs of nationality in the late-nineteenth century. Steven Palmer explores how Costa Ricans developed a national identity around a hero from the war. Brady Harrison shows how fiction writers continued to utilize filibustering as a subject to explain United States imperialism. In the late-nineteenth century, writers and politicians who invoked images from the war targeted audiences that consisted of both people old enough to remember the war and those born after it. Both authors reveal how memories affected cultural attitudes towards United States relations with Central American states.

In “Getting to Know the Unknown Solider,” Steven Palmer shows how Costa Ricans positioned their state in the Caribbean sphere around the adoption of a national hero and the co-opting of the War in Nicaragua into its own *Campaña Nacional*. Palmer demonstrates how, during the war, President Mora employed a language that framed the filibusters as outlaws violating the laws of both Central America and the United States. Palmer shows how the Central American public and governments justified their own declarations of war that led them onto Nicaraguan soil using a language that confirmed their understanding of Walker as a rogue and unrepresentative of the United States. Mora embraced a dualistic patriotism that promoted state and regional constructs of national identity without evoking anti-United States rhetoric.

Palmer reveals how, under the threat of another Central American imperial conquest by Justo Rufino Barrios of Guatemala in 1885, Costa Ricans and Hondurans

developed a hero, Juan Santamaría, to evoke patriotic military action against the dictator. Barrios embraced the dualistic identity of Mora while formulating a strategy of aggression Costa Ricans associated with Walker. The same year that Barrios declared his intentions for a new Central American union, a Honduran writer named Alvaro Contretas released “*Un Héroe Anónimo*,” an article that circulated in Costa Rica.<sup>32</sup> This article highlighted Santamaría’s sacrifice against the filibusters. Within weeks, Costa Rican writers began calling attention to other heroes that embodied their nation through daring feats during the war. Costa Ricans embraced these heroes and the war and slowly changed how they explained it. Palmer reveals how, until Barrios’s declaration of intent to reunite Central America in 1885, the war against Walker was known throughout Central America as the *Campaña Nacional Centroamericana*. After this decision, Costa Ricans adopted a language that explained the war as their own national war. Palmer contends that these heroes and the war became the foundation of Costa Rican national identity.

In “The Young Americans,” Brady Harrison focuses on two novels: *The Crusade of the Excelsior* and *Soldiers of Fortune* to reveal how the War in Nicaragua influenced American expressions of imperialism. These two works, both written after Reconstruction, revealed how United States citizens remembered the expeditions. Richard Harding Davis’s *Soldiers of Fortune* celebrated the ideals of Walker and was the third bestselling novel of 1897. Bret Harte’s *The Crusade* challenged the value of both

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<sup>32</sup> Steven Palmer, “Getting to Know the Unknown Soldier: Official Nationalism in Liberal Costa Rica, 1800-1900,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, no. 1 (Feb. 1993): 45.

filibustering and economic imperialism.<sup>33</sup> Harte created a character, based on both William Walker and Simon Bolivar, who relied on charm to attract people to an expedition that exploited both filibusters and native inhabitants. Davis used similar images as Harte but utilized them to argue for United States military and economic intervention in Central America. Though the two writers presented diverging views on extralegal interference, Harrison argues they represented a larger late-nineteenth century discourse of the role of the United States in the world. Harrison reveals how Harte, despite his warnings, still displayed the specter of imperialism, for he argued for an alternative form of United States presence in Central America based on education and business practices. With many readers old enough to remember the War in Nicaragua, Walker served as a polarizing literary medium to discuss economic and racial imperialism.

Harrison also examines, in *Agent of Empire*, how Walker represented Ralph Waldo Emerson's imperial vision as well as how his embodiment of that figure served as a literary trope to inspire Theodore Roosevelt and other pro-interventionist citizens. Harrison focuses on the "imperial self" to explain how Walker identified himself as one with the nation but also as one with the right to mold surrounding nations to that identity.<sup>34</sup> He portrays Walker as an agent of empire in the world. However, he depicts

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<sup>33</sup> Brady Harrison, "The Young Americans: Emerson, Walker, and the Early Literature of American Empire," *American Studies* 40, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 88.

<sup>34</sup> Harrison, *Agent of Empire, William Walker and the Imperial Self in Literature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 16-26. Harrison's work will be explored in more detail in the conclusion, as well as a few of the pieces of fiction that he has examined in both *Agent of Empire* as well as "The Young Americans." I argue that Harrison has underemphasized the continuity that existed between the regenerators and the progressives who wrote about them decades later. I contend that such under-emphasis occurred because Harrison's studies relied on secondary literature to explore Walker, for his focus is almost completely on primary literature from the early-Progressive Era. Harrison does not portray the regenerators as being earnest in their employment of the word regeneration. Therefore, the conclusion

the regeneration discourse as more of a justification for actions than as evincing any genuine motivating factors. Instead, he highlights the self-interest at hand in filibustering as the motivating factors of the antebellum campaigns associated with Walker.

Collectively, this newer research reveals that twentieth century North Americans writers hindered scholarly studies of the subject and relegated most United States publications to the field of popular biography and military reconstruction. For about a hundred years, Walker remained a divisive symbol of United States hegemony. Yet, it was not until historians embraced social and cultural methodologies that diverted scholarly attention away from Walker's validity and ability could historians explore what Walker signified and how he affected diplomacy and culture throughout the Americas. The cultural turn has opened new scholarly paths for exploring previously how filibustering studies augment diplomatic history. However, what remains to be done is a thorough examination of the continuity between what motivated the 1850s colonizers and as well as how Americans judged their success to how Gilded Age Americans understood their own interventions and successes in the Caribbean.

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of this dissertation uses some of the same literature that he has explored to demonstrate that the similar motives expressed by both the regenerators and Progressives to argue for scholars to depict continuity between them.



## CHAPTER II – THE ORIGINS OF THE NICARAGUAN REGENERATION

### NARRATIVE AND THE SEEDS FOR A REGENERATION RIVALRY

“The Mosquito Bite that Changed History” – Meigs O. Frost, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1946<sup>35</sup>

#### Introduction

On October 20, 1946, almost ninety years after William Walker first landed in Nicaragua, Meigs Oliver Frost of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* released an article called “The Mosquito Bite that Changed History.” In this article, Frost, a locally renowned author, celebrated for such works as *I’m Alone* and *A Marine Tells it to You*, directly linked the participation of William Walker in the Nicaraguan civil war to the mosquito bite that killed his fiancée, the “lovely Ellen Gait Martin.”<sup>36</sup> Frost contended that the “[f]abulous William Walker was driven to fantastic feats,” after his fiancée died from malaria. As Frost explained, with the death of Ms. Martin, Walker lost his sanity.

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<sup>35</sup> Meigs O. Frost. “The Mosquito Bite that Changed History,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1946.

<sup>36</sup> Meigs O. Frost. “The Mosquito Bite that Changed History,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1946. By 1946, Frost had gained public notoriety in the area for several publications, including *I’m Alone* and *A Marine Tells it to You*. Frederic May Wise and Meigs Oliver Frost, *A Marine Tells It to You* (New York: Sears & Company, Inc., 1929); and Jack Randell and Meigs Oliver Frost, *I’m Alone* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1930).

Some scholars and contemporaries, particularly Costa Ricans, consider the war that led to Patricio Rivas’s ascendancy to the presidency as a separate war from the one fought by the Rivas and Walker administrations against the Allied forces of Central America. As a result, there are many different names utilized to describe the events that took place between 1854 and 1860. Some have referred to the war that took place between May 1854 and November 1855 as the Granada-Leon War, Granada-Leon Civil War, or as simply the Nicaraguan Civil War. Those who distinguish the events as separate wars usually refer to the war that started with Costa Rica’s declaration of war in March 1856 as the “Filibuster War,” or La Guerra Nacional. Others, such as William Walker, described the entirety of events as one long war and referred to it as “the War in Nicaragua.” I have chosen not to capitalize “civil war” because I am not distinguishing this point of the war as separate from the entirety of the war that occurred. I am simply referring to the war as a civil war. I, like Walker, believe that the phrase “The War in Nicaragua” is the best descriptor, since international forces participated throughout the entirety of it. I contend that the civil war, itself, was an international war. Its geopolitical footprint could be felt, as early as 1854, in Guatemala and Honduras. Thus, scholars who divide the phases of the war in an effort to criminalize the actions of Walker distort the events.

He left his newspaper, *The New Orleans Crescent*, closed his law office, and moved to San Francisco to join in the excitement of the California gold rush. Ultimately, Frost further claimed that Walker would never have left for Nicaragua if not for malaria.

In doing so, Meigs O. Frost revitalized the remnants of William Walker's message of regeneration.<sup>37</sup> He linked the Gulf South and Central American residents through a story of disease and warfare. He dismissed the causes of the Nicaraguan civil war that led to the head of the *Democraticos*, Francisco Castellón, offering a contract for Walker's service.<sup>38</sup> He did not mull over American expansion or Manifest Destiny. Instead, Frost focused on the medical motives and experiences of General William Walker. For Frost, the actions of Walker resulted from the terror and grief caused by a little insect, specifically by the malaria-carrying *anopheles* mosquito that killed Ellen Gait Martin.

Meigs O. Frost provides one of many tales of William Walker. Yet, the New Orleans writer chose a storyline that had been largely forgotten by scholars at the time of his writing. Since then, some scholars, such as Amy S. Greenberg, Frederic Rosengarten, and Brady Harrison, have resurrected the importance of the regeneration narrative.<sup>39</sup> But

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<sup>37</sup> By 1946, Frost had gained public notoriety in the area for several publications, including *I'm Alone* and *A Martine Tells it to You*. Frederic May Wise and Meigs Oliver Frost, *A Martine Tells It to You* (New York: Sears & Company, Inc., 1929); and Jack Randell and Meigs Oliver Frost, *I'm Alone* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1930).

<sup>38</sup> *Walker en Nicaragua (A Los Pueblos de Centro-America)* (Cojutepeque, 1856), 4

<sup>39</sup> Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brady Harrison, *Agent of Empire: William Walker and the Imperial Self in American Literature* (Athens, GA: UGA Press, 2004); and Frederic Rosengarten, *Freebooters Must Die! The Life and Death of William Walker, the Most Notorious Filibuster of the Nineteenth Century* (Wayne, PA: Haverford House, 1976). All three authors do account for the prospect of Nicaraguan regeneration. Both Greenberg and Harrison highlight the inward regeneration and transformation that men went through as participants in the war. Rosengarten focuses more on the strategy of regeneration than internal struggles that the men went through related to it. He concludes that Walker perceived slaving as a strategy that would regenerate Nicaragua. I agree with Rosengarten that this was one aspect of the regeneration of Nicaragua, but it was only one element. The regeneration effort was larger

they have not focused on the medical messages attached to the concept of Caribbean regeneration that motivated American intervention there. Walker went to Nicaragua hoping to improve its healthiness, and his contemporaries knew it.

Though disease has not been ignored in the Walker literature, the focus is always on how it affected the battlefield and logistics. Almost every scholar mentions how Francisco Castellón, the general who invited Walker and offered him the colonization contract, died of cholera. Most explain how cholera epidemics created an ebb and flow of battlefield momentum that prolonged the war and otherwise deterred a Costa Rican advancement that would likely have ended Walker's tenure in Nicaragua by as much as a year. Yet, historians have not extrapolated about how the self-described regenerators understood these events nor on how it affected American perceptions of William Walker and other Americans involved in the colonization of Nicaragua.

Meigs O. Frost correctly identified the importance of disease as one element in the regeneration narrative, but he did not go far enough. In attempting to provide a concise account of why William Walker fought in Nicaragua, he oversimplified several elements. First, Walker did not introduce the regeneration narrative to the story of Nicaraguan development. In fact, American media portrayed Walker as the third prominent Anglo-American regenerator, following behind Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt and Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney. Second, though Anglo-American pursuits for intervention predated a healthcare mission, an unforeseen yellow fever outbreak in Brazil accelerated American interests in Nicaragua. Thus, it could be argued

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than Walker. Even for Walker, his plans were far more grandiose than just slaving. His regeneration also included healthcare provisions and institutional development, all meant to stabilize the region and prevent further war.

that the bite of an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is what Frost should have blamed for American colonization in Nicaragua. Finally, though mosquito-borne diseases encouraged people to take interest in Nicaragua, cholera actually spread during the civil war and resulted in people fearing for destabilization of the region.

This chapter focuses on the evolution of the public discourse about intervention in Nicaragua carried out in American print media between the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the signing of the peace treaty between the two warring factions in late-October 1855, which is when William Walker became the supreme commander of Nicaragua's consolidated military. It also highlights how the media understood and portrayed the three regenerators, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Colonel Kinney, and William Walker, as they responded to American concerns for the potential and stability of that country. Their apprehensions always revolved around the prospects of America's continued passage through Nicaragua. Americans wondered if the route would become too diseased, if the Costa Ricans would annex it, or if war would break out along the Caribbean Coast. Any of those aspects could jeopardize future access through Nicaragua.

#### Background: Yellow Fevered-Dreams and Nightmares

For those seeking an interoceanic transit route through Central America, the stars aligned in the 1850s. In 1848, prospectors in California discovered gold, which compelled Americans to travel to their newly annexed Pacific Coast territory. The procurement of this newly acquired territory and at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848 caused Americans to desire safe and efficient transcontinental travel. However, most itinerants found land-based routes across North America too slow and too dangerous. Many found the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the Mormon Trail

long and dangerous. Those who could afford to voyage by sea did so. Furthermore, the overall lack of demand for such routes prior to the annexation of California meant that journeyers had little consistency in set routes to utilize, and they still had to eventually disembark in Central or South America on expensive routes, such as those provided by the Pacific Mail and Steamship Company through Panama. Most travelers found the routes to be too costly. The low demand for such services prevented the company from offering affordable rates.

It was not until after Brazil's yellow fever crisis of 1849 and 1850 that Americans truly valued the need for a new and affordable route through Central America. Prior to the outbreak, as Sidney Chalhoub explains, residents in the United States perceived land south of the equator as a safe-haven from the fevers.<sup>40</sup> People believed that some aspect of the equator, likely meteorological, prevented the spread of yellow fever to Brazil, but they did not understand why. Since the disease did not reach Brazil, few questioned the general mechanisms of this logic. Brazil thus served as a viable and safe destination for Americans seeking adventure and opportunities in the Americas. And for Americans seeking to travel to California by sea, Brazil offered an exotic and fever-free alternative to the trudging land routes across North America. Furthermore, before the annexation of the Pacific Coast Territory, almost no Americans had any reason to even make such journeys. Thus, Americans did not act to find a safe, fast, and affordable transcontinental route until after the annexation of the Pacific Coast Territory.

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<sup>40</sup> Sidney Chalhoub, "The Politics of Disease Control: Yellow Fever and Race in Nineteenth Century Rio de Janeiro," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25, No. 3 (1993): 442.

Before Brazil's yellow fever epidemic, Americans juxtaposed their understanding of Brazil in relationship to the Caribbean and Central America. They depicted Brazil as a reliable region for their ventures and trips and generally dismissed Central American exploration and travel routes. Americans exoticized the region while focusing on its potential. Itinerants with means relied on travel memoirs, such as *Travels in Brazil* by Henry Koster and *Travels in the Interior of Brazil* by George Gardner, to gauge their movements.<sup>41</sup> Many took particular interest in Daniel Parish Kidder's *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil* for information on this glamorous travel route.<sup>42</sup> Such memoirs redirected their readers away from health concerns and towards issues of opportunity and leisure.

Daniel Parish Kidder, who spent years laboring as an evangelical missionary in Brazil, had very little to say about fevers in his works. When he did mention fevers, he pointed out how swiftly local *boticarios* could eliminate them with homegrown remedies and quinine.<sup>43</sup> Instead, Kidder focused on promoting the need for Anglo-American presence in Brazil by sighting political discontent with local governments, murders, lack of hotels, and spiritual conditions within the country. In doing so, Kidder illuminated all of the untapped potential that waited for eager entrepreneurs and travelers to and through Brazil. Such publications instructed Americans to perceive Brazil as healthy. In turn, Americans contrasted Brazil to the Caribbean and Central America, which they

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<sup>41</sup> George Gardner, *Travels in the Interior of Brazil, Principally in the Northern Provinces, and the Gold and Diamond Districts, during the years 1836-1861* (London: Reeve Brothers, 1846); and Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst, Reese, Orme, and Brown, 1816).

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Parish Kidder, *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil, Embracing Historical and Geographical Notices of the Empire and Its Several Provinces*, Vol. 1 (London: Wiley & Putnam, 1845).

<sup>43</sup> Kidder, *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil*, 192.

envisioned as unhealthy and dangerous. Such beliefs hindered Americans from pursuing transit plans in Central America.

The realization that yellow fever could and did strike in Brazil alarmed American citizens. The yellow fever outbreak that occurred starting in the Brazilian summer of 1849 thrust travelers into a panic and jeopardized any hopes of making Brazil the premier path to California. As Sidney Chalhoub explains, by the end of that epidemic, as many as one-third of Rio de Janeiro's inhabitants contracted yellow fever and at least four thousand had died.<sup>44</sup> Newspapers throughout the country reported on the shock of this finding. In Pennsylvania, the *Sunbury American* described the fever in Rio de Janeiro as the "first instance known of the appearance of the yellow fever south of the equator."<sup>45</sup> The newspaper monitored the presence of fever on board foreign warships present in Brazil. While the steamer *H. B. M. Cormorant* reported thirteen cases of fever on board, news reached the United States that even the British were losing men to this outbreak.

Fittingly, William Walker's former New Orleans newspaper, *The Daily Crescent*, served as one of the other primary urban newspapers to shed light on this outbreak. By October, the fever remained an ongoing problem in Brazil. The *Crescent* reported that yellow fever was still "very bad," in Pará, Brazil.<sup>46</sup> It related how the captain of the *Garland*, which had recently arrived in Salem, died from the outbreak, and all of its crew fell ill. Such news reports informed Americans that yellow fever occurred south of the

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<sup>44</sup> Chalhoub, "The Politics of Disease Control," 442.

<sup>45</sup> "Intelligence from South America," *Sunbury American*. (Sunbury, PA.), June 8, 1850. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026403/1850-06-08/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>46</sup> *The Daily Crescent*. (New Orleans, LA), October 31, 1850. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015378/1850-10-31/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 20, 2017). Pará Brazil is in the north. It touches both the Atlantic Ocean and the Amazon River.

equator and that its existence there also threatened their well-being back home as the ships that they ironically relied on to escape fever in the Caribbean were, in fact, bringing the fever back to American ports from their safe haven in Brazil.

Though Americans lamented the debunked myth of safe travels in Brazil, they continued focusing their gaze on California, which intensified their efforts for passage through Central America. In the spring of 1849, Cornelius Vanderbilt, who had anticipated the prospects of Nicaragua before the Brazilian outbreak, met with Secretary of State John M. Clayton and Joseph L. White, one of Vanderbilt's most trusted businessmen.<sup>47</sup> They conspired for control over a Nicaraguan transit route that would compete with the Pacific Mail Line's Panama route and break the spell that the disease-free Brazil held over Americans that made them apprehensive about Central American travels. And, as Stephen Dando-Collins explains, Vanderbilt also pursued the rights to the United States mail contract that would go along with it.<sup>48</sup>

Cornelius Vanderbilt persuaded members of the United States government to guarantee him a monopoly of the proposed transit route. Two United States diplomats, Elijah Hise and Ephraim George Squier, secured a deal between them and the Nicaraguan government for American rights to monopolize a transit route in Nicaragua. They signed a deal on September 3, 1849. The treaty provided Nicaragua a \$10,000 payment, upfront, \$200,000 of company stock for the new enterprise that would operate the canal, and annual payments of \$10,000 until the company completed construction of the canal.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War: How Cornelius Vanderbilt Invaded a Country to Overthrow America's Most Famous Military Adventurer* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2008), 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War*, 11.



However, as Squier later admitted, the American government never approved the treaty, though it did grant Hise the power to make treaties. In fact, the government recalled Hise before Nicaragua agreed to the treaty, and Nicaragua, in turn, retroactively nullified it based on the suspect circumstances surrounding the legitimacy of Hise.<sup>50</sup> Soon after, in 1851, Vanderbilt signed a contract with Nicaragua that finalized all loose ends created by the confusion of the previous treaties.

Cornelius Vanderbilt put forth the prospects of Nicaragua as an alternative travel destination. The new demand for access to California made time a more important factor than the leisure of the extended South American voyages. Vanderbilt understood that the colonization of Nicaragua by Americans could provide the first consistent sea route that would be both quicker and more cost effective than the awkward land routes being carved by pioneers across the mainland of the United States. However, he and his new wave of entrepreneurs also recognized that they would have to position Nicaragua as a safe destination if they were to successfully lure people away from routes further south.

Thus, American newspapers friendly to Vanderbilt began crafting a narrative that celebrated Nicaragua's healthiness as well as the potential that it held for American investment and colonization in an effort to deter people away from Brazil. The *Lewistown Gazette* praised Nicaragua for having a healthy climate. It even contended that "there are no epidemic diseases peculiar to it." The newspaper promoted a wide variety of agricultural endeavors possible in Nicaragua while describing the land as being "capable

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<sup>50</sup> George Ephraim Squier, *Travels in Central American, Particularly in Nicaragua* (New York: D. Appleton, 1853), 264-266.

of the finest cultivation.”<sup>51</sup> The *Gazette* attempted to attract the same types of investors, missionaries, and colonizers that found Kidder’s writings so compelling. It sought to entice Anglo-American intervention into a new region. Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan health narrative did not gain momentum in the American press until after the yellow fever crisis in Brazil, a watershed moment that wobbled an American *zeitgeist* that previously inhibited Americans from pondering the prospects of Central American travel.

The United States government ultimately gave Commodore Vanderbilt his desired monopoly through the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty in 1850, after the Brazilian yellow fever outbreak commenced. The treaty, between Great Britain and the United States, provided the United States the rights to future canal-building projects as long as they respected British rights to utilize the route. It also served as an agreement by both parties to stop official colonizing efforts in the Caribbean. From the British perspective, the treaty did not oblige them to relinquish their current colonies, which allowed continued maintenance of a strong imperial presence in Central America, near the proposed transit route.

Americans almost immediately realized that the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty failed to release Central America from the grasps of the British Empire like they had hoped, which left many desiring more aggressive policies to fix what the treaty failed to do. *The Daily Union* contended that Clayton had “sold” the United States to the British through the treaty. The newspaper argued that it provided “no advantage in the affair, while Great

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<sup>51</sup> “Beautiful Region of Country near the Isthmus of Panama,” *Lewistown Gazette* (Lewistown, PA.), September 1, 1849. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83032276/1849-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Britain and the New York company of speculators gain[ed] everything.”<sup>52</sup> Even the *New York Herald* described the treaty as “humbug.”<sup>53</sup> For Commodore Vanderbilt, however, the treaty allowed him to exploit a fragile government in Nicaragua that lacked the resources to procure the revenue from him guaranteed in the contracts and treaties.<sup>54</sup>

Despite any original opposition to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, throughout the United States, newspapers eagerly reported on the success of Commodore Vanderbilt. In March 1851, *The New York Herald* described that his new steamship line would serve as competition to the consolidated Howland and Aspinwall steamer lines, which ran through Panama.<sup>55</sup> While it eagerly anticipated the arrival of Vanderbilt’s steamers, the newspaper berated Howland and Aspinwall for overworking their staff and for neglecting the comfort and accommodations of their passengers. More importantly, it also accused the companies of failing to give their ships “that thorough cleaning and purification which vessels engaged in such a trade require.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, the newspaper informed travelers that Vanderbilt’s competition failed to provide the sanitary conditions desirable for such a long route through fever-infested territory, contrasting the Pacific Mail Line to Vanderbilt’s predicted performance. The newspaper anticipated that the ships would be

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<sup>52</sup> “The Nicaragua Question – The Treaties. – We are Sold to the British,” *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), April 28, 1850. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1850-04-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>53</sup> “Nicaragua and the United States,” *The New York Herald*, October 28, 1850. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1850-10-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>54</sup> Dando-Collins *Tycoon’s War*, 4-6. As Dando-Collins explains, Vanderbilt promised a new route at half the rate of his closest competitor, the Pacific Mail Line, which operated in Panama. Vanderbilt could do so partially by calculating the cost differences that the shorter route provided, for less distance meant less fuel and less pay for his workers. However, he could also do so because he knew Nicaragua could not force his company to pay its fair share of revenue.

<sup>55</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon’s War*, 4-5. Dando-Collins offers a more insightful understanding of Pacific Mail and Steamship Company, which lambasted in this article.

<sup>56</sup> “To Travel to San Francisco,” *The New York Herald*, March 11, 1851. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1851-03-11/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

ready by June 1852. It highlighted the shorter passages that the steamers could provide, which meant, according to them, that more time could be devoted to providing sanitation for the ships and repose for the staff.

*The New York Herald*, by promoting the healthiness of Vanderbilt's line also celebrated the robustness of Nicaragua as a region. It positioned Nicaragua as the solution to the yellow fever bouts that caused panic throughout much of the Americas. The United States, in particular, had faced episodic bouts of yellow fever since the 1690s. Though yellow fever appeared to be eradicated in the North by the 1820s, it still periodically appeared throughout the South. With this understanding, the newspaper highlighted the "remarkably healthy and beautiful country," of Nicaragua that Vanderbilt's passage would take patrons through to reach California.<sup>57</sup>

Though *The New York Herald* was not the first newspaper to promote Nicaragua's healthiness, after this publication the health narrative became a common theme in the writings of Americans. Like Brazil previously, most Americans took its healthy state for granted. Newspapers rarely if ever covered the presence of diseases there, for they had yet to see a need to do so. On the contrary, newspapers in Washington and New Orleans, two cities susceptible to yellow fever, emphasized the vigorous condition of Granada.<sup>58</sup> Such newspapers informed their readers to treat the potential of Nicaragua as one of safety for transit. They felt assured that Commodore Vanderbilt's new line would serve as the safest, long-term route to California. Nicaragua did not need regeneration, for it

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<sup>57</sup> "To Travel to San Francisco," *The New York Herald*, March 11, 1851. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1851-03-11/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> "Nicaragua," *Weekly National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), April 12, 1851. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045784/1851-04-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017). It credits the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* for the original publication of this article.

was, at this time, the solution to their problems by providing a safe, clear passage to California.

However, some scholars did attempt to warn Americans to the health risks of the new jewel of Central America. In particular, Ephraim George Squier, the architect of the Hise Treaty, responded to the travel frenzy that brought thousands of Americans through Nicaragua. Besides serving as the *chargé-d'affaires* in Central America, Squier had also crafted a scholarly persona. He was a world-renowned traveler, newspaper editor, and archaeologist. In the 1850s, Squier wrote a series of books and magazine articles concerning his travels and diplomatic endeavors throughout Central America. He designed these works to guide Americans on how they could and should participate in the new Anglo-American undertakings in Central America.

In *Travels in Central America*, published in 1853, Ephraim Squier warned American developers of the potential health threats that waited for them in Nicaraguan jungles. Though the nation, in its perceived undeveloped state, appeared lush and healthy, Squier wrote how “the removal of the trees and other vegetation, and the consequent exposure of the rich earth. . . to the sun, would prove a prolific source of fevers and kindred diseases.”<sup>59</sup> Overall, Squier concluded that the undertaking must occur, but entrepreneurs should rely on native workers, for they were already “inured to labor and hardened to exposure.”<sup>60</sup> There, he compelled developers to consider locals, for they

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<sup>59</sup> Ephraim George Squier, *Travels in Central America, Particularly in Nicaragua, with A Description of Its Aboriginal Monuments, Scenery, and People, Their Languages, Institutions, Religion, &c.*, Vol. II (New York: D. Appleton & Co., Publishers 1853), 247-248.

<sup>60</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America, Particularly Nicaragua*, Vol. II, 248.

would not succumb to diseases that were potential health threats to the American colonizers and would not retard progress.

During the next few years, Ephraim Squier served the public as the eminent authority on the condition of Central America. Besides *Travels in Central America*, Squier wrote *Waikna, or, Adventures of the Mosquito Shore*, and *Nicaragua, Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal*. For a broader audience, he also published several articles in *Harper's Monthly*. Collectively, these works highlighted an array of dangers that awaited Anglo-Americans as they ventured into exotic Nicaragua. Passengers to California, as well as laborers and settlers attempting to develop the land along the Transit Route, looked to his work for guidance about how to behave and where to travel. Such literature would have been found quite uninteresting only a few years earlier when Americans were enamored with Brazil.

Throughout his publications, E. G. Squier exoticized Nicaraguan diseases. For example, he mentioned his surprise at finding *goitre* in nearly every town in Nicaragua.<sup>61</sup> Though by the 1850s, physicians had already identified that the primary cause of this disease is an iodine deficiency in water, he highlighted the unusual pattern that the disease took.<sup>62</sup> Squier emphasized his surprise that it was found in the cities of Nicaragua, for it was, “a disease peculiar to elevated or mountainous regions.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, he directed readers to feel suspicious about what they thought they knew about how diseases functioned, at least in Central America.

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<sup>61</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America, Particularly Nicaragua*, Vol. II, 154.

<sup>62</sup> *Weekly National Intelligencer*. (Washington, D.C.), December 13, 1851. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045784/1851-12-13/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America, Particularly Nicaragua*, Vol. II, 154.

Similarly, Ephraim Squier warned potential colonizers of the Mosquito Coast, a region that already had a civilizing mission headed by the British underway. At the time that Squier wrote *Travels*, American investors busily prepared to take over that civilizing mission and turn it into an American colony. Squier warned his Anglo-American audience to be wary of contact with the Black population along the Mosquito Coast. He claimed that a type of syphilitic leprosy, known as *bulpis*, was “almost universal on the coast.” He described how *bulpis*, through the red and white infectious scabs that it formed, left its victims “fatally susceptible to all epidemic diseases.” He claimed that the disease had “already reduced the population to one-half of what it was twenty years ago.” Squier stated that the disease was so prevalent that the “Indians of the interior. . . have prohibited all sexual relations, between their people and the Sambos of the coast, under penalty of death.”<sup>64</sup> Squier certainly directed this warning to those investing into the Kinney Expedition, for he recognized if only politely, a Southern custom of improper fraternizing with exotic labor that would have jeopardized their wellbeing.

Ephraim Squier also wrote about diseases that the average reader would have known and found far more frightening. However, in writing about such epidemics, Squier returned to the overarching narrative that positioned Nicaragua as a healthy state by emphasizing that they did not exist in the region. Squier honed in on the propensity of certain parts of Central America and the Caribbean to experience cholera. He implicitly racialized the presence of cholera. On the opening page of his first chapter of *Waikna*, his

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<sup>64</sup> Ephraim George Squier, *Adventures on the Mosquito Shore* (New York: Worthington CO., 1891), 68. However, this is a reprint of *Waikna; Or, Adventures on the Mosquito Shore*, written by Samuel A. Bard and attributed to Squier. Samuel A. Bard, *Waikna; or; Adventures on the Mosquito Shore* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855). Baird is possibly a pseudonym

detailed study of “Sambo” Nicaragua, he made certain to mention cholera during his travels in Kingston, Jamaica. He contended that cholera appeared “to be domesticated in Kingston.” He further described it as “one of the local institutions” that had “invade[d] the more civilized parts of town.” He reported how the rich inhabitants who had benefited from emancipation fled to the mountains to escape it, though “with the pestilence following, like a sleuth-hound, at their heels.”<sup>65</sup> And though, in *Nicaragua*, he admitted that cholera struck Nicaragua in 1837, he noted that it did not affect the Port of San Juan, an important destination along the Transit Route.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Squier, warned his Anglo-American readers about the disease while connecting it to the Afro-Caribbean population. Though originating in squalor, which he and his readers associated with Black savagery, he informed readers that cholera had a proclivity to affect even the most refined civilizing agents in regions where it existed.

In the end, E. G. Squier followed Kidder’s strategy and logic and promoted the need for Anglo-American intervention along the new transit route. To stimulate this point, he alluded to the relationship between political discord and disease. He highlighted the crumbling political structure that befell *mestizo* societies during health epidemics. In *Travels in Central America*, Squier described Central Americans as being “sunk in ignorance,” which made the area, in his mind, ill-equipped for a cholera outbreak. Squier mentioned how the entire region lacked physicians and suffered from improper treatment, all of which allowed the disease to “spread with fearful rapidity.”<sup>67</sup> Squier did not contemplate, in this history, how cholera arrived. He only focused on the negative aspects

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<sup>65</sup> Squier, *Waikna*, 13-14.

<sup>66</sup> Squier, *Nicaragua*, 72.

<sup>67</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America*, 426.



of Central American society that inhibited their chances to combat it. He explained that the Central American authorities, having failed to stop the examined outbreak that previously haunted the region, did take measures to mitigate losses. Citing an English resident in Guatemala, Squier explained that every member of the medical staff there, including medical students, were “furnished with medicines and sent to those placed where it was thought their presence was most urgently required.”<sup>68</sup> Yet, they failed to prevent the local Indians from “dying in great numbers.”<sup>69</sup> He contended that such failures left the Indians stricken with terror, which illuminated the fragility of peace and stability in Central America by showing that poor healthcare threatened social order.

E. G. Squier insisted that, without proper leadership in Central America to combat the epidemic, the natives turned to their priests. He argued that these priests agitated “their resentment against the Liberals, by insinuating that they had poisoned the water with the view to destroy the Indians, intending to repeople [sic] the country with foreigners.” He stated that these priests referenced the colonization of Vera Paz as proof that Liberals sought the complete eradication of Indians. He described how this epidemic led to a rebellion against the “poisoners and the foreign residents.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, the outbreak served as a warning for Anglo-American missionaries and colonizers about just how closely the region’s stability was tied to proper healthcare governed by proper leadership.

Regardless of potential health threats, Commodore Vanderbilt’s Accessory Transit Company increased its operations, and Americans began migrating to Nicaragua to colonize the Transit Route. American entrepreneurs took great interest in the economic

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<sup>68</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America*, 427. Squier references an unnamed author, here.

<sup>69</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America*, 427.

<sup>70</sup> Squier, *Travels in Central America*, 427.

potential of their newly treasured canal zone. By 1852, some Americans began predicting the possibility of doubling Nicaragua’s annual revenue. They believed such improvements would require “proper management,” something that the Nicaraguan government failed to provide in their eyes, even before the civil war.<sup>71</sup> *The National Intelligencer* compared the state’s revenue to the profits provided by Vanderbilt’s transit company, showing that his, alone, could double Nicaragua’s financial potential. Such findings called into question just how efficient that government could be if left to its own devices, which helped transition American minds to see themselves as needed, as regenerators.

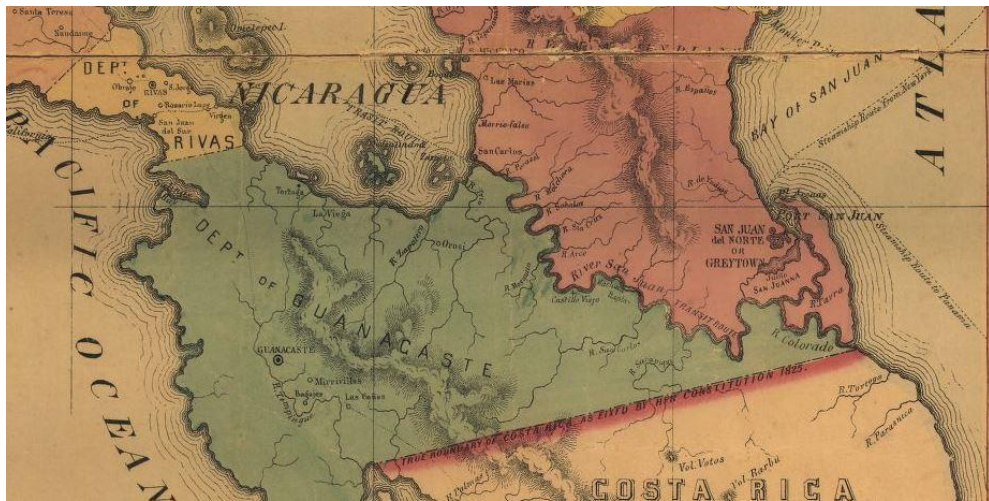


Figure 5. Extraction from the Government Map of Nicaragua Approved by General Walker during the Rivas Administration<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> “Nicaragua,” *Weekly National Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.), July 10, 1852. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045784/1852-07-10/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>72</sup> Jocelyn, Albert H. *Government map of Nicaragua: from the latest surveys ordered by President Patricio Rivas and Genl. William Walker; executed under the supervision of the Señor Fermín Ferrer, Governor of the Western Department, 1856*. New York: A.H. Jocelyn, 1856. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004629018/>. The Transit Route starts near the southeast corner at San Juan del Norte, follows the river to Lake Nicaragua, passes through Rivas, and finally terminates at San Juan del Sur. This illustration thus highlights the primary part of Nicaragua that captured the attention of American colonizers. Greytown, for example, is right next to San Juan del Norte

## A Destabilized Nicaragua and a Jeopardized Transit Route

Between the time that Commodore Vanderbilt gained control of the Nicaraguan transit route and Squier's sequels to *Travels in Central America*, a civil war broke out in Nicaragua, one that consumed the lives and resources of its neighboring countries as well. In 1853, Nicaragua held an election that pitted Don Francisco Castellón against Don Fruto Chamorro. Chamorro represented the conservative and aristocrats of Nicaragua in the *Legitimist* party, whose political capital rested in Granada. Castellón, on the other hand, represented the liberal party, known as the *Democraticos*, who exerted their power out of Leon. Since the foundation of Nicaragua as an independent state, the two parties had competed against each other as the primary political factions of Nicaragua. After a heated election that left both parties with bitter animosity, the *Legitimistas* declared Chamorro the winner.

The *Democraticos* contested the election. Fearing that their protests would lead to a *coup d'état*, Don Chamorro made a series of swift political moves to solidify executive power. Chamorro accused Francisco Castellón of trying to start a revolution in Nicaragua and began arresting many of the *Democratico* leaders. Most went into exile. Chamorro also had a new constitution written, one which transformed the executive office into a much more powerful entity. It stipulated longer term limits and more authority than previously outlined. From the *Democraticos*' perspective, such moves illegally violated the principles of the 1838 constitution, which they considered to be the pillar of the republic.

Americans became alarmed over Don Chamorro's presidency. Newspapers such as *The Republic* in Washington expressed concerns that he had remained silent on foreign

affairs.<sup>73</sup> Many feared that he would upset the stability of the Transit Route. Though *The New York Herald* had previously praised him for his “enlightened and Liberal sway,” it, too, turned on him.<sup>74</sup> On December 18, 1853, the *Herald* published a scathing critique against the Chamorro administration. The newspaper accused the administration of “creating dissatisfaction” amongst its inhabitants. It then posited that Chamorro strove “to annoy and molest Americans living on the transit road.” The newspaper further argued that the new administration refused to respect the charter of the Accessory Transit Company. It cited its fear over a “sham trial” concerning the shooting of an American citizen in Virgin Bay. The newspaper boldly stated that American rights would not be protected by President Chamorro.<sup>75</sup>

*The New York Herald* also highlighted the political corruption within the Chamorro administration. In covering political arrests, it wrote that Chamorro sought private trials against the accused *Democraticos*. It further emphasized this by stating how the new administration would not grant access to the evidence against the defendants. Instead, it would deposit all evidence into “secret archives of the government.” The newspaper compared Chamorro to Napoleon, claiming that he relied on “*coup de main*” strategies that “put the constitution aside” in order to let him “govern as it appears convenient to him.”<sup>76</sup> Chamorro would not be the last Nicaraguan leader who would be compared to Napoleon by American media, however.

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<sup>73</sup> “Central America,” *The Republic* (Washington, D.C.), May 27, 1853. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014434/1853-05-27/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>74</sup> “Our Nicaraguan Correspondent,” *The New York Herald*, July 16, 1853. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1853-07-16/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>75</sup> “Central America,” *The New York Herald*, December 18, 1853. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1853-12-18/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>76</sup> “Central America,” *The New York Herald*, December 18, 1853. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1853-12-18/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Americans feared that President Chamorro would destabilize Nicaragua. They understood that his measures risked the future of the Transit Route. He could attempt to cancel the contract with Cornelius Vanderbilt. He could also, by creating political unrest, ruin the healthiness of the route, which would endanger travelers to California. The presence of yellow fever in New Orleans certainly intensified such fears. In that year, yellow fever affected approximately forty percent of the city, killing off ten percent of the population.<sup>77</sup> Since Americans, by this time, understood that yellow fever was not indigenous to Louisiana but came from the Caribbean, any sign of instability in the region made Americans anxious about the safety of one of the nation's most important entrepôts.

Ironically, President Chamorro set into motion the very *coup d'état* that he feared. On May 5, 1854, the *Democraticos* launched their overthrow. Led by General Maximo Jerez, Francisco Castellón, Mateo Pineda, and José Maria Vallé, the *Democratico* rebels chartered an American ship, captained by Gilbert Morton, to transport them from Tiger Island to Realejo, Nicaragua.<sup>78</sup> From there, the rebels quickly overran the western half of Nicaragua, known as the Occidental Department. As a result, the *Legitimistas* abandoned Leon, which they had previously taken control of after forcing the *Democraticos* into exile the previous year.

However, the *coup* only partially worked. While it provided the *Democraticos* with access to supplies, territory, labor, and soldiers, the rebels failed to capture President

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<sup>77</sup> John Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence: The New Orleans Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1853* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1966), vii.

<sup>78</sup> "Dictator Walker," *The National Tribune* (Washington, D.C.), April 27, 1893. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82016187/1893-04-27/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Chamorro, which allowed the *Legitimistas* to regroup. Both parties formed their own respective governments, the *Legitimistas* in Granada and the *Democraticos* in Leon. As a result, a civil war broke out that engulfed the entire nation, which, in turn, jeopardized the stability of the Transit Route.

As the two parties locked themselves into a stalemate, the civil war transformed into an international war that endangered American travel in Nicaragua. Both sides began recruiting foreigners to serve in their respective armies. The *Legitimistas* recruited many prominent Honduran and Guatemalan aristocrats to act as officers in their military. Eventually, they received the aide of General Santos “the Butcher” Guardiola and Guatemala’s President José Rafael Carrera, who provided military support to them. In turn, the *Democraticos* also enlisted Central American aide. General Trinidad Cabañas, who held executive power in Honduras at the outbreak of the civil war, provided military support to Francisco Castellón. In the process of helping the *Democraticos*, Cabañas lost his own power in Honduras. Both sides also recruited American and European mercenaries along the Transit Route. The *Legitimistas* had particular success with acquiring French soldiers. Thus, Americans watched as their Transit Route became engulfed in what was increasingly becoming an international crisis.

By October, the rebels had captured most of the countryside. They had the *Legitimistas* trapped in Granada. From the perspective of many Americans, it appeared that the *Democraticos* chose to perpetuate the war instead of ending it with what looked to be an inevitable capture of Granada. The *Evening Star* commented that the war had

crumbled much of Granada into ruins.<sup>79</sup> Years later, Charles Doubleday, a veteran of that war who arrived in Nicaragua before Colonel Walker, lamented similar concerns over how political spoils discouraged the *Democraticos* from seizing opportune moments. In his memoir, Doubleday stated that General Guerrero told him that it would not “suit the government at Leon to end the war.” He insisted that Guerrero explained to him that to do so would “throw various claimants for office and emoluments – now happily employed in the field – upon the President, who could not possibly satisfy them all.”<sup>80</sup> The indecision at Granada during this siege reminded Americans that the fragile line providing a safe passage to California lay at the mercy of Central American political parties and not in their own hands.

Americans voiced their concerns about unwanted outside intervention. Though the American public already knew that foreigners participated on both sides of the war, American newspapers began highlighting the greater international implications of these interferences. One newspaper, *The Evening Star* of Washington, became particularly concerned with the offer of Costa Rica to lend aid to Don Chamorro. In return for their service, Costa Rica demanded that Chamorro relinquish claims to the Transit Route, which jeopardized the current treaties allowing the Accessory Transit Company to operate there unmolested by Costa Ricans.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), October 13, 1854. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1854-10-13/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>80</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886), 70.

<sup>81</sup> *Evening Star*. (Washington, D.C.), October 13, 1854. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1854-10-13/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Thus, the deliberateness of the *Democraticos* threatened American access to California. The *Democraticos*' indecision at Granada also allowed the *Legitimistas* to recover. Because of this blunder, by the end of 1854, the *Democraticos* no longer had control over the civil war. They actively pursued more foreign assistance under conditions far less favorable than most of the leaders approved.

During this time, Byron Cole, a California colleague of William Walker, traversed through Central America. He traveled in the company of William Vincent Wells, a consul-general of the Republic of Honduras. Wells sought to exploit mineral rights throughout Central America, though he had exacting interest in Honduras. Wells held minor influence through his connections with Francisco Castellón. He secured for Cole a chance to meet the head of the revolution in late-1854.<sup>82</sup> Cole realized the opportunity available for his editorial colleague and began negotiations, on Walker's behalf, to obtain a contract of service for the grey-eyed colonel. Cole returned to Walker with a contract shortly after. Walker, in turn, agreed to the idea of the contract but not the wording. The contract requested Walker to acquire a small army to fight for the *Democraticos*; however, Walker knew that such wording would not allow him to circumnavigate neutrality laws. He then sent Cole back to Castellón to craft a contract that better veiled any military services traded between the two parties. On December 29, 1854, Cole received the colonization contract that allowed Walker to recruit settlers without fear of charges being brought upon him for violating neutrality laws. In February 1855, Cole reached Sacramento, California with the new contract, which Walker accepted.

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<sup>82</sup> William Vincent Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856), 42.



Meanwhile, American fears of an unsafe Nicaragua continued to amplify. As the civil war stagnated, disease crept into the camps. American newspapers began reporting isolated incidents of illness in Nicaragua, though they had previously not focused on it as a topical theme. However, if only incidentally, they set the stage for a health crisis narrative that correlated poor healthcare and disease with the *Legitimistas*, whose flirtations with the Costa Ricans jeopardized the sanitation of the route by bringing the war closer to it. They also threatened its very existence as an American-controlled enterprise if they chose to oust the transit company.

The testimony of John Priest, the United States Consul at San Juan del Sur, served as one of the first narratives that illuminated the *Legitimistas*' complete disregard for basic American colonizing rights. On March 10, 1855, *The New York Herald* printed an extract of a letter written by Priest to his father. In it, Priest claimed that President Chamorro had him arrested and taken prisoner "because a man obnoxious to their government and who had been putting up at my hotel, was not delivered up by me" to the *Legitimistas*. Priest emphasized that illness had, at that time, confined him to his bed, though such a condition had little bearing on how well Commander Cornell, the *Legitimista* leader in charge of his arrest, treated him. Despite being incapacitated, Cornell "took me from my bed and sent me to the guard house with two negroes, with guns, to guard me."<sup>83</sup> He continued by stating that they threatened to shoot him if he failed to deliver the man within two hours. Thus, Priest's letter colored the *Legitimistas* to American readers as barbaric war mongers.

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<sup>83</sup> "Additional from Nicaragua," *The New York Herald*, March 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-03-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

His correspondence also illuminated the need for political regeneration for the safety of Americans in Nicaragua. John Priest warned his father that the *Legitimistas* had “just made a levy of \$5,000 on the American and other foreign citizens.” Priest stated that the *Legitimistas* took possession of his home and treated him and his companions “as though we were slaves.” He contended that they “always acted towards us Americans as though we had no government to vindicate our rights.” Yet, Priest held hope, stating that “things have at length come to such a pass that something surely will speedily be done.”<sup>84</sup> Consequently, through this letter, the *Herald* promoted the need for Anglo-American intervention to counter the *Legitimistas*’ collective lack of civility.

By March 1855, American newspapers clearly lost faith in the *Democraticos*’ ability to stabilize Nicaragua. They began a new narrative that highlighted the changing tides of the war that now favored the *Legitimistas*. On March 14, *The New York Daily Tribune* reported that “the whole country is now again in possession of the Government of Chamorro, with the exception of Leon, Chinendega [sic] and Rielijo [sic] at the West, and the Department of Rivas at the south.”<sup>85</sup> In that same issue, the arrest of a prominent doctor, Dr. Roché appeared. Roché formerly served as minister of hacienda for Nicaragua and was an important ally for Chamorro. However, he eventually joined the *Democraticos*. With them, he attempted to negotiate for a treaty, but Chamorro had him arrested. The newspaper also recounted the retreat of many prominent *Democraticos* to

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<sup>84</sup> “Additional from Nicaragua,” *The New York Herald*, March 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-03-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>85</sup> “Central America,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, March 14, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-03-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

San Salvador, who fled after having suffered a terrible defeat at Masaya. Collectively, such incidents depicted a bleak future for the war-torn nation.

However, while American newspapers reported on the waxing power of Don Chamorro, the *Legitimist* president died on March 12, 1855, just two days before *The New York Daily Tribune*'s article on the capture of Dr. Roché. Chamorro died of dysentery while in Granada.<sup>86</sup> Leadership then rotated to General J. Estrada.<sup>87</sup> American newspapers honed in on the health of Chamorro while chronicling the changing tide of the civil war. *The Evening Star*, on April 6, 1855, wrote that Chamorro "had gone in the forlorn hope of resuscitating a system worn out by long continued illness." It added that his duties as president as well as his service as commander against "a strong revolutionary party" took its toll on his health.<sup>88</sup> Chamorro would not be the last political leader to die of illness that year.

While news reached the United States of the fading power of the *Democraticos* as well as the death of President Chamorro, Colonel Kinney busily prepared for his colony along the contested Mosquito Coast. For years, Nicaragua challenged British claims to the sovereignty of the Mosquito Coast. After Central America's independence from Spain, the English invested their energies along the Mosquito Coast, treating it as if it were independent of the new Federal Republic of Central America. They crowned local leaders, who were descendants of maroon communities, as the legitimate kings of the

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<sup>86</sup> *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA.), April 6, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1855-04-06/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>87</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 4, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-04-04/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>88</sup> *Evening Star*. (Washington, D.C.), April 6, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1855-04-06/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

region, until they eventually settled on a local whom they called Robert Charles Frederick. Under King Frederick, Europeans acquired land grants, which gave them, in theory, control over the economic development of the region, particularly concerning resource extraction.

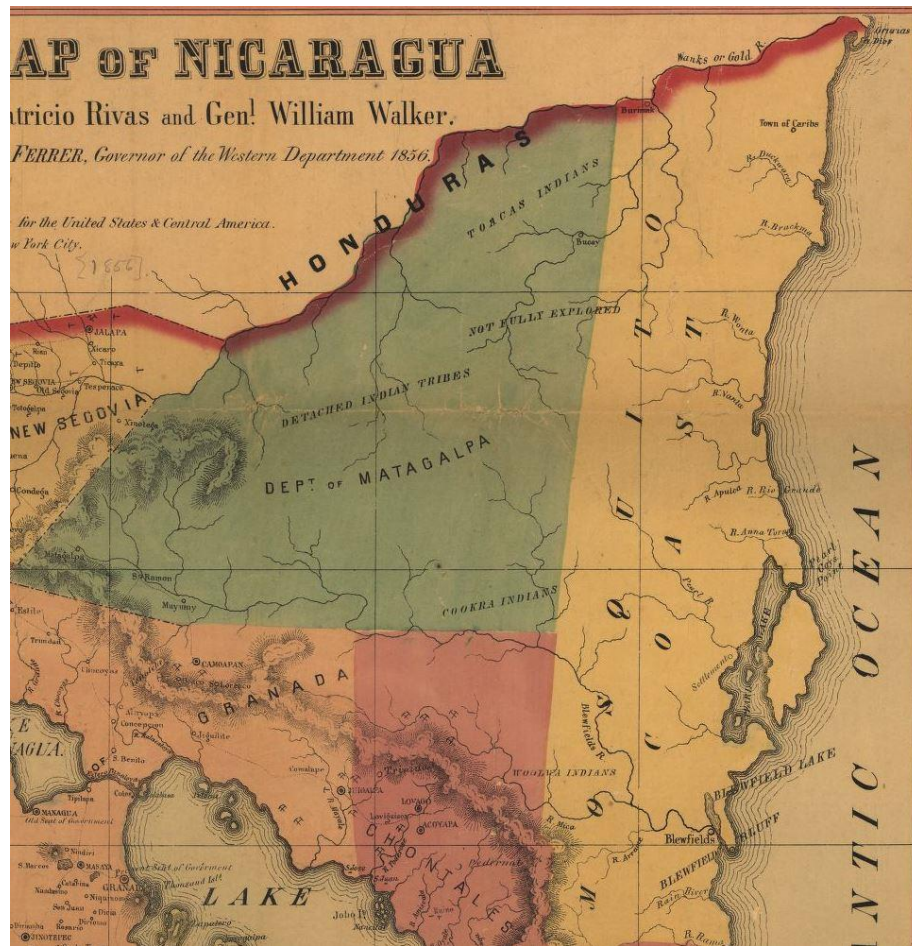


Figure 6. The Mosquito Coast according to the Rivas Administration<sup>89</sup>

For a while, the British profited from a lucrative mahogany industry as they deforested the jungle along the Mosquito Coast. However, as Michael D. Olien explains,

<sup>89</sup> Jocelyn, Albert H. *Government map of Nicaragua: from the latest surveys ordered by President Patricio Rivas and Genl. William Walker; executed under the supervision of the Señor Fermín Ferrer, Governor of the Western Department, 1856*. New York: A.H. Jocelyn, 1856. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004629018/>.

this came to an end in 1848, with the withdrawal of protective rates as well as from over exportation.<sup>90</sup> In that year, the British decided to take firmer command of the coast to counter the losses sustained from the failing mahogany industry. Two British vessels sailed into San Juan del Norte and captured it, renaming it Grey Town.<sup>91</sup> With that capture, the British secured most of Nicaragua's Caribbean coast, as well as parts of the Honduran coast. The British invasion of San Juan del Norte had served as one of the catalysts for the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. Despite such control, European developers failed to create a successful colony along the coast. After tensions grew between the Americans and British in Grey Town, American naval ships bombarded Britain's one glimmer of hope, Grey Town in 1854.<sup>92</sup> British hopes were destroyed with this military maneuver by the United States.

That year, eighteen American investors led by Henry Lawrence Kinney took advantage of British frustrations and acquired the rights to develop a colony along the Mosquito Coast. Colonel Kinney proposed a settlement geared to promote economic development of the region. The "Kinney Expedition" acquired interests primarily from New York bankers and financiers.<sup>93</sup> The investors had purchased the rights to develop about 22,500,000 acres of land.<sup>94</sup> However, the federal government provided very

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<sup>90</sup> Michael D. Olien, "Micro/Macro-Level Linkages: Regional Political Structures on the Mosquito Coast, 1845-1864." *Ethnohistory* 34, No. 3 (Summer 1987): 259.

<sup>91</sup> Peter F. Stout, *Nicaragua: Past, Present, and Future; A Description of Its Inhabitants, Customs, Mines, Minerals, Early History, Modern Filibusterism, Proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal and Manifest Destiny* (Philadelphia: John E. Potter, 1859), 278.

<sup>92</sup> Olien "Micro/Macro-Level Linkages," 276.

<sup>93</sup> William Vincent Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856), 138.

<sup>94</sup> Olien, "Micro/Macro-Level Linkages," 277. It should be noted, as will be seen when examining newspaper discussions about the acreage, that Americans often believed this number to be as high as 25,000,000 acres. Since this chapter is focused on how American media portrayed the events, differences in numbers evince the differences in the sources that mentioned them. The exaggerated numbers, I contend, illuminated the fevered speculations about Kinney's potential.

ambiguous messages to Kinney. At times, the federal government appeared enthusiastic about his expedition. Sidney Webster, the personal secretary of President Franklin Pierce, met with Kinney.<sup>95</sup> Eventually, legal trouble over the violation of the neutrality laws as well as impediments later caused by the Accessory Transit Company delayed Kinney's expedition until 1855, while Walker pacified the *Legitimistas*.<sup>96</sup>

Many of the New York financiers found hope in the prospect of a Kinney-led expedition. Kinney had much experience dealing with trade between Anglo-American frontier settlers and their respective Spanish-American neighbors. For example, Kinney had participated in frontier enterprises trading livestock between Texas and Mexico. Newspapers, such as *The New Orleans Picayune* and *The New York Herald* credited Kinney for establishing "the first settlement west of the Nueces." Such papers described how his settlement in Texas had "thousands of acres teeming with varied crops," which helped create "one of the most delightful and flourishing cities on the Gulf."<sup>97</sup> Thus, many early financiers put their financial faith not into Vanderbilt's Accessory Transit Company but in the Kinney Expedition, a colony which jeopardized Vanderbilt's access to the Transit Route through its claims to Grey Town.

The Kinney Expedition promised to be a repeat of his Texas colony. Newspapers, such as *The Daily Union*, reported that Kinney claimed ownership of over 25,000,000 acres of land. The *Union* highlighted that the deeds came directly from the "King of

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<sup>95</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 147.

<sup>96</sup> Stout, *Nicaragua*, 176. Stout stated that the United States government prevented his initial voyage from leaving the harbor. They then arrested his party and put them on trial for violation of the neutrality laws. They failed to reach convictions against them.

<sup>97</sup> *The New York Herald*, October 1, 1854. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-10-01/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Mosquitia,” and that they were “sanctioned by a convention of his chiefs, to three Englishmen.” The deeds expressly allowed for the introduction of immigrants. The newspaper insisted that the original grantees who “secured the services of Col. Kinney” for the expedition were all “gentlemen of the highest character for intelligence, integrity, and patriotism.” Likewise, it also emphasized a collective knowledge of the “well-known character of Col. Kinney as a gentleman of honor, intelligence, enterprise, and patriotism.”<sup>98</sup>

In light of the civil war, newspapers, especially *The Daily Union*, also ascribed a regeneration narrative to Colonel Kinney’s expedition. As the newspaper stated, Kinney set out to “improve the country,” through the development of the millions of acres awarded to him. It also indicated that, in doing so, he would “build up a stable government” along the Mosquito Coast. It further described that, under the direction of Kinney,” the “industrious men” going with him would “diffuse the arts of peace” and would “lay the foundation of regular government.”<sup>99</sup> Thus, for his supporters, Kinney offered a model of economic and political regeneration for the region. At the very least, if he succeeded, he could guarantee control over Grey Town.

*The Daily Union* emphasized that Kinney provided a legitimate solution to the Nicaraguan crisis. Anticipating anti-filibusterism among rival newspapers, it argued that Colonel Kinney did not lead “marauders or reckless adventures.” It contended that Kinney, in colonizing the Caribbean coast, would not be invading a foreign country but,

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<sup>98</sup> *The New York Herald*, October 1, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-10-01/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>99</sup> “Central American Colony or State,” *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), December 14, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1854-12-14/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

instead, would be taking “possession of lands to which he can show a legal title.” Instead of filibustering, which many watchful eyes feared would become the ultimate alternative as more and more Americans persisted in joining the two warring factions, Kinney would “carry out a colony of active, intelligent, energetic, and industrious men.”<sup>100</sup> Through these colonizers, the *Union* promoted civilization and republicanism in the region.

American media focused on the political destabilization that the British caused along the Mosquito Coast to promote this anti-British regeneration message. Some newspapers argued that Kinney’s colonizing mission served as anti-British imperialism, something they sought since the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. On November 17, 1854, *The New York Herald* described the expedition as a “new Anglo-American republic in Central America.” The *Herald* emphasized that Colonel Kinney would secure for the Americans San Juan del Norte. In turn, he would provide the important transit town with a “vigorous government” that it implied the British failed to deliver to the “feeble and disorganized population” that existed there.<sup>101</sup>

However, not all newspapers promoted the prospects of a Kinney regeneration mission. Many Americans perceived his mission to be pure exploitation, something not worthy of the lofty regeneration ideals that originally tilted their interests towards Nicaragua. By early January 1855, newspapers such as *The Boston Telegraph* and *The Gallipolis Journal* began calling his colony “Grabtown.”<sup>102</sup> On February 5, 1855, *The*

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<sup>100</sup> “Central American Colony or State,” *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), December 14, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1854-12-14/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 17, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-11-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>102</sup> *Gallipolis Journal* (Gallipolis, Ohio), January 11, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038121/1855-01-11/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).



*Evening Star* joined these newspapers and accused Kinney of partaking in a “filibustering scheme.”<sup>103</sup> For such newspapers, the imperialist undertones of Kinney’s expeditions offered only a shell of the regenerative qualities proclaimed by so many.

Nevertheless, many newspapers celebrated the potential for American imperialism under the leadership of Colonel Kinney. The Mosquito Coast offered ample opportunities for agricultural development and mineral extraction. Ironically, prominent newspapers, such as *The New York Herald*, offered British imperialism as a model to follow, even if they disagreed with British presence in the region. The *Herald* promoted the variety of products that could be produced on large-scale plantations. Planters could cultivate “sugar, cotton, indigo, cocoa, Indian corn, India rubber, mahogany, and innumerable dye woods.”<sup>104</sup> The newspaper also highlighted the availability of gold, silver, and coal. It contended that the Mosquito Coast’s fate ultimately rested as a province of the United States. The *Herald* further claimed that the company should be subject to the federal government of the United States. It desired for the Kinney Expedition to perform the same duties as the East India Company did for Great Britain. Thus, it, too, offered an anti-European imperialist message while also illuminating the potential of using the European model of imperialism to exploit the region.

For those dreaming of imperial grandeur through Henry Lawrence Kinney, the solution to stabilize the region required not soldiers but industry. *The Bradford Reporter*, in Pennsylvania, described how the Mosquito Coast suffered from “degenerate days” and

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<sup>103</sup> *Evening Star*, (Washington, D.C.), February 5, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1855-02-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>104</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 24, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-11-24/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

was in need of stabilization. While the *Reporter* contended that “the establishment of a few hundred sharp-eyed American riflemen” would “adjust some of the troublesome questions” in Central America, it ultimately asserted the need for more “working men” and less “fighting-men” to lay the “foundation of empire” that they desired.<sup>105</sup>

Some newspapers followed *The Boston Telegraph* and *The Gallipolis Journal* and explicitly questioned the motives and logic behind supporting Colonel Kinney’s expeditions. *The New-York Daily Tribune* shamed other newspapers, mainly *The Union*, for being “particularly loud in praise” of Colonel Kinney. It further chastened them for being “so ready to believe” that Kinney was a “most heroic and elevated person” that the newspaper failed to scrutinize his scheme. The *Daily Tribune* did not deduce any regenerative qualities in Kinney’s motives. Instead, it called his expedition “one of the most impudent speculations ever generated in a period of commercial inflation and public gambling.”<sup>106</sup> The *Daily Tribune* further insisted that support for the Kinney Expedition justified British imperialist policies, which they did not endorse. The newspaper asserted that the Mosquito king never had the authority to cede the 25,000,000 acres of land. It also portrayed support for Kinney as hypocritical to previous criticisms against the British for acquiring the land through their manipulation of the Mosquito kings. The *Daily Tribune* argued that the Mosquito Coast rightfully belonged to Nicaragua. In turn, it connected Kinney to the British and insisted that “England and her savage protégé

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<sup>105</sup> “Col. Kinney’s Designs – Colony of the American Riflemen in the Mosquito Territory,” *Bradford Reporter* (Towanda, PA.), December 2, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024558/1854-12-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>106</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 16, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-12-16/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

ought to be expelled as trespassers.”<sup>107</sup> Such reports demonstrated that those accepting the ideals of regeneration often scrutinized the ideals and justifications of would-be champions, for the ends did not automatically justify the means.

#### Walker and the Budding Regeneration Narrative

American media had been crafting a persona for Colonel Walker since his last expedition in Mexico.<sup>108</sup> After his fiancée, Ellen Martin Gait, died in 1849, William Walker moved to California. There, he worked for a newspaper for several years, but in 1852, Walker took great interest in the instability of Baja California and Sonora. He believed that both the Mexican and United States governments failed to protect the civilians in those regions from Apache Indian raids. He further believed that he could find a solution to this problem.<sup>109</sup>

William Walker met with a group of like-minded entrepreneurs in Placer County, California. They agreed to send Frederick Emory, who later served as the secretary of state for the Republic of Lower California and Sonora, to Guaymas to obtain a land grant near Arispe, in Sonora.<sup>110</sup> However, before Emory arrived, a bellicose Frenchman named Count Raousset de Boulbon had commenced the settlement of his own colony. Boulbon brought with him several hundred Frenchmen with the expectation, at least the Mexicans

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<sup>107</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 16, 1854. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1854-12-16/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>108</sup> Arthur Woodward, editor, *The Republic of Lower California, 1853-1854: In the Words of Its State Papers, Eyewitnesses, and Contemporary Reporters* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1966). Though there are other works that also cover Walker's expedition into Mexico, Woodward highlights, through the use of contemporary newspapers and magazines that Walker consistently acted as a crusader against lawlessness, first through his own newspapers, then through filibustering. In this study, Woodward also demonstrates that Walker understood long before he reached Nicaragua that he would best find support from Southerners.

<sup>109</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 18.

<sup>110</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 24.

believed, that they would work an old mine. The Frenchmen refused, and hostilities increased between the Frenchmen and the local government of Arista. Under these circumstances, Mexican officials at Guaymas found it difficult to trust a second expedition of colonizers, no matter their claims and goals. Emory returned to California empty-handed. Nevertheless, the Placer County conspirators kept their resolve.<sup>111</sup>

Dejected but still hopeful, William Walker transformed into Colonel Walker as he prepared for war. On October 15, 1853, Colonel William Walker landed in La Paz, Mexico, with about forty-five men to pacify the Apache.<sup>112</sup> After establishing his command there, Walker, on November 3rd, declared himself its president. Walker then installed Louisiana's civil codes, with all of its implications concerning slavery.<sup>113</sup> On November 30, Walker then declared the Republic of Lower California a sovereign and independent state. By January 18, 1854, Walker claimed ownership of Sonora. Unfortunately for Colonel Walker, he overextended his reach. Though Walker received reinforcements, he simply did not have the resources to manage the vastness of his paper republic. Walker's army suffered from malnutrition, and he did not have the means to properly equip his soldiers. Many of his men resorted to less than noble activities, such as robbery, theft, and murder. Others deserted.

By May, President Walker had to abandon his new republic. On May 8, 1854, what remained of Walker's colony marched from Tia Juana to the United States border. There, they surrendered to the United States military. Many of them faced trial for

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<sup>111</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 19-20.

<sup>112</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 25.

<sup>113</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 24. Its implications will be further discussed in Chapter Four, for when Walker turned to slavery as a strategy to pursue has been debated by many scholars.

violating neutrality laws, and some took plea-bargains. Walker stood trial; the jury acquitted him. He then returned to his work as a newspaper editor just in time for his colleague Byron Cole to leave for Nicaragua on a steamer with William Vincent Wells.

Many newspapers throughout the United States had celebrated the conquests of Colonel Walker in Baja California and Sonora. They hailed him as the legitimate president of those territories and bestowed onto his soldiers their newly acquired government titles that reinforced his legitimacy.<sup>114</sup> They also utilized his conquests to celebrate Anglo-American prowess by habitually reconstructing Walker's battles in an effort to demonstrate how his men, even when outnumbered, could put their enemies "to flight."<sup>115</sup> However, the American media that supported Walker had not yet attached a reverberating regeneration narrative to the events. Walker tended to appear and disappear into the newspapers as more of a celebrated reminder of Anglo-American action and resolve than as a symbol of regeneration.

In fact, his opposition did a better job at defining his presence in Mexico. They referred to him as a filibuster and as a pirate. Ohio's *The Weekly Lancaster Gazette* described his conquest as a "contemptible and piratical exploit."<sup>116</sup> *The New York Herald*, which took an ambivalent stance, preferred the word filibuster, a word which offered an

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<sup>114</sup> *Democrat and Sentinel*. (Ebensburg, PA), March 23, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071378/1854-03-23/ed-1/seq-2/>; (accessed February 20, 2017); and *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1854. *Chronicling America*.

<<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-04-10/ed-1/seq-1/>>. (accessed February 20, 2017). *The New York Herald* covered the political actions of Frederick Emery, his secretary of state. They also wrote about his use of emissaries and covered his proclamations as if he were a legitimate ruler.

<sup>115</sup> *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), June 11, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1854-06-11/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>116</sup> "The Walker Piracy," *The Weekly Lancaster Gazette* (Lancaster, OH), June 22, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88078726/1854-06-22/ed-1/seq-1/>>.

ambiguous connotation as to the morality and righteousness of his actions.<sup>117</sup> In Michigan, *The Grand River Times* provided a more negative stance on the concept of filibustering and referred to Walker's expedition as a "filibustering scheme."<sup>118</sup> Thus, Walker left San Francisco for Nicaragua with a turbulent background that conferred upon him titles of both heroism and infamy. Americans saw him as either a legitimate but exiled ruler or as a pirate. They did not see him as a regenerator, yet.

When Colonel Walker arrived at Realejo, Nicaragua on June 11, 1855, he had not yet publicly professed a message of regeneration. Indeed, Walker had kept his colonization efforts out of the public spotlight as best as possible. However, Walker arrived equipped with the knowledge of the events that had transpired. An active editor in San Francisco, an important embarkation point along the Transit Route, Walker was intimately aware of what the rest of the nation had to say about the civil war, as well as about Vanderbilt, and Kinney. He had witnessed the accusations brought against his fellow regenerators, as well as the accolades that glorified their causes.

Whether or not Colonel Walker had a fully developed regeneration message ready for the public before his arrival remains unclear. In fact, neither Walker nor his most vocal allies commenced the conversations that correlated his actions to a regeneration narrative. Such conversations began in the American newspapers that covered his early achievements. However, the grey-eyed physician did take active measures to respond to the new medical crisis. Walker relied on his medical knowledge more so than military

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<sup>117</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1854-04-10/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>118</sup> "The End of Another Filibustering Scheme," *Grand River Times* (Grand Haven, MI), June 28, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026466/1854-06-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

expertise to manage the war. Though Walker knew when to strike, the colonel often lacked stratagem on how to win battles. Yet, as the remaining portion of this chapter will demonstrate, Walker made considerable progress in the war, and his actions served as the primary reason that the war ended.

When Walker arrived in Realejo, the *Legitimistas* had control over the Oriental and Meridional departments of Nicaragua. Walker arrived on June 11, 1855, with his 58 “immortals.”<sup>119</sup> Realejo was one of the few towns in the northwest of Nicaragua capable of hosting the newly-arrived soldiers. As the renowned German explorer Karl von Scherzer explained, besides Granada and the towns dotting the Transit Route, Realejo was the only other western village to have an inn.<sup>120</sup> Thus, it served as a key embarkation point for the *Democraticos*. In Realejo, Walker’s soldiers awaited the arrival of the *Democratico* representatives by frequenting the local *pulperias* and presenting themselves with “aggressive manners” in the otherwise quiet town. Francisco Castellón sent three representatives, Captain Charles William Doubleday, Dr. Henry Livingston, and a Colonel Ramirez, to meet them in Releajo.<sup>121</sup> Doubleday was a British-born American citizen who had been serving in the *Democratico* military. Dr. Livingston was an American Consul who had lived in Nicaragua for a considerable time, and Colonel

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<sup>119</sup> There seems to be some conflict as to just how many people count in this original set of “immortals.” Some reports have the number at 56 and others at 58. I contend that the distinction is trivial when understanding the success of Walker.

<sup>120</sup> Karl von Scherzer, *Travels in the Free States of Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador*, Vol. 1 (London: London, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1857), 54.

<sup>121</sup> It is possible that this was actually Dr. Joseph W. Livingston, for he was also a long-time resident in Nicaragua and a friend to Mariano Salazar, the brother-in-law of Castellón. The primary records hint that there may have been confusion as to which Livingston it was or that someone simply confused the first name. Likewise, the memoirs do not offer much to properly identify the first name of Colonel Ramirez.

Ramirez was one of General Muñoz's key colonels. Walker's initial rendezvous with these men legitimized his presence as a welcomed element in the Nicaraguan civil war.

The invitation by Francisco Castellón served as a key theme that newspapers attached to the Walker narrative. Even before Walker's arrival, newspapers, such as *The New Orleans Daily Picayune*, reported on the colonization contract that Castellón provided Walker.<sup>122</sup> This contract separated Walker from Vanderbilt and, especially, Kinney. The transit company, after all, made its contract, through the Hise Treaty, with a Nicaraguan government that ceased to function as a head of state and with a United States diplomat already recalled from service. And the legitimacy of the Kinney expedition, for many observers, rested on the legality of both the sovereignty of the Mosquito Coast and the rights that its "king" had to trade away land to European speculators. Thus, Walker had the strongest claim to a legitimate presence in Nicaragua.

The three *Democratico* representatives escorted the soldiers to Chinandega, which neighbored Realejo and had a population of about 11,000 people.<sup>123</sup> The Democrats utilized Chinandega as a command outpost. It served as one of the primary trading junctions in Nicaragua. They reached the town within a few days. There, Colonel Walker met President Castellón and General Muñoz. Walker found Castellón to be quite welcoming but found Muñoz far less receptive.<sup>124</sup> On June 20, 1855, Castellón commissioned Walker to serve as a colonel in the *Democratico* military with similar

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<sup>122</sup> *Daily Picayune*, May 12, 1855.

<sup>123</sup> Scherzer, *Travels in the Free States of Central America*, 111.

<sup>124</sup> James Carson Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua or Reminiscences of an Officer of the American Phalanx* (Columbia, MO: E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1909), 26. Jamison noted that Muñoz had a reputation for disliking Americans and that Walker almost instantly suspected him of plotting against him.



promises for officer positions for several of Walker's men. As part of his conditions for service, Walker convinced Castellón to allow him to maintain direct control over all Americans whom he brought with him. He also persuaded Castellón to allow him to participate in the southern theater of war, which brought him within the vicinity of the Transit Route.

Nine days later, Walker's phalanx prepared for its first battle. Walker hoped to capture the town of Rivas, a key settlement near the Transit Route. Rivas was approximately four leagues north of Virgin Bay, which welcomed travelers from California to the Transit Route. In reality, Rivas was not a single town, but, as Scherzer described it, the settlement was an "agglomeration of six or seven Indian villages connected to each other." In the center of this agglomeration existed "the real city of Nicaragua."<sup>125</sup> Rivas consisted of low, one-storied houses that provided ample opportunities for ambushing unsuspecting soldiers. It had a population of about 12,000 people, over half of which were Indians. The capture of Rivas, Walker hoped, would cut off the *Legitimistas*' access to the Transit Route, just south of it. It would also prevent the *Legitimistas* from conscripting more Indian soldiers from this concentrated labor pool. Thus, Castellón considered it an important but nonessential assignment for the newly-arrived colonel to prove his loyalty.

However, on June 29, 1855, Colonel Walker, in trying to capture Rivas, suffered his first defeat. Walker and his soldiers left Chinandega six days earlier for Rivas. The phalanx arrived at El Gigante, about six leagues north of San Juan del Sur, on June 27.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Scherzer, *Travels in the Free States of Central America*, 47.

<sup>126</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 44.

Unfortunately for Walker, news reached General Corral of the *Legitimistas* that his forces had arrived. Corral sent Colonel Bosque with a larger force to confront Walker in Rivas. Though the company initially made steady progress into the interior of the town, the *Legitimistas* ambushed them. The *Legitimistas*, through sheer numbers, outmatched the small American force. Walker estimated that the *Legitimistas* had over 500 men waiting for his troop of 58.<sup>127</sup>

Though Colonel Ramirez had orders to support Colonel Walker with two hundred soldiers, he betrayed Walker and deserted the phalanx. As a result, for over four hours, the Americans fought “door to door and from house to house” without any support.<sup>128</sup> Although their casualties were few, Walker’s forces surrendered what little ground they initially made and retreated. In all, the Americans only suffered about eleven deaths, with another seven wounded. The *Legitimistas* lost over seventy men.<sup>129</sup> Perhaps the worst loss suffered by the phalanx came with the death of Timothy Crocker, who was a veteran of the Mexican campaign.<sup>130</sup> Walker had hoped to rely on this veteran and could not afford to lose too many like him. Thus ended Walker’s first battle in Nicaragua. He had lost, but his company remained mostly intact.

American newspapers bombarded the public with an array of narratives after Walker’s defeat at Rivas. Newspapers that took stances against the legitimacy of privately-managed military interventions quickly flocked to a narrative that the Battle at Rivas ended the Walker experiment before it could begin. *The New York Herald*, which

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<sup>127</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 53.

<sup>128</sup> James Carson Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua: Or, Reminiscences of an Officer of the American Phalanx* (Columbia, Mo; E. W. Stephens Pub. Co., 1909), 28.

<sup>129</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 53.

<sup>130</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, Aug 2, 1856.

consistently favored a pro-Vanderbilt narrative, claimed that Walker was “decidedly defeated.” It depicted the American phalanx as a “gang of desperados.” It further contended that the failure of Walker evinced that filibustering could “only be got up by false representations.” It also led its readers to see Walker’s failure at Rivas as a portent for the Kinney Expedition. In regards to Colonel Kinney, the newspaper wrote that it hoped “for the sake of humanity, that Colonel Kinney, with his friends, will never reach the Atlantic side of Nicaragua, for they are sure to get a hot reception.”<sup>131</sup> Ultimately, for the *Herald*, the defeat showed that military expeditions by Anglo-Americans could not regenerate the nation.

Likewise, on the same day that *The New York Herald* criticized the Walker expedition and warned the Kinney Expedition of its future, *The Daily Dispatch* of Richmond, Virginia, attacked the character of Walker while highlighting his defeat. The *Dispatch* insisted that, through the gathering of testimonies from survivors of Walker’s company, Walker did not participate in the battle. It also highlighted how his failure to capture Rivas allowed the *Legitimistas* to secure many important documents, including the contract between Walker and Castellón. It described one of Walker’s companions, Dr. W. H. Davis, as a murderer who killed an English hotel keeper in Virgin Bay. In doing so, it reinforced the “desperado” image that anti-filibustering papers relied on to dissuade people from financing, joining, or supporting them.

Other papers also failed to portray an accurate outcome of the Battle of Rivas. *The Daily Dispatch* noted that many newspapers erroneously reported that Colonel Walker

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<sup>131</sup> *The New York Herald*, July 28, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-07-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

had died.<sup>132</sup> On the contrary, still, other newspapers speciously portrayed Walker's initial battle as a victory. On July 12, 1855, *The Jeffersonian* reported on Walker's capture of Rivas. It described Walker's victory as having caused "the most intense excitement throughout the country."<sup>133</sup> It effectively provided false hope about Walker's potential, either purposefully or accidentally. Nevertheless, such false, conflicting reports left the American public unsure of whom they should support and why.

Yet even within this complicated web of conflicting reports and biased editorials, a regeneration narrative surfaced that highlighted Nicaraguan hopes for the success of William Walker. Pennsylvania's *Sunbury American* insisted that the locals welcomed Walker. Despite his defeat at Rivas, it noted that "they had been well received by the best men at Rivas." It contended that such men "were anxious for a permanent government at any cost." Even outside of Rivas, the paper insisted that "the greater portion of the intelligent men in the country were in favor of" Walker.<sup>134</sup> Thus, despite his initial defeat, the newspaper offered hope that Walker would eventually win while also reaffirming his legitimacy as a welcomed member of the *Democratico* army.

Coinciding with such a narrative, newspapers supporting William Walker placed blame on the failures of the *Democratico* natives. *The Daily American Organ*, in Washington, accused the native *Democraticos* of showing "very little or no fight" and stated that they ran away. Yet, the *Organ* did not hold out hope that Walker could recover

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<sup>132</sup>"Defeat of Walker – Flight of the Filibusters," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), July 28, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1855-07-28/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>133</sup> *The Jeffersonian* (Stroudsburg, PA), July 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026399/1855-07-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>134</sup> *Sunbury American* (Sunbury, PA), July 14, 1855. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026403/1855-07-14/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

from the defeat. The newspaper claimed that such treachery brought “an end of the great annexation project of Colonel Walker, ex-President of Sonora.”<sup>135</sup>

As news reached America of Colonel Walker’s initial defeat, newspapers throughout the country began a slow but steady shift away from their traditional narratives of a healthy Nicaragua. Instead, they began to emphasize the presence of disease, especially cholera. Newspapers focused on the relationship between cholera and its potential to spread along the Transit Route. In Indiana, *The Evansville Daily Journal* described the presence of cholera as “raging fearfully” on the Nicaraguan steamers since early September.<sup>136</sup> Likewise, *The Green-Mountain Freeman*, in Vermont, reported on the “ravages of cholera” onboard another Nicaraguan steamer, the *Uncle Sam*. By the time the *Uncle Sam* had reached San Francisco, it had lost over one hundred passengers, mostly Irish and Germans.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the steamer line lost much favorability as its own actions as well as those of the treacherous natives allowed cholera to form and spread throughout the Transit Route, according to the newspaper.

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<sup>135</sup> “Colonel Walker’s Defeat” *Daily American Organ*. (Washington, D.C.), July 27, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1855-07-27/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>136</sup> *The Evansville Daily Journal* (Evansville, IN), November 2, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015672/1855-11-02/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>137</sup> *Green-Mountain Freeman* (Montpelier, VT), October 18, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023209/1855-10-18/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).



Figure 7. Harbor of San Juan del Sur, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*<sup>138</sup>

Newspapers turned to a familiar narrative and exoticized cholera while highlighting the danger that the foreign disease posed to Americans. *The Kansas Weekly Herald*, relying on its California correspondent, further exasperated fears of cholera spreading in California. It reported on the spread of cholera on the S. S. *Sierra Nevada*, which it described as a Nicaraguan vessel. The *Sierra Nevada* had left from San Juan del Sur and was destined for California when cholera broke out amongst its passengers, which caused “fearful havoc” on board the ship. The newspaper reported twenty-seven dead onboard the Nicaraguan passenger ship with twenty active cases still to be resolved.

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<sup>138</sup> *General William Walker's Expedition in Nicaragua: Harbor of San Juan del Sur*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 2, no. 51 (November 29, 1856), p. 392. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 1857, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99614156/>.

It hoped that “the salubrity of our climate will check the ravages of this fearful epidemic, and that the disease will not spread to any extent in the city.”<sup>139</sup>

Yet, the *Kansas Weekly Herald* also turned against the steamer company for its failures to maintain proper conduct during the affair. It protested the authorities for suppressing and misrepresenting the presence of the disease. It described their strategy as a “[c]old-blooded attempt” to misinform the press of the official death count as well as for withholding the names of the deceased.<sup>140</sup> The paper reported that passengers suggested that the death count was closer to forty-five or fifty. It further stated that the crew threw these bodies overboard, which helped hide the correct numbers. The correspondent warned that the port in San Francisco lacked quarantine laws that could have mitigated the damages caused by such corruption.

Any semblance of American unity on the cause of Nicaraguan regeneration evaporated by July 1855. In that month, the Transit Company prepared for war against Colonel Kinney. Originally, Sidney Webster, the private secretary of President Pierce, guided the Accessory Transit Company and the Kinney Expedition colonizers to cooperate together. However, whatever comradery existed amongst Webster, Vanderbilt, and Kinney dissipated.

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<sup>139</sup> “Our California Correspondence,” *Kansas Weekly Herald*, September 1, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85029297/1855-09-01/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>140</sup> “Our California Correspondence,” *Kansas Weekly Herald*, September 1, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85029297/1855-09-01/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

Colonel Walker believed that the *Legitimista* representative in Washington, Don José de Marcoleta, orchestrated the demise of this alliance.<sup>141</sup> Whether he did or did not, the federal government took legal measures to harass the Kinney Expedition and prevent it from commencing the colonization of Nicaragua. In turn, Kinney discovered Commodore Vanderbilt had withdrawn his support of the expedition. Kinney felt betrayed and made it known that he would seek revenge against the Transit Company for this treachery. In response, the Transit Company armed itself with European mercenaries to protect the Transit Route. Relations further disintegrated after Colonel Kinney became the civil and military governor of San Juan del Norte, otherwise known as Grey Town, on September 6, 1855.<sup>142</sup>

Meanwhile, Francisco Castellón continued to support the American presence in western Nicaragua. Under his guidance, the *Democraticos* expanded the original contract with Colonel Walker. On July 26, 1855, Castellón announced a new decree that granted Walker the right to enlist three hundred men for military service. The contract offered each soldier a monthly salary of one hundred dollars. It also offered them land, and, according to the contract, they would receive five hundred acres to cultivate.

It was also during this month that Colonel Walker became aware of the cholera outbreak in Nicaragua. As Charles Doubleday explained in his memoir, cholera broke out in June, shortly after Walker's arrival. Doubleday described how it came "with a

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<sup>141</sup> "The Nicaraguan Minister," *Richmond Enquirer*, December 10, 1852. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1852-12-10/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 20, 2017); Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 148.

<sup>142</sup> Peter F. Stout, *Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future; A Description of Its Inhabitants, Customs, Mines, Minerals, Early History, Modern Filibusterism, Proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal and Manifest Destiny* (Philadelphia: John E. Potter and Company, 1859), 178.



suddenness and violence” that caught both sides unprepared.<sup>143</sup> However, Walker first encountered it in July in Chinandega and Realejo. These settlements were, at the time, severely affected by the outbreak. Both of these towns were in the Occidental Department, on the northwestern corner of Nicaragua. The epidemic took its toll on the *Democraticos*. Don Pedro Aguirre, one of the initial commanders to lead the May 4, 1854, *coup d'état* against Chamorro, died from that cholera outbreak. Aguirre, at the time, served as the acting sub-*delegado* of hacienda at Chinandega. Walker later commended Aguirre for his loyalty to the American phalanx, for “he had shown much attachment to the Americans during their stay.”<sup>144</sup> Aguirre fell ill while escorting the American forces to Realejo.

At the time, Aguirre was monitoring the potential movements of General Santo Guardiola. He had chosen to remain behind instead of traveling with the Americans on the *Vesta*. Aguirre primarily feared that, despite the fact that Guardiola suffered a defeat earlier that month in the neighboring department of Segovia, he remained in the vicinity. Aguirre had planned on leaving with the phalanx, for he had even packed his trunk with the intention of going with them. Ultimately, however, he decided to remain near his post. Aguirre then caught cholera while lingering in Realejo, and died soon after. Walker, aware of the disease, monitored his soldiers’ behaviors and diets to diminish its chances of affecting his camp.<sup>145</sup>

The cholera that struck the *Democraticos* in June and July did not diminish. Though in August, the phalanx escaped much of its terror by patrolling the Pacific Coast

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<sup>143</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 71.

<sup>144</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 82.

<sup>145</sup> More on this will be discussed in Chapter Five.

by boat between Realejo and San Juan del Sur, the disease continued to ravage the countryside. However, despite earlier noted resistances to the disease, the Americans could not entirely escape death. A few members did succumb to cholera in the month of August while making port at Realejo.<sup>146</sup>

September 1855 proved to be a critical month for the *Democraticos*. Having captured San Juan del Sur on August 30, Walker subsequently earned his first victory at Virgin Bay on September 3rd. Walker later described the losses that they suffered at this battle as “trifling.”<sup>147</sup> In comparison to what this victory secured, any losses would have felt that way. Walker defeated General José Santos Guardiola, the feared “butcher” of Central America.<sup>148</sup> Routing Guardiola away from the Transit Route, Walker secured for the *Democraticos* the southern portion of Nicaragua.

Though Walker won a decisive victory at Virgin Bay, cholera raged throughout the *Democraticos*’ camps. On September 5, 1855, Francisco Castellón, the leader of the rebel faction and general responsible for acquiring Colonel Walker’s services, died of cholera. By September 9, cholera had spread throughout the countryside and affected civilians with the same potency as it did the troops. By September 15, 1855, at least six hundred had fallen to the disease in Chinandega and Leon alone.<sup>149</sup> In Leon, the cholera outbreak prevented the *Democraticos* from effectively replenishing their military and labor ranks.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, Granada and Rivas witnessed similar results. The entire western

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<sup>146</sup> Walker, *War in Nicaragua*, 86; and Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 156.

<sup>147</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 94.

<sup>148</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 35.

<sup>149</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 59.

<sup>150</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 98.

half of the warring nation, as well as the entire Transit Route from California to New York, suffered from the epidemic. And for the American media, the spreading of cholera onto the Transit Route served as a major point for concern in a civil war that jeopardized American travel.

After a few smaller skirmishes at the end of September and the beginning of October, William Walker led his phalanx in a siege against the *Legitimista* stronghold, Granada. The siege worked, and Walker captured the *Legitimista* capital on October 13, 1855. One of Walker's officers, James Carson Jamison, commented that, during this siege, both yellow fever and cholera thinned the ranks of the *Legitimista* enemies.<sup>151</sup> Thus, Walker's preparations against cholera allowed him to utilize if only indirectly, cholera as a tool of warfare by making his men more immune to it than his enemies.

The capture of Granada did not immediately bring an end to the war, but it did limit the remaining options for the *Legitimistas*. Though Walker quickly moved to begin treating with General Corral for an end to the war, Corral did not immediately accept Walker's proposal to negotiate with him. Instead, on October 14, Corral marched north, away from Granada and Walker. Meanwhile, *Legitimistas* continued to make war against the *Democraticos*. On October 22, a small army of *Legitimistas* murdered American civilians at Virgin Bay. Nevertheless, the *Democratico* forces continued to grow, which ultimately led to Corral's surrender. The American forces, in particular, continued to increase. Colonel Birkett D. Fry arrived on October 15 with sixty more men from San Francisco on the *Uncle Sam*. Following the arrival of the *Uncle Sam*, the *Sierra Nevada* arrived on October 20 with even more American support, including the brother of

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<sup>151</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 57.

Achilles L. Kewen, Colonel E. J. C. Kewen. Despite the massacre at Virgin Bay, the *Legitimistas* could not prevent the oncoming incursions of American forces that bolstered the *Democratico* ranks. Thus, on October 22, 1855, William Walker convinced both parties to sign a treaty that resulted in a merged government under the presidency of Don Patricio Rivas, a *Democratico*.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, Meigs O. Frost was right. A mosquito bite could change history. He focused on the *anopheles* mosquitos, which stalked Walker's fiancée like Death reified. But it was *Aedes aegypti* that caused the most terror, for yellow fever, and not malaria, drove men to seek new routes and regions to colonize. Since 1849, American travelers, businessmen, and explorers had concerned themselves with attaining safe passage through the Caribbean. In light of the realization that the safest route to California from the Atlantic Seaboard ran through the edge of the British Empire, American entrepreneurs and adventurers took steps to secure Nicaragua safely into the American sphere of influence. After yellow fever erupted in Brazil, Americans realized the fragility of the future Transit Route and the inability of other peoples to maintain it properly. As a result, three separate leaders took actions independent of each other to do just that. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, Colonel William Walker, and Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney all secured different parts of Nicaragua into American hands. At the heart of all three expeditions rested the desire for an American monopoly on safe, stable, and sanitary travel enterprises through Central America.

Commodore Vanderbilt responded first to this potential crisis. He secured the rights to a transit route through Nicaragua. Vanderbilt beat out potential competitors,

including European developers, to provide Americans with a virtual monopoly on passage to and from their two coasts. Americans felt satisfied with the healthier passage that Vanderbilt's steamers provided. The route through Nicaragua provided shorter trips than did the competitor's routes through Panama and South America. However, ultimately, the civil war that broke out in 1854 jeopardized the safety of this route. The civil war also called into question the validity of the contract, for it was no longer clear who acted as the legitimate government of Nicaragua.

Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney was the second to respond to American calls for Nicaraguan safety but third to arrive in Nicaragua. Kinney represented a larger conglomeration of investors who purchased land rights along the contested Mosquito Coast. The Mosquito Coast, having existed within the British domain for several decades, posed a threat to American interests in Central America. It also reminded Americans that the British did not respect the sovereignty of America's sister states throughout the continent. For decades, Europeans had tried to develop the Mosquito Coast, and for decades they had failed to do so. The Kinney Expedition offered Americans a chance to chip away at the British domain while also offering them a starting point to regenerate Nicaragua by providing Americans with a center for a civilizing mission. However, Americans ultimately could not completely back Kinney's expedition, for, ironically, its legitimacy rested on the lawfulness of British claims to the rights to purchase the land deeds that it, in turn, purchased to start the colony.

Colonel William Walker was the third responder to American concerns in Nicaragua. Doctor Walker, unlike both Vanderbilt and Kinney, provided the best proof that he served a just cause through his colonization contract with Francisco Castellón, the

leader of the *Democraticos*. Newspapers routinely highlighted its existence and celebrated the possibilities that came with it. By leading his Americans in the siege of Granada, which ultimately forced a *Legitimista* surrender, Colonel Walker could boast the best credentials for stabilizing Nicaragua, which, in turn, meant a stable transit route to and from California. Walker also provided the best hope against cholera, which had ravaged the Nicaraguan countryside and penetrated the Transit Route as far north as the American ports connected to it.

When the civil war between the *Democraticos* and the *Legitimistas* ended, Walker had yet to find himself in a feud with either the Kinney Expedition or the Accessory Transit Company. Though the once-cooperative relationship between Commodore Vanderbilt and Colonel Kinney had come to a disagreeable end, Walker had, up until this time, developed a working relationship with local transit agents, such as Mr. Cushing.<sup>152</sup> On the other hand, Walker had exclusively devoted himself to military engagements on the western portion of Nicaragua. Thus, he had little contact with the Kinney Expedition and had no reason to engage with or against them during the civil war.

Yet, the seeds for further discord amongst the American regenerators had been planted. American newspapers had, for several years, created narratives about the involvement of Colonel Kinney and Commodore Vanderbilt in Nicaragua. Likewise, they offered Americans a blustery understanding of Walker's presence in Mexico. Newspapers ultimately began encouraging the discord before any of the factions did. Newspapers taught Americans to seek out the proper heroes for Nicaragua.

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<sup>152</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 95.

Newspapers highlighted the failures of those that they sided against while celebrated and elaborated upon the actions of those that they supported. The contrasting opinions about Nicaragua's regeneration spurred conflicting narratives about why it occurred.

The end of the civil war did not bring an end to the regeneration question. It did not resolve the conflicts between Commodore Vanderbilt and Colonel Kinney. It did not strengthen the relationship between the Transit Company and William Walker. It did not bring together Colonel Kinney and Colonel Walker. The end of the civil war meant only an end to the fighting between Nicaragua's two political parties, an end that proved to be only temporary.

In fact, the emerging conflicts surrounding the three regenerators encouraged American media to temporarily remove human agency from their narratives. Several newspapers, such as *The New York Daily Tribune* and Ohio's *Ashland Union*, emphasized how weather, and not human intervention, saved travelers from the cholera epidemic. In particular, they focused on the "sanitary visitation of the 'northers;' which prevail" in the late autumn.<sup>153</sup> As a result of these winds, the newspapers claimed that cholera had "entirely disappeared."<sup>154</sup> The newspapers, in turn, credited these winds for allowing safe passage on steamers to Nicaragua, such as the *Uncle Sam*, which had left New York on October 5, 1855, for Nicaragua.

Thus, Americans were left grappling with conflicting media reports about who they should support. Newspapers did not take any steps to unify the three regenerators

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<sup>153</sup> *The Ashland Union* (Ashland, OH), December 5, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035173/1855-12-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

<sup>154</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 29, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-29/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 20, 2017).

into a grand narrative. Instead, as the next chapter will demonstrate, they sowed the seeds for a war within a war. The war that broke out between the Rivas administration and the Allied forces, which were led by Costa Rica, veiled a war that erupted between William Walker and Commodore Vanderbilt as they battled over control of the Transit Route. Though this new war between the regenerators did not occur because of the news media's previous coverage, it erupted within a world already prepared for it. Americans knew to take sides before Walker knew there were sides to take.



## CHAPTER III - FROM COLONEL TO PRESIDENT; FROM ALLIES TO ENEMIES:

### WALKER'S EARLY VICTORIES IN THE REGENERATION WAR

On Tuesday evening next, Lieut. P. E. Mooney, the sole survivor of the Nicaraguan prisoners taken by Mora at Santa Rosa will deliver a lecture at Odd Fellows' Hall. He lost an arm in the action where so many others lost their lives. He proposes to give an account of the battle of Santa Rosa, his treatment by the Costa Ricans, the capabilities of the country; its present condition and the prospect of Walker in his work of regenerating Central America. - "Lecture on Nicaragua," *New Orleans Daily Creole*, July 21, 1856<sup>155</sup>

#### Introduction

On July 21, 1856, just nine days after General William Walker ascended to the presidency of Nicaragua, Lieutenant P. E. Mooney, a veteran of the War in Nicaragua, offered a public lecture in New Orleans on the "the prospect of Walker in his work of regenerating Central America."<sup>156</sup> The city's inhabitants found this topic to be quite enthralling. Locals had adopted the young conqueror as one of their own when he originally moved there in 1845.<sup>157</sup> While Walker lived in New Orleans, he served as a reputable lawyer while working on Canal Street.<sup>158</sup> He contributed to J. D. B. De Bow's increasingly popular *The Commercial Review of the South West*, a respected journal about Southern and Western development.<sup>159</sup> He also operated a newspaper, the *New Orleans Daily Creole*.

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<sup>155</sup> "Lecture on Nicaragua," *New Orleans Daily Creole*, July 21, 1856.

<sup>156</sup> "Lecture on Nicaragua," *New Orleans Daily Creole*, July 21, 1856.

<sup>157</sup> Alejandro Bolaños Geyer, *William Walker: El Predestinado* (Saint Charles, MO: Impresión Privada, 1992), xviii.

<sup>158</sup> Laurence Greene, *The Filibuster: The Career of William Walker* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers, 1937), 25.

<sup>159</sup> William Walker, "Venice, Its Government and Commerce," in *The Commercial Review of the South and West*, Vol. III, 1847: 48-56.

These professional ventures provided William Walker entry into the top circles of New Orleans. Such business prospects introduced him to respectable foreign, Creole, and “American” elites.<sup>160</sup> In these circles, Walker met his American fiancée, Ellen Gait Martin, whose untimely death because of malaria ultimately led to Walker’s decision to leave the city.<sup>161</sup> Thus, when someone offered to speak on the success of the city’s adopted son, New Orleanians listened.

For some residents, the speech by Lieutenant Mooney offered closure. After all, President Walker’s treasured American *falange* suffered a terrible defeat at the Battle of Santa Rosa, which occurred on March 20, 1856, when Walker still served as general of the Rivas regime.<sup>162</sup> Many of the men who fought in that preliminary engagement against the Costa Ricans came from or through New Orleans. Mooney, as a veteran of that humiliating setback, could provide the city with insight of what went wrong.

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<sup>160</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, editors, *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992). In the late antebellum period, many white elites in New Orleans fell into three basic categories, all of which associated them with a particular part of the city. Creoles were those born of French, Spanish, and, to a lesser extent, German, heritage in Louisiana and its immediate vicinity. The term existed then, as it does today, as a rather flexible concept, and others could also be considered Creole, depending on their circumstances. The Foreign French were those who migrated to Louisiana after the Louisiana Purchase from either France or its colonies. Those from Saint Domingue could find themselves categorized as either of the aforementioned terms. Americans were Anglophones. The term could refer to one from another state, or it could also refer to an Irish or English immigrant to the city. These terms had strong political connotations but were remarkably fluid. Nevertheless, starting in the 1830s, the city was split into three districts that were governed independently of each other. The Creoles’ power centered in the Marigny and Bywater area. The Foreign French and Creoles both controlled the French Quarter. The Americans controlled what is now called the Central Business District. The three districts merged back into a united city in 1852. Each chapter in *Creole New Orleans* highlights a different nuance surrounding these concepts.

<sup>161</sup> “The Mosquito Bite that Changed History” – Meigs O. Frost, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 20, 1946; Greene, *The Filibuster*, 25; and Stephen Dando-Collins, *Tycoon’s War: How Cornelius Vanderbilt Invaded a Country to Overthrow America’s Most Famous Military Adventurer* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2008), 7. Interestingly, other scholars, such as Dando-Collins, attribute her death to cholera, focusing on the “congestion” discovered by her attending physician, Dr. Kennedy. Laurence Greene attributes her death to yellow fever. However, Meigs Frost cites a post-humorous reading of the symptoms by a local physician who believed that Kennedy’s report suggested malaria.

<sup>162</sup> William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile and New York: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1860), 41. Throughout his memoir, William Walker referred to his American troops as the *falange*. Others referred to it by its English moniker, the American phalanx.

Furthermore, as a prisoner of the Costa Ricans, Mooney would be able to provide answers as to what Americans could expect in the future from the newly-discovered enemies of Central American regeneration.

Most listeners certainly went to hear Lieutenant Mooney explain President Walker's regeneration mission. Mooney, through this speech, augmented a fermenting narrative concerning Walker's escapades in Nicaragua that relied on the lexicon of regeneration. Most of Mooney's intended audience hoped that the presence of Walker would end the ongoing war that threatened the future of their newly acquired transportation route to Nicaragua. They also feared that the war, if allowed to continue, would lead to the spread of disease throughout Nicaragua. They feared that the war would further contaminate the Transit Route with disease, particularly cholera, for they had already witnessed such corruptions reach San Francisco through the transportation steamers. And, finally, they hoped that Walker would create a new republic that would align with the South.

However, by July 1856, Americans had also attached the concept of regeneration to other men involved in the development of Nicaragua. Many put their faith into the hands of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt, one of the richest and most powerful businessmen in all of the Americas, promised safe passage through Central America via his monopolized transportation system in Nicaragua. He guaranteed a safe canal system and provided magnificent steamers that offered a clean and reliable route for those seeking efficient intercontinental transportation between California and the Atlantic Coast. Americans also had once looked to Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney as a potential regenerator. Kinney headed the colonizing expedition along the Mosquito

Coast. Many thought that Kinney could civilize the region through economic and land development projects in what most considered to be a savage region.

More importantly, Lieutenant Mooney's speech augmented an active debate over who deserved the credit for Nicaragua's current success. Colonel Kinney and Commodore Vanderbilt both had claims regarding the current stability of the Transit Route. By July 1856, President Walker had made enemies out of both of them, which prevented any chance for either to share credit with him. Previous to his appointment as president, Walker guided President Patricio Rivas to disavow Colonel Kinney's colony. In an effort to increase his American colonization efforts, Walker had Rivas confiscate much of Vanderbilt's transit property. Likewise, both Kinney and Vanderbilt treated the other as a threat to their own development efforts. Newspapers encouraged people to take sides on the issue of who should regenerate Nicaragua.

Lieutenant Mooney, through his speech in New Orleans, entered an ongoing debate that began soon after William Walker, as a colonel in the *Democratico* army, forced the *Legitimistas* to sign the peace treaty of October 23, 1855, which allowed the two parties to once again function in the same government. Most of the South supported William Walker, who received almost universal backing near the Gulf Coast. Northern newspapers tended to be more cautious and fluid in whom they endorsed with many providing wavering fanfare for either Walker or Vanderbilt. Colonel Kinney, though once the recipient of praise from newspapers throughout the United States, faded out of the debate by July 1856. Nevertheless, though opinions differed over whom to support, the regeneration narrative remained.

This chapter seeks to explain the relationship between the actions of William Walker and the evolution of the regeneration narrative that defined the American presence in Nicaragua. By the end of 1855, most American newspapers celebrated the return of both Nicaragua's healthiness and its political stability, two factors that originally compelled so many Americans to focus their resources and labors onto the republic for the purpose of connecting California to the East Coast. After the October 23 treaty, Walker experienced very little criticism in the American media until January 1856, when news reached the United States of several mysterious deaths of well-known Americans who served him. Even then, most criticism did not surface until February, after Walker revoked Vanderbilt's charter in Nicaragua.

For the next three months, Walker experienced vacillating support from Northern newspapers that portrayed him as a slaver and war monger. However, even such barrages gave way to a larger narrative of Nicaraguan stability that portrayed his detractors, including President Franklin Pierce, as short-sighted pawns for the British. Walker's allies, including William Vincent Wells, utilized print culture to mitigate criticism successfully and to take control of the regeneration narrative.

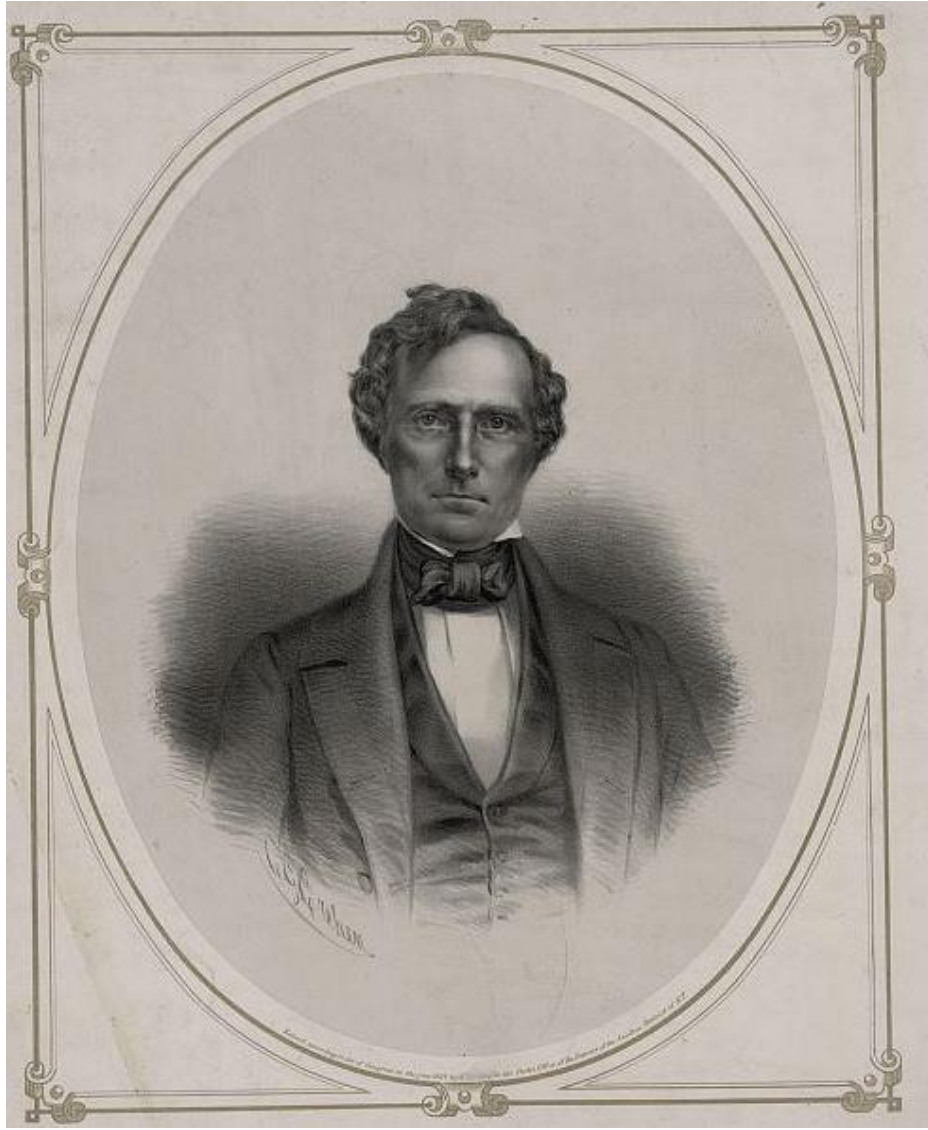


Figure 8. Franklin Pierce, circa 1854.<sup>163</sup>

However, the waves of support that Walker experienced in the American media coincided with ripples found within the Rivas administration. Costa Rica had declared war on William Walker in March 1856. Cornelius Vanderbilt aligned with the Costa Ricans and helped create an international coalition designed to oust Walker from

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<sup>163</sup> *Franklin Pierce*. Aug. 14, ca. 1854. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003674830/>.

Nicaragua and return the Transit Route to Vanderbilt. Though the initial invasion by the Costa Rican army failed by the end of April, Walker began losing support amongst the Nicaraguan native elites. In turn, Walker calculated the events occurring in Nicaragua with the American media's irresolute but overall positive depictions of him as the true regenerator of Nicaragua. He took control of the Nicaraguan government in June 1856, and in July, he ascended to the presidency.

Thus, as Lieutenant P. E. Mooney gave his speech on Walker's prospects of regeneration in Nicaragua, it appeared that Walker was successful. Walker's supporters had veiled the turmoil brewing in Nicaragua. They underemphasized the presence of yellow fever and cholera. They did not acknowledge the potency of the insurgents appearing throughout the countryside. They effectively, if only long enough for Walker to ascend to the presidency, elaborated a narrative of stability that temporarily halted Vanderbilt's schemes against him.



Figure 9. The “American Hotel” on road to San Juan, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*<sup>164</sup>

### The Ascendancy of General William Walker

Both Americans and Nicaraguans had reason to celebrate the peace treaty of October 23. It named Patricio Rivas, a *Democratico* who both factions respected, as the provisional president of the republic. It also placed William Walker as general of the new and combined Nicaraguan army.<sup>165</sup> Together, Rivas and Walker took a series of steps designed to stabilize the region, the Transit Route, and the new government. In the

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<sup>164</sup> *Gen. Wm. Walker's Exp. in Nicaragua: Half-way house on road to San Juan 'American Hotel,' used as way station for travelers to Calif.* 1856, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 2, no. 36 (August 16, 1856), p. 149. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99614151/>.

<sup>165</sup> William Vincent Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856), 78.



process, these measures placed them in direct confrontation with both Colonel Kinney and Cornelius Vanderbilt.

Almost immediately, President Rivas and General Walker sought to resolve the international tensions surrounding the civil war that engulfed the resources and inhabitants of so many other countries. The treaty took measures to placate French involvement in the war. French soldiers had been fighting for the *Legitimistas* since the summer of 1854.<sup>166</sup> The treaty offered members of the French Legion contracts to continue their service in the new republic and thus become citizens.<sup>167</sup> Rivas and Walker agreed that, in order to secure peace with these mercenaries, they would honor the payment and land contracts that the *Legitimistas* originally made with them. For over twenty years, French merchants had been residing in Granada and marrying into local families. Ephraim George Squire even noted how easily the French could assimilate “to the natives of the country,” which suggested to most that they could be neutralized as a threat by incorporating them into society.<sup>168</sup>

While the Rivas administration allowed for the settlement of the French soldiers, it promoted the continued settlement of American colonizers. It re-affirmed aspects of the 1838 constitution that allowed native-born citizens from any American republic to declare themselves naturalized Nicaraguans.<sup>169</sup> The regime honored the Castellón contract and its subsequent decree that awarded land to Americans serving under William

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<sup>166</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886), 21.

<sup>167</sup> Lorenzo Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, (Guatemala: La Unión, 1887), 113.

<sup>168</sup> Ephraim George Squire, *Nicaragua: Its People, Scenery, Monuments, and the Proposed Interoceanic Canal* (New York: D. Appleton, 1853), 154.

<sup>169</sup> Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, 113.

Walker. Furthermore, under Joseph W. Fabens, an American whom Rivas appointed as the new director of colonization, the regime also extended the contract to encourage more American migrants to Nicaragua. The Rivas government awarded 250 acres of land to each adult emigrating from the United States. Families received an additional 100 acres of land. The administration dispersed public lands to these American colonizers. Migrants would be awarded ownership after six months of residence on the granted lands. Furthermore, Fabens waved the duty fees for “all personal effects, furniture, agricultural implements, seeds, plants, and domestic animals.”<sup>170</sup> These policies worked, for American civilians, and not just soldiers began immigrating monthly to Nicaragua by the hundreds.

The Rivas administration also attempted to secure peace with its neighbors, which Americans hoped would guarantee the future of both the Transit Route as well as their budding colonies along it. However, the administration had mixed success with these diplomatic efforts. Guatemala chose not to respond to Rivas’s attempts at securing peace between the two governments. San Salvador, however, accepted the Rivas administration’s proposal for friendly relations, and the Hondurans agreed to recognize the new regime.<sup>171</sup> Costa Rica became increasingly belligerent towards the new regime. The Mora regime eagerly sought control over the Transit Route. It also desired to solidify all Costa Rican claims to Guanacaste, a contested region claimed by both governments.<sup>172</sup>

Costa Rica’s President Juan Rafael Mora Porras also espoused the first concerns that General Walker sought the establishment of a Central American empire. On

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<sup>170</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 144.

<sup>171</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 194.

<sup>172</sup> Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, 25.

November 20, 1855, President Mora released a proclamation against Walker. He described the American phalanx as a “gang of upstarts.” He warned Costa Ricans that the American conquest of Nicaragua would not “satisfy their greed” and that they would “invade Costa Rica” to take their wives, daughters, and homes.<sup>173</sup> Such a declaration hindered Walker’s chances at securing the Transit Route’s safety.

The Rivas regime also took great strides to mend political and social relations between the *Legitimistas* and *Democraticos*. The treaty obliged the new government to recognize the debts contracted by the *Legitimistas* as well as their military appointments and commissions. The regime, in an act of good faith, allowed several *Legitimista* officers to maintain prominent positions of authority. The treaty authorized General Ponciano Corral to continue his service as the new minister of war and govern the command of the soldiers stationed in Managua and Masaya through two of his officers, General Tomas Martinez and Colonel Linni Cezar, respectively.<sup>174</sup> Likewise, Rivas allowed General Florencio Xatruch, a close friend of General Santos “The Butcher” Guardiola, to maintain control over the city of Rivas.

Ironically, in the early months, American newspapers mostly worried not about the appointment of General Corral but of General Walker’s decision to execute him, because almost immediately after the signing of the new treaty, Walker had Corral arrested for treason. On November 5, 1855, José Maria Valle brought to Walker a package of letters destined for the Honduran frontier that a courier from Managua brought to him. The letters revealed that General Corral wrote to General Guardiola

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<sup>173</sup> Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, 132.

<sup>174</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 78.

asking for his military support to continue the war. He asked Guardiola to organize aid in San Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The next day, Walker had Corral court-martialed. Parker H. French, an American, served as Corral's counsel. Collier B. Hornsby, one of Walker's most esteemed American officers, led the court martial, with Colonel Birkett D. Fry and D. Carlos Thomas, neither native to Nicaragua, serving as the judge advocate and interpreter, respectively.<sup>175</sup> He was executed on November 8, 1855.

Many Americans responded to General Walker's execution of General Corral with outrage. The *Evening Star* described the execution as murder. It characterized Walker's legitimacy as "preposterous," stating that he "had no right to court martial any man for treason, it being a political and military offense."<sup>176</sup> Other newspapers voiced their concern as well. *The Evansville Daily Journal*, in Indiana, contended that General Corral was "a man worthy of a better fate."<sup>177</sup> *The North Carolinian* utilized the incident to highlight General Walker's crass internal diplomacy. It stated that Walker ignored the wishes of many foreign residents, clergy, and "principal native citizens," who pleaded for him to spare Corral's life. The newspaper then stated that the people of Granada surrounded Corral's corpse in mourning.<sup>178</sup> Such reports highlighted American concerns that Walker's internal policies would further destabilize the region.

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<sup>175</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 138.

<sup>176</sup> *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), November 30, 1855. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1855-11-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Henceforth, this collection will be referred to as *Chronicling America*.

<sup>177</sup> *The Evansville Daily Journal* (Evansville, IN), December 04, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015672/1855-12-04/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>178</sup> *The North Carolinian* (Fayetteville, NC), December 22, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020750/1855-12-22/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Though Americans feared that General Walker's decision to execute General Corral threatened the stability of the new regime, the ever-growing presence of Anglo-Americans in positions of power in Nicaragua placated most concerns. Walker strategically placed many key Americans into such appointments in an effort to stabilize the government. Describing this process, Walker stated that "the necessity for the American element to predominate in the government of Nicaragua sprang from the clauses in the treaty of peace."<sup>179</sup> Besides using the treaty to appoint himself general of the army, Walker had Rivas appoint, as previously mentioned, Joseph W. Fabens the director of colonization. Before Walker's arrival, Fabens worked with Fermin Ferrer and Colonel Kinney to colonize much of Ferrer's land for the purpose of mining development.<sup>180</sup> Walker had another American, Parker H. French, appointed the minister of hacienda. To counterbalance the presence of former *Legitimistas* in the military, Walker had many of his own officers promoted, including Collier B. Hornsby, who eventually became a general.<sup>181</sup> Through these appointments, Walker reassured Americans that Americans controlled both the colonization of Nicaragua as well as the safety of the colonizers, all under his steady watch and guidance.

General Walker also advised President Rivas to appoint several *Democraticos* whom he believed would bolster the American colonization effort. Though Máximo Jerez had proven aloof, at times, to General Walker's presence, Walker convinced Rivas to appoint Jerez to the ministry of relations.<sup>182</sup> Jerez led the original coup from Tiger Island

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<sup>179</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 156.

<sup>180</sup> *The Daily Union*. (Washington, D.C.), May 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-05-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>181</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 207.

<sup>182</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 133.

and had served as one of the *Democraticos*' primary generals until he had fallen into disgrace after retreating from Granada.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, Walker appreciated Jerez's ability to attain foreign assistance from the Hondurans during the war.<sup>184</sup> President Rivas tasked Jerez with attaining peace with their sister republics. Similarly, because Fermin Ferrer had demonstrated a willingness to participate in the American colonization efforts through his dealings with Joseph Fabens and Colonel Kinney, Walker had him appointed minister of public credit.<sup>185</sup>

General Walker also allocated funds for the creation of a newspaper called *El Nicaraguense*. It began operations on October 20, 1855, between the capture of Granada and the signing of the peace treaty.<sup>186</sup> In the first months of its existence, *El Nicaraguense* focused on the strength of the Rivas administration. Walker chose to make the newspaper bilingual and targeted Spanish and English speakers both domestically and abroad. It highlighted the stability that the Rivas administration provided by merging the two warring factions into one government. It celebrated the ability of the administration to develop federal institutions.<sup>187</sup> The newspaper also illuminated the government's major work projects.<sup>188</sup> It devoted much space to government decrees and acts of sale, especially property acquisitions. It also periodically released military rosters to advertise the growing American presence, since Walker knew that other newspapers would re-publish such news.

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<sup>183</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 35.

<sup>184</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 16.

<sup>185</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 186.

<sup>186</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 95.

<sup>187</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Nicaragua), December 29, 1855.

<sup>188</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Nicaragua), December 27, 1855.

The newspaper, at least during the early months, did not posture Walker as the leader of Nicaragua; however, many American newspapers quickly realized that *El Nicaraguense* served as an outlet of Walker's ideas and plans. The *Washington Sentinel* described it as Walker's "organ" and directly tied the newspaper to the newly enacted colonization plans.<sup>189</sup> Even if *El Nicaraguense* veiled its attempt to promote General Walker, it could not conceal his involvement in the newspaper or hide its partiality from the American media. Nevertheless, such criticisms did not deter the American press from utilizing, first and foremost, *El Nicaraguense* as the primary source of information pertaining to the development of Nicaragua.

By the end of 1855, American media began celebrating the successes of General Walker. Many Americans perceived Walker to be the true leader of the new administration. In New Orleans, *The Daily Picayune* stated that Walker had "quiet possession of the country."<sup>190</sup> The *New-York Daily Tribune* lauded Walker for his conquest of Nicaragua while also praising his humility for declining the presidency, which he offered to General Ponciano Corral.<sup>191</sup> By December, The *Washington Sentinel* exclaimed that "the peace of Nicaragua seems firmly established, and its beneficial effects are everywhere observed."<sup>192</sup> Thus, it appeared to many members of the American press that Walker had quelled problems of political instability.

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<sup>189</sup> *Washington Sentinel* (Washington, D.C.), December 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>190</sup> *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), December 26, 1855.

<sup>191</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*. November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>192</sup> *Washington Sentinel*, December 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

These newspapers, through their support of William Walker, highlighted his success, particularly at choosing the proper agents to run the new government. Joseph Fabens, as director of colonization, helped swell American emigration numbers, which American newspapers responded to most favorably. The *New-York Daily Tribune* informed its readers that the “prospect” of Walker sustaining power was “apparently in his favor.” It highlighted the “considerable numbers” of reinforcements arriving from San Francisco.<sup>193</sup> For example, on November 7, 1855, Captain R. W. Armstrong, of the new Nicaraguan military, brought with him a company of soldiers from San Francisco, which helped raise the American presence to approximately two hundred men. *The Daily Picayune* reported that the steamer *Sierra Nevada* brought 120 men to San Juan del Sur and it anticipated the arrival of another 400 men on the steamship *Cortes*.<sup>194</sup> Americans believed that their growing presence in Nicaragua ensured its stability.

Similarly, American newspapers correlated the arrival of these immigrants with the improvement of Nicaragua’s infrastructure and agricultural and mining development that Joseph Fabens orchestrated. *The Daily Picayune* celebrated the “great improvements . . . being made in Granada, under the direction of competent engineers.” It emphasized that the new administration focused its attention on the cultivation of lands “inferior to none,” which it contended were finally “being properly cleared.”<sup>195</sup> Newspapers, such as *The New York Herald*, celebrated the “rich yield of gold” that “[e]xperienced American

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<sup>193</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*. November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>194</sup> *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), December 26, 1855.

<sup>195</sup> *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), December 25, 1855.



miners from California” extracted from the region.<sup>196</sup> In each instance of improvement, newspapers consistently credited American involvement and expertise.

The health and wellbeing of Nicaragua and its inhabitants also factored into how American media portrayed the future of the newly stabilized republic. Even if the *New York-Daily Tribune* struggled to correlate the diminished occurrence of cholera with General Walker’s presence, it did note that its manifestation during the war had decimated the population, leaving them too “exhausted and wearied” to offer any resistance.<sup>197</sup> *The Daily Picayune*, on the other hand, contended that Nicaragua was now “healthy throughout,” and it asserted that such changes made Walker “popular with all classes” in the new republic.<sup>198</sup> Likewise, *The Washington Sentinel* exclaimed that “the health of the country is perfect and cholera has entirely ceased in the Republic.”<sup>199</sup> Walker appeared to have cleaned up the country.

If newspapers only previously danced around the theme of regeneration before William Walker’s ascendancy, by November 1855, the American press began posing more direct comments concerning the concept. San Francisco’s *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* directly correlated regeneration to Walker’s colonization effort. The newspaper focused on the arrival of the Californians under Colonel Birkett D. Fry in Nicaragua. While referencing Fry’s wife, who it described as “an accomplished American lady,” the newspaper mentioned how she was “imbued with the spirit of

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<sup>196</sup> *The New York Herald*, December 30, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-12-30/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>197</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>198</sup> *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), December 26, 1855.

<sup>199</sup> *Washington Sentinel*, December 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

regeneration and Republicanism,” which it implied brought peace to the war zone.<sup>200</sup> The newspaper described these migrants as the “sons of freedom” who served as “instruments of imparting so much happiness and hopes of future peace and prosperity to a downtrodden and oppressed people.

Supporters of General Walker relied on this new, more direct regeneration message to stem the tide of anti-filibusterism. In defending Walker’s colonization plans, *The Daily Union*, in Washington, argued that the development of the New World rested on the same policies that Walker utilized to revitalize Nicaragua. It compared Walker’s recruits to the original white emigrants to the Americas. It stated that because of such shared ambitions, “nations have been regenerated, savages civilized, the earth made fruitful, and the behests of the Most High accomplished.”<sup>201</sup> The newspaper contended that the detractors of Walker, such as the *London Times*, had conflated migration with conquest. Instead, it portrayed the Walker colonization effort as one of “purchase and peaceable occupation,” while deliberately distinguishing the post-treaty plans led by Joseph Fabens from the military landing of Walker’s original American phalanx.

*The Daily Union* charged Walker’s critics of giving into British imperialism. The newspaper argued that adhering to the premise that Walker was a filibuster and that filibustering violated international law allowed “Great Britain to prescribe to the United States a code of international law she is herself every day violating in those remote parts of the world where scarcely an echo is heard of the groans of oppressed nations.” It argued that the United States neutrality laws did not apply to “individual citizens,

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<sup>200</sup> *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* (San Francisco, California), November 17, 1855.

<sup>201</sup> *The Daily Union* (Washington, D., C.), December 27, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-12-27/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

animated by enterprise, whose sole object is to better their condition by making the earth fruitful.”<sup>202</sup> However, it contended that, if the United States government and citizens accepted the British narrative that Walker acted illegally, they risked the independence of Central America to the British Empire. Thus, the regeneration mission acted as a bulwark for the freedom of all of American republics.

While Americans celebrated their increased presence in Nicaragua, the Rivas administration took steps to exclude the Kinney Expedition from the new republic’s future. At first, it did, in fact, appear to many Americans that the Rivas administration would work towards building friendly relations with Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney. After all, it was only as recently as May 1855 that American newspapers reported on the cooperative colonization plan enacted by Joseph Fabens, the new director of colonization, Fermin Ferrer, the minister of public credit, and Henry Lawrence Kinney, the head of the Mosquito Coast colonization effort. *The Daily Union* reported how Ferrer contacted Fabens to colonize “a large quantity of agricultural and mineral lands in Nicaragua, which, in their present condition, are of but little value.”<sup>203</sup> It stated that Fabens and Ferrer contracted Kinney to procure colonists and transport them to these undeveloped lands. Thus, Americans had ample reasons to believe that Colonel Kinney had a future in the stabilized republic.

Earlier, in May, *The Daily Union* confirmed that the United States government disrupted Colonel Kinney’s plans to embark from New York and work with Joseph

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<sup>202</sup> *The Daily Union*. (Washington, D.C.), December 27, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-12-27/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>203</sup> *The Daily Union*. (Washington, D.C.), May 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-05-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Fabens and Fermin Ferrer. It contended that the district attorney in New York treated the deal as “unlawful,” and further stated that he deemed their colonization plan as a disguised military expedition “in contravention of the neutrality laws.”<sup>204</sup> The district attorney had a bench warrant put out for both Kinney and Fabens and had them arrested with bails set at ten thousand dollars each. Perhaps more importantly, the newspaper reported that a Mr. Cutting assisted the New York district attorney in the trial against these two colonizers. Mr. Cutting, it stated, acted as a representative of Mr. Marcoleta, the *Legitimista* minister from Nicaragua. William Walker suspected that Marcoleta helped tear apart Kinney’s alliances with the United States and Cornelius Vanderbilt.

For many speculators, financiers, and potential colonizers, the decision of President Patricio Rivas to appoint Joseph Fabens and Fermin Ferrer hinted favorably for Colonel Kinney. Yet, the Rivas administration took a hostile approach towards the Kinney Expedition. The Rivas administration perceived the Kinney Expedition to be completely illegitimate. Both Walker and Rivas realized that to cooperate with Kinney would jeopardize any claims that they had for control over the Mosquito Coast. They understood that to acknowledge his leadership meant recognizing the legitimacy of the process that the British and Kinney financiers took to acquire the rights to those lands. Thus, they treated him as an enemy to the new state.

This did not mean that the Rivas administration did not see a future in Nicaragua for the colonizers that came with Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney. On the contrary, as early as November 1855, the administration took measures to both dismantle the Kinney

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<sup>204</sup> *The Daily Union*. (Washington [D.C.]), 10 May 1855. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-05-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Expedition while simultaneously buffering their own American colonization efforts. The administration, in fact, relied upon the experiences that Joseph Fabens and Fermin Ferrer had working with Kinney to defeat his schemes. In early November, Fabens visited San Juan del Sur, the seat of Kinney's colony. There, he lured many of the Americans away from Kinney and signed them into the Army of Nicaragua.<sup>205</sup> In the Nicaraguan military, these recruits qualified for the same land grants as did other emigrants, as well as steady pay. Fabens had Captain Swift transport thirty of Kinney's men to Walker.<sup>206</sup> In conjunction with Captain R. W. Armstrong's arrival from San Francisco on November 7, 1855, Faben's political maneuvering augmented the American phalanx to two hundred men, loyal first and foremost to General William Walker.

Colonel Kinney responded to Joseph Faben's maneuvers by attempting to negotiate with General Walker. Captain Smith, on behalf of Kinney, brought Walker a letter requesting both leaders to recognize claims of each other. Kinney offered to acknowledge General Walker as the commander-in-chief of the Army of Nicaragua if Walker agreed to accept him as the legitimate governor of the Mosquito Coast. As Walker's ally William Vincent Wells explained, Walker responded: "Tell Mr. Kinney, or Col. Kinney, or Gov. Kinney, or by whatever name he styles himself, that if he interferes with the Territory of Nicaragua, and I can lay my hands on him, I will most assuredly hang him." In response to Walker's rejection as well as the pressing need to obtain more funds, Kinney left for San Francisco on November 13.<sup>207</sup> The Kinney Expedition continued, but it did so in a weakened and almost futile condition.

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<sup>205</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 158.

<sup>206</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 95.

<sup>207</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*. 95.

Before news of Henry Lawrence Kinney and William Walker's feud reached American shores and colonies, newspapers struggled to understand the relationship between Walker and Kinney as well the future of Nicaragua. Even Honolulu's *Polynesian* reported that "there had been no official communication between Walker and Kinney." The newspaper asserted that the Rivas administration, under Walker, maintained a "profound secrecy . . . in regard to their future movements," and that "little is known but through rumor."<sup>208</sup> Thus, for readers around the world, the fallout between Walker and Kinney came without much, if any, warning.

Soon, however, news reached the United States of the discord between General Walker and Colonel Kinney in late-1855. American newspaper reports on November 12, 1855, proved to be particularly harsh for Kinney's popularity and future prospects. On that day, Washington's *Evening Star* reported that Walker sought to "drive him out the country."<sup>209</sup> *The New York Herald* reported that Kinney's personnel numbers dwindled to approximately twelve men, most of whom had fallen victim to sickness.<sup>210</sup> Likewise, *The New-York Daily Tribune* contrasted Kinney to Walker, calling Walker "the conquering hero" while relegating Kinney to "that less successful adventurer." The *Tribune* described Kinney as being "stuck in Greytown" while "doing nothing" and "daily losing men" to "disease and dissipation."<sup>211</sup> Such reports effectively emasculated Kinney.

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<sup>208</sup> *Polynesian*. (Honolulu, Hawaii), November 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015408/1855-11-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>209</sup> *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>210</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>211</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1855-11-12/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Newspaper reports concerning Kinney's dwindling prospects continued after Kinney's retreat to San Francisco. On November 15, the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal* reaffirmed earlier reports concerning sickness in Kinney's colony and also revealed that Walker's soldiers also wished to "be allowed to drive Kinney and his men out of the country."<sup>212</sup> News also reached the United States of Fabens's success in recruiting Kinney's men. Rumors spread that Kinney had attempted to align with the *Legitimistas*.<sup>213</sup> On November 26, Washington's *Daily American Organ* reported that fifty men had deserted Kinney.<sup>214</sup> On the next day, *The Nashville Union and American* revealed that Kinney's men went to Walker's camp. Throughout the remainder of the year, most newspapers around the United States continually reiterated this same message – Kinney no longer factored into the regeneration of Nicaragua.<sup>215</sup>

Only a few newspapers held out any semblance of hope that Colonel Kinney would succeed. On November 15, Vermont's *Green Mountain Freeman* informed its readers that Kinney remained in Greytown "laboring for its improvement." The *Freeman* feared that ideological differences over slavery between Walker and Kinney encouraged tension between the two. It was one of the first American outlets to highlight concerns that Walker endeavored to establish slavery in Nicaragua while it believed that Kinney did not. Through such tension, it argued that "[m]atters of political moment seem likely

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<sup>212</sup> *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, November 16, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023200/1855-11-16/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>213</sup> *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* (San Francisco, California), November 17, 1855.

<sup>214</sup> *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), November 26, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1855-11-26/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>215</sup> *Nashville Union and American*, November 27, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1855-11-27/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

to grow out of the movements of these men and perhaps of a very diverse character.”

This implication, it insisted, caused Walker to seek the expulsion of Kinney’s colony.<sup>216</sup>

While news spread about the feud between General Walker and Colonel Kinney, American newspapers focused on the state of health in Nicaragua, particularly along the Transit Route. For Americans, Nicaragua could not be considered stable nor regenerated until cholera disappeared along that route. As previously stated, during these early months, many American newspapers celebrated the diminished presence of cholera; however, some newspapers located in cities most attuned to the Transit Route continued to express their health concerns, especially in the initial weeks of the Rivas administration. On November 2, *The Daily Picayune* of New Orleans, for example, continued to release information concerning the presence of cholera on board ships in the Pacific fleet, though that newspaper relied on outdated information and focused on reports from the very beginning of October.<sup>217</sup> Even so, by December, *The Daily Picayune*, re-directed its concerns about cholera away from Nicaragua and towards Honduras, which experienced an outbreak shortly after General José Santos Guardiola returned.<sup>218</sup> In fact, for the duration of Walker’s tenure in Nicaragua, Honduras remained vulnerable to periodic outbreaks, something which American newspapers routinely revealed. By March 1858, American newspapers reported that over 5,000 Hondurans had died from cholera.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> *Green Mountain Freeman* (Montpelier, Vt.), November 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023209/1855-11-15/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>217</sup> *The Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), November 2, 1855.

<sup>218</sup> *The Daily Picayune*, (New Orleans), December 9, 1855.

<sup>219</sup> “Clippings,” *Holmes County Republican* (Millersburg, OH), March 11, 1858. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028820/1858-03-11/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



As the spread of cholera appeared to diminish, American newspapers concentrated their attention on the health and progress of the Transit Route. Though Vanderbilt had competition in other regions, by the end of 1855, the route through Nicaragua was seven hundred miles shorter than the nearest competition, namely the route in Panama.<sup>220</sup> Travelers had long stopped seeing it as a luxurious or convenient solution to Brazil's yellow fever but saw it, instead, as the primary solution to their travels.

By December, newspapers, such as *The Washington Sentinel*, expressed their jubilation that "the health of the country [Nicaragua] is perfect and the cholera has entirely ceased in the Republic." Yet, they still worried about the future of the Transit Route. The *Sentinel* explained that the Transit Company worked in "the only unhealthy portion of the country," but it lauded the company for not experiencing a single death in the twenty-eight months it had worked there.<sup>221</sup>

But who controlled the Transit Route was an entirely different question, and newspapers provided a very ambiguous understanding that indirectly highlighted the growing tension between the Rivas administration and Cornelius Vanderbilt. As the *National Era* stated, for Walker, access to the Transit Route was "worth more to him than success in half a dozen battles."<sup>222</sup> As early as November, *The New York Herald* asserted that General Walker reigned over the Transit Route with "undisputed possession."<sup>223</sup> The

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<sup>220</sup> *The New York Herald*, October 24, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-10-24/ed-1/seq-7/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>221</sup> *Washington Sentinel*, December 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>222</sup> *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), October 25, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1855-10-25/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>223</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 27, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1855-11-27/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

*Washington Sentinel* attributed continued progress along the route to the “beneficial effects” of the peace that Walker brought to Nicaragua.<sup>224</sup> *The Daily Union*, in Washington, warned readers that, despite over fifty million dollars being transported through the route over the last fifteen months, it remained relatively unsecured throughout the duration of the civil war. The newspaper estimated that as little as “[t]welve men could have taken possession of the immense floating capital had they felt disposed.”<sup>225</sup> As this article revealed, the stability of the Rivas regime did not satisfy their concerns about access to California through Nicaragua.

Ironically, just as the fears of cholera along the Transit Route dissipated, the disease re-emerged. However, neither supporters nor detractors of General Walker focused on its presence. The new outbreak occurred just as Captain Anderson’s steamship full of recruits arrived on December 17.<sup>226</sup> Its presence went against the conventional ideas held by the newspapers that the “northers” had carried the disease away, wind currents that newspapers previously contended defeated cholera.

Unlike the previous outbreak, which Americans noted as afflicting almost exclusively the native populations, the most recent outbreak exacted its toll on American soldiers. Walker particularly lamented the loss of four of his officers: Captain George R. Davidson, Colonel Charles H. Gilman, Captain Armstrong, and Major Jesse Hambleton. American casualties from cholera climbed until the American soldiers began reporting

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<sup>224</sup> *Washington Sentinel*, December 15, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>225</sup> *The Daily Union*. (Washington, D.C.), November 2, 1855. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1855-11-02/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>226</sup> This is likely Frank P. Anderson.

deaths almost daily.<sup>227</sup> As Walker later stated, the “frequent sound of the dead march, as the funeral escorts passed through the streets, began to exercise a depressing effect on the troops.”<sup>228</sup> Walker’s observations of this phenomenon later encouraged him to use military personnel to take control over funerary rights as a strategy to combat both cholera and the degradation of morale that it caused.<sup>229</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter Five, this was a prime example of how Walker utilized the military to combat disease.

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<sup>227</sup> *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond, VA.), January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-2/>>. Captain George R. Davidson was one of the first to succumb to the December outbreak. Davidson, from Frankfurt, Kentucky, was not an easy officer to replace. He had previously served the Kentucky Regiment as a cavalry officer during the Mexican-American War. He gained minor notoriety for his escape from the Mexico City prison before making his way to Tampico. Before leaving for Nicaragua, he served on the board of assistant alderman in San Francisco. Davidson had only arrived in Nicaragua on October 3, 1855, but Walker expected Davidson to serve as a competent captain. Under Walker, Captain Davidson commanded Company C of the American Battalion, which put him directly in charge of about fifty-five men. Davidson also helped capture Granada.

Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 106; and Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 64, 106. Walker explicitly considered Colonel Charles H. Gilman’s death a “severe loss.” Walker previously worked with Colonel Gilman during his attempt to conquer Baja California and Sonora. Like Davidson, Gilman arrived on October 3, 1855 to serve his old commander. Gilman had a reputation for being a “man of strong mind” as well as for being a “good store of military knowledge.” Gilman, while serving Walker, lost his leg in Lower California. However, Walker had a history of trusting Gilman, for Gilman led the successful invasion at La Paz during that campaign. While in Mexico, Gilman served Walker as a captain, then lieutenant colonel. Walker rewarded Gilman with the rank of colonel in the new Nicaraguan army, as a testament to his loyalty and abilities. Once in Nicaragua, Gilman also immediately served Walker by participating in the capture of Granada.

*The New York Herald*, January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). Likewise, the loss of Captain R. W. Armstrong, another recent arrival, hurt Walker. Armstrong had arrived in November with a company of forty-six men from San Francisco. Walker replaced Armstrong with Lieutenant Daniel K. Bayley, a member of the original phalanx.

*The New York Herald*, January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; *Spirit of the Age* (Raleigh, N.C.), November 14, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026561/1855-11-14/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); and Wells, *Walker’s Expedition in Nicaragua*, 98. Major Jesse Hambleton was another critical victim from this outbreak. Again, Hambleton took part in the siege of Granada. He originally served under Colonel Birkett D. Fry as quartermaster of the First Battalion Voltigeurs, a battalion that Walker hoped would serve as an elite strike force. Soon after, Walker promoted Hambleton to major and awarded him the position of Commissary of War in the new government. He died soon after the promotion.

<sup>228</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 158.

<sup>229</sup> These ideas will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Whether or not General William Walker orchestrated a concerted scheme to hide the truth about cholera remains unclear. Walker did have extensive connections in the media through his past work as an editor in both San Francisco and New Orleans. Nevertheless, what is clear is that the American public did not receive an accurate interpretation of the December outbreak. Tension over control of the Transit Route as well as Walker's ingenuity at utilizing *El Nicaraguense* to monopolize the supply of information reaching American newspapers veiled its presence from the American public. With but a few exceptions, most American newspapers did not return to narratives concerning cholera in Nicaragua until after Walker became president in July 1856.

Even if American newspapers did not report on cholera, newspapers concerned about General Walker's legitimacy and future did report on the deaths resulting from the disease. Most of the American media reports surfaced in January 1856. *The New York Herald* latched onto any information that it could receive about how and why these soldiers died. For years, the *Herald* favored the economic future that a Vanderbilt-controlled Transit Route offered. At best, it provided wavering support for Walker and Kinney during this period. By mid-January, the *Herald* began cautiously asserting, however, its concerns that Walker was unable to secure a stable government, which meant that he could not, in turn, secure a healthy Transit Route. Though it admitted that "no opposition of any account [of cholera] exist to General Walker's government," it contrasted news that it received on Nicaragua to what the supporters of Walker claimed, stating that it foresaw a "contradictory and unsatisfactory" future for him. It especially focused on reports of internal dissatisfaction over the land grants awarded by Joseph

Fabens to the migrant colonizers.<sup>230</sup> Rumors spread that the American recipients arrived to broken promises that did not live up to the colonization decree. Thus, the *Herald* encouraged readers to doubt the future of a Walker-governed Nicaragua.

On January 14, *The New York Herald* reported on the deaths of Captain George R. Davidson and Captain Robert W. Armstrong. The *Herald* stated that Davidson died of an undisclosed illness, which lasted approximately thirty-six hours. The *Herald* provided an eight-paragraph obituary on Davidson that highlighted his military service and activities in California after the 1849 gold rush. The newspaper described how Davidson spent much of his short tenure in Nicaragua sick. It ultimately contended that Davidson died from a “mysterious malady,” and at no point, did the newspaper attribute his death to cholera in this report.<sup>231</sup>

However, as its obituary on Captain Robert W. Armstrong demonstrated, the newspaper willingly reported on the presence of yellow fever, the dreaded disease that caused American travelers to treat Nicaragua as their primary route. The newspaper described how Armstrong fell victim to a “severe attack.” *The New Herald*, once again, highlighted Armstrong’s solid career in the military and his activities in California to demonstrate that disease under the regime of General Walker stole the best of society.

Despite *The New Herald*’s reservations about General Walker, it did not blame him directly for the presence of disease. After all, Walker was not the only colonizer there. By the end of January, about 250 Americans resided in Nicaragua who did not

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<sup>230</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>231</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

serve Walker. Most of them had come with the Accessory Transit Company or with Colonel Kinney. The presence of disease in Nicaragua could not be pinned on the colonization efforts of the new republic. In fact, the *Herald* reported on Colonel Kinney's illness, which also served as a metaphor for his inability to regenerate the Mosquito Coast.<sup>232</sup> Reports of Kinney's illness encouraged American readers to see the prospects of his colony as bleak as his own health. However, its continued existence could call into question the success of Walker's regeneration efforts by highlighting his failure to remove it.

Throughout January, *The New York Herald* continued its investigations into these deaths. They became if only accidentally, a prime point for the newspaper to chip away at the legitimacy of General Walker in the minds of its Northern readers. By the end of January, the newspaper changed its story on how Captain Davidson had died. The *Herald* relied on information published by *The Bolevin Oficial*, a Costa Rican correspondent in San José. If the *Herald* only wavered in its support for William Walker, its Costa Rican correspondent openly attacked the legitimacy of the "grey-eyed man of destiny." In an article mentioning the mass emigration of Americans to Nicaragua as well as Central American anxieties over a Walker empire, the *Herald* stated that two of the same judges who sentenced General Ponciano Corral to death had, in turn, condemned George R. Davidson and Charles H. Gilman to the same fate. The article concluded that such deaths had led to a mass exodus of Walker's foreign settlers.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-14/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>233</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-30/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

*The Bolevin Oficial* followed its own state's lead and sought to deter colonizers and financiers from backing General Walker. *The New York Herald* likely did not share this sentiment at the time of its publication, however. It almost certainly sought answers to its concerns that General Walker had not yet made Nicaragua safe for Anglo-Americans. Nonetheless, the misinformation over the deaths of Walker's officers awakened Walker to the fact that the battle for Nicaragua would be fought with words as much as with arms. It also alerted the administration that Costa Rica's sustained belligerent attitude towards Walker's presence would not abate. Walker, through this attack on him, realized that he had to monitor the relations between the Costa Ricans and his Northern critics.

In fact, once the new government formed, Costa Rica directed much of its efforts against the Americans in Nicaragua. They launched a propaganda campaign designed to delegitimize William Walker. Costa Rica voiced its concerns that Walker aimed to establish slavery throughout Central America while making sure not to implicate the Nicaraguan government that he served. The political battles that ensued from this intellectual propaganda war between Walker and Costa Rica ultimately led to Walker's explicit broadcast of the regeneration narrative because he had to prevent his enemies from taking control of the chronicle presented to most audiences.

Despite these concerns, most American media coverage at the beginning of 1856 remained favorable for General Walker and the Rivas regime. The primary enemies of the regime appeared to be foreign. Most American critics appeared to be abolitionists who feared that Walker desired slavery in Nicaragua, a motive that neither Patricio Rivas nor William Walker had openly pursued in Nicaragua at this time.

## The Vanderbilt Rivalry and the Regeneration Narrative

Though the American media's coverage of William Walker certainly favored him, public perception did not motivate him. According to Captain Charles Doubleday, Walker once stated: "I am not contending for the world's approval, but for the empire of Central America."<sup>234</sup> Ideals and outcomes motivated Walker. He believed that his presence and the manifestation of the "American element" would, in fact, regenerate Nicaragua. Doubleday, who admired Walker's bravery but admonished his pursuit of an empire, compared Walker to Napoleon Bonaparte, arguing that, like Napoleon, Walker "conceived himself to be an instrument of destiny before whom all lesser influences must give way."<sup>235</sup> Because of such strong beliefs, he argued, Walker expressed an "inordinate confidence in the ability of his handful of Americans to conquer, unassisted, any number of enemy."<sup>236</sup> Such confidence, Doubleday insisted, led Walker to "disregard obstacles which might have deterred other men, and which in the end caused his downfall."<sup>237</sup> Doubleday understood that Walker put the idea of a regenerated region above his own celebrity.

This is not to suggest that Walker did not understand the importance of positive American media coverage. Walker simply did not believe that he could or should allow popular opinion or press coverage to dictate his actions. In fact, almost paradoxically, Walker eagerly pursued favorable coverage by trying to convince the media and its readers to accept his ideals and pursuits. Until the publication of William Vincent Wells'

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<sup>234</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1886), 216.

<sup>235</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 107.

<sup>236</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 113.

<sup>237</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 107.



*Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua, El Nicaraguense* remained the primary tool to persuade supporters. Such a nuance is important to appreciate Walker's deliberate, calculated, and temporarily successful attempt to take control over the developing regeneration narrative that swayed potential recruits and financiers.<sup>238</sup>

However, in the beginning of 1856, a fallout between William Walker and Cornelius Vanderbilt tested Walker's resolve to stay true to the mission of regeneration. Walker convinced Patricio Rivas to engage against the Accessory Transit Company. As a result, Walker found himself a direct rival to the most powerful businessman in the United States, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. Unlike Vanderbilt, Walker could not self-fund but required the financial support of powerful bankers, politicians, and planters. To defeat Vanderbilt, Walker needed to not only maintain the support that he established, but he also had to increase it. On the contrary, the American media support that Commodore Vanderbilt acquired primarily served him as a financial tool. Profit motivated Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt concerned himself far less with the ideals of regeneration than did Walker, or likely even Kinney.

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<sup>238</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War*, 341; Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854 -1861* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002), 106-108; Montúfar, *Walker en Centro América*, 301, 384. Though some scholars have previously argued that Walker's adoption of slavery represented a purely political motive of desperation that betrayed his previous ideals, this argument is only partially correct. Since at least Lorenzo Montúfar in the 1890s to as recently as Stephen Dando-Collins in 2008, scholars have argued that Southerners pushed Walker to abandon his ideals. As the editor of the *Crescent*, Walker did, in fact, display, at times, hostility towards slavery. Pierre Soulé, the prominent Louisiana senator and an ardent slaver and expansionist, is often the politician that such scholars contend convinced Walker to establish slaving in Nicaragua. Soulé did visit Walker in Nicaragua. He did fund Walker. He also bought land in Nicaragua. It is also true that Walker allowed the decree to re-institute slavery shortly after his visit. But there is a several-year gap between his years as an editor in New Orleans and this expedition. Between his leaving the newspaper and his conquest of Nicaragua, Walker instituted Louisiana law in his failed Mexican republic. To suggest that Walker, a practicing lawyer in New Orleans, did not anticipate the legalization of slavery with his choice of legal code seems to suggest that Walker did not grasp the very law that he admired and implemented. More on this subject will be examined in subsequent chapters.

However, after the Rivas administration commandeered Accessory Transit Company property, Commodore Vanderbilt strategically aligned himself with the Costa Ricans, the primary detractors of an American presence in Nicaragua. Vanderbilt did not have to take an active part in the propaganda war. He benefitted from the public discourse that exposed Walker as an illegitimate and fraudulent regenerator, a campaign primarily championed by the Costa Ricans and British. In turn, the Costa Ricans benefitted from Vanderbilt's financial and logistical support. Thus, for William Walker, the campaign to legitimize himself as a regenerator became his primary defense against a foreign army backed by a belligerent and vengeful tycoon.

The controversy between the Rivas regime and Vanderbilt commenced in November 1855, but the conflict that severed relations between Rivas and Vanderbilt did not occur until February 1856. Despite reservations held about the Hise Treaty, Vanderbilt secured a subsequent charter in August 1851 that granted him the right to operate in Nicaragua. Nicaraguans allowed Vanderbilt to continue his business ventures in good faith as long as he would honor the payment plans.<sup>239</sup> However, once the chaos of war subsided, the Rivas regime realized that Vanderbilt had consistently failed to uphold his agreement to pay the proper revenue. Supporters of General Walker, such as William Vincent Wells, insisted that the company had relied on bullying tactics to defer payments. Wells contended that Vanderbilt utilized "indefinite threats about the power of the United States," to prevent Nicaragua from collecting its revenue.<sup>240</sup> Thus, Vanderbilt tested the

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<sup>239</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 205.

<sup>240</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 205.

resolve of Walker, forcing him to decide between justice and alliance and between Nicaraguans and Americans.

Though the administration, almost immediately after its formation, became aware of the financial difficulties that the Transit Company presented, President Rivas did not immediately act with aggression. Instead, he resorted to negotiations and pleas. In early November, the regime contacted the president of the company to appoint commissioners to settle the accusations of revenue evasion.<sup>241</sup> The Transit Company refused to cooperate. Such indecisiveness on the part of Rivas and obstruction by the Transit Company agitated Walker, who, in turn, plotted against the company. Walker realized that the Transit Company was experiencing internal discord. Two of the primary agents, C. K. Garrison and Charles Morgan, appeared to be caught up in a plot to lower the stock value in an effort to buy the company out from under. Ultimately, they failed, and Vanderbilt's faction purchased a controlling share of the company in November. Walker already had a working relationship with Garrison, who had been one of his primary financial backers. Garrison, a company agent in California, had personally taken care of the financial arrangements for many of Walker's California recruits. Vanderbilt's faction, after gaining control, informed Morgan and Garrison that their employments would both expire in January and February, respectively.<sup>242</sup> As a result, Walker and these agents started plotting out how they could better introduce more Americans into Nicaragua without the assistance of Vanderbilt.

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<sup>241</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 149.

<sup>242</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War*, 145.

With the assistance of Edmund Randolph and A. Parker Crittenden, who arrived in San Juan del Sur to meet with him, General Walker began preparations to oust the Transit Company. Randolph and Crittenden informed Walker that the Transit Company's repeated breaches of contract provided the Rivas regime a chance to void the charter, under the condition that such breaches forfeited the rights of the company. Together, Walker, Morgan, Randolph and Crittenden agreed to pursue a new charter, one without Vanderbilt.<sup>243</sup>

General Walker did not inform President Rivas of the *coup* against Commodore Vanderbilt. Instead, he focused his attention to the financial malfeasance of the Accessory Transit Company and its sister, the Ship Canal Company. Though operating from the contracts and under the same leadership, Vanderbilt had the operations along the Transit Route split into two companies, one dedicated to the transport of passengers through the Transit Route and the other dedicated to the construction of a canal system. Walker convinced Rivas that the failure of the Ship Canal Company to commence construction on the canal voided both companies' rights to exist. As part of the 1851 agreement, the Ship Canal Company agreed that, if it could not build a canal, it would use the land to develop a railroad, which it had also failed to do.

General Walker persuaded President Rivas to revoke both companies' charters, which were intricately tied together as one package, on February 18, 1856. The next day, Walker established the new charter with Charles Morgan and C. K. Garrison.<sup>244</sup> In response to the revocation, Rivas appointed three commissioners, D. Cleto Mayora, E. J.

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<sup>243</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 150-151.

<sup>244</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 156.

C. Kewen, and George F. Alden, to determine what the companies owed Nicaragua. These agents then seized all of the property, including ships and facilities, for the new company to utilize.<sup>245</sup>

With this carefully coordinated act, General Walker made an enemy out of Commodore Vanderbilt. By this point, the American newspapers had once again returned to their own regeneration narratives. However, they did not choose ones that Walker desired. *The New York Herald* initially sided with Cornelius Vanderbilt after the Rivas administration confiscated his companies' property. On March 14, 1856, the *Herald* criticized Walker for challenging Vanderbilt. It applauded Vanderbilt for taking advantage of the weak state, asserting that it was "entirely safe to refuse to pay the sums agreed upon" because Nicaragua could not force Vanderbilt to do so. The newspaper then credited the Accessory Transit Company for the promise of regeneration that it offered to Central America, claiming that it was the company that "induced our administration to bombard Greytown; upset Colonel Kinney in his Central American expedition; laid the foundation of a stupendous commercial company and has thrown Wall street into periodical excitements and convulsions."<sup>246</sup> By siding with Vanderbilt, *The New York Herald* temporarily threatened the public image that General Walker held in the United States. It also highlighted the beginning of the sectional fracturing of support that Walker witnessed in the United States. Though Northern adventurers increasingly joined Walker, the grey-eyed general lost much, but not all, of his financial support from that region.

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<sup>245</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 153-154.

<sup>246</sup> *The New York Herald*, March 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-03-14/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Though General Walker received fractured support in the North, Southern newspapers continued to promote Walker. In particular, Walker's old newspaper, the *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, responded to Northern attempts to delegitimize Walker. On April 2, 1856, the *Crescent* chastised the "might-makes-right" attitude of Northern newspapers, such as *The New York Herald*, and argued that the Rivas administration was well within its right to request what Vanderbilt owed. The newspaper contended that "many of the Northern papers . . .invoked to break down Nicaragua. . . to substantiate the invalid claims of a faithless steamship monopoly."<sup>247</sup> The newspaper explicitly compared the response of the Rivas government against the transgressions of Vanderbilt to what all Americans would expect the United States government to do if a company, such as the successful Collins Steamers, were to try the same thing against it.

The *New Orleans Daily Crescent* also depicted Walker, not Vanderbilt, as the true hero of Nicaragua. It considered itself the "first in the South-west. . . to stand by the new order of things in Nicaragua, and to vindicate the conduct of Gen. Walker and his companions in arms from the aspersions that were profusely lavished upon them."<sup>248</sup> It contended that the Americans in Nicaragua deserved "high praise instead of censure." It argued that they acted on the "loftiest of motives" and that, in doing so, they exhibited "unexceptionable" conduct. Likewise, the paper lambasted Senator Clay for treating Walker like a pirate, stating that such accusations ignored his "great and glorious work of

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<sup>247</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-04-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>248</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-04-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

regeneration.”<sup>249</sup> The *Crescent* also argued that the mission of Walker was intricately tied to the South, implying that Northerners were less-qualified than Southerners to comment on the regeneration of Nicaragua. The newspaper explicitly argued that “the South has a deeper interest in the success of the regenerators of Nicaragua” than it did with previous attempts to colonize Kansas, a venture that most Southern statesmen and citizens believed held the key to their future. Instead, the *Crescent* told Southerners that “cotton-growing States” need to look southward at the new “star of empire” that Walker built.<sup>250</sup>

With major northern media outlets turning on General Walker, Commodore Vanderbilt moved to pressure C. K. Garrison, Charles Morgan, and William Walker into submission. After Costa Rica’s president Juan Rafael Mora Porras declared war against Walker on March 1, 1856, Vanderbilt met with the Costa Rican ambassador to the United States, Don Felipe Molina, to discuss how they could work together to remove Walker from power. Similarly, Vanderbilt also met with ambassadors from the other Central American republics, as well as those from Great Britain, Chile, Peru, and Brazil. Vanderbilt informed these ambassadors that the five-point star on the new Nicaraguan flag represented the five-state empire that Walker wished to create in Central America, with each star representing a respective Central American country. Through these negotiations, Vanderbilt built a coalition to combat Walker and regain his Transit Route.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-04-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>250</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-04-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>251</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon’s War*, 178.

By the time that Costa Rica declared war on General Walker, he had successfully entrenched his American followers throughout Nicaragua. Both Walker and Wells approximated that 1,200 Americans, both soldiers, and civilians, had colonized Nicaragua by the date of Mora's declaration. Six hundred of them served as soldiers for the American phalanx, which existed as the primary arm of the republic's military. Walker and his Americans had colonized the key political cities as well as those along the Transit Route. 500 Americans inhabited Leon; 200 colonized La Virgen, and 290 Americans lived in Granada. Americans created colonies between 30 to 50 people in San Carlos, Castillo, San Juan del Sur, Matagalpa, and Rivas.<sup>252</sup> Thus, even with Vanderbilt's financial support, Costa Rica would need to fight an army as organized as the *Legitimista* military that Walker had initially defeated. More importantly, this military had a sizeable backing of civilians capable of supporting them as well as a new lifeline to the United States through Garrison and Morgan's splinter company.

Though the first few confrontations against Costa Rica resulted in defeats for the American forces, General Walker still maneuvered himself into a greater position of power. On March 20, 1856, Colonel Louis Schlesinger led the Americans to Santa Rosa, where they were promptly routed.<sup>253</sup> The Americans, in turn, defeated a Costa Rican force at Serapaqui on April 10, but they suffered a second defeat against the Costa Rican army at Rivas that same day.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 159; and Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 103.

<sup>253</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 183.

<sup>254</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 205.



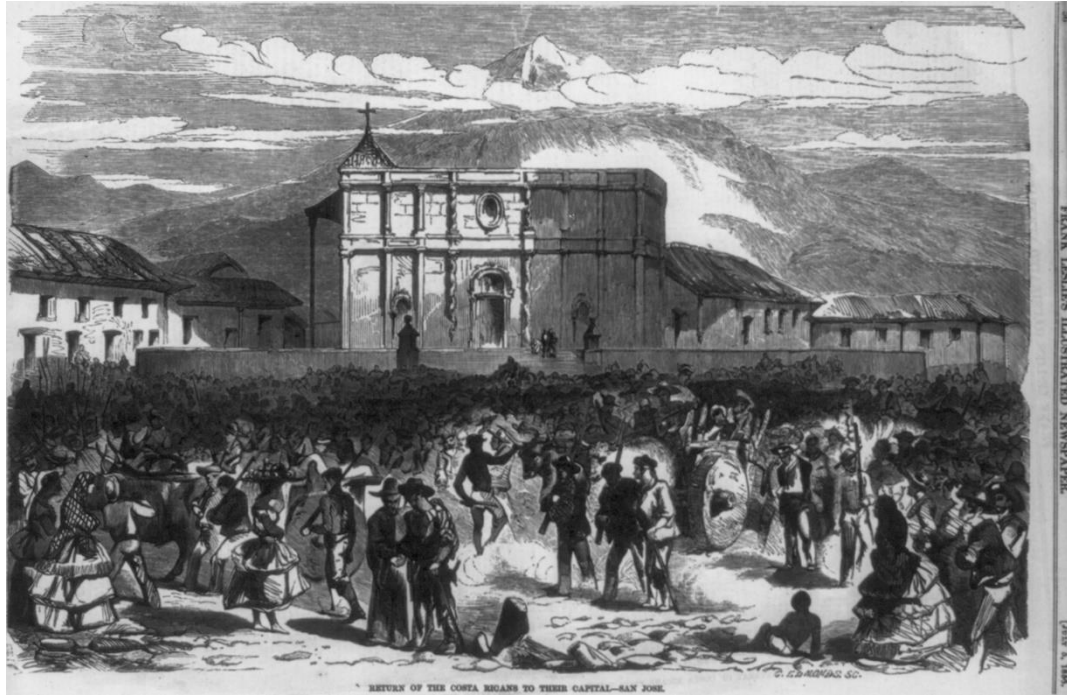


Figure 10. The Costa Rican army after its withdrawal from Nicaragua, in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper<sup>255</sup>

However, the Costa Ricans almost immediately lost all momentum when cholera broke out in their camps on April 11. This outbreak forced the Costa Ricans to halt their march to Granada and retreat home. Walker estimated that only about five hundred men out of an army of three thousand survived the outbreak. The Costa Rican army carried cholera with them back home, and the country, in turn, lost almost ten percent of its population before the outbreak finally ended.<sup>256</sup> The Costa Rican retreat allowed Walker's supporters to claim victory, no matter how it occurred. On May 3, *The Daily Picayune* announced that General Walker personally routed the Costa Ricans from

<sup>255</sup> [Gen. Wm. Walker's Exp. in Nicaragua: Return of the Costa Ricans to their capital--San Jose]. 1856, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 2, no. 28 (June 21, 1856), p. 56. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99614145/>.

<sup>256</sup> Dando-Collins, *Tycoon's War*, 221-222; Geyer, *William Walker*, 144; Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 193-211. Costa Rica lost about 10,000 lives out of a population of 112,000 people. These numbers have been accepted by both Dando-Collins and Geyer.

occupied Rivas.<sup>257</sup> With these defeats and outlandish news reports, it appeared as if Vanderbilt's coalition might dissolve before it could properly form.

In response to the Costa Rican battles, Northern critics of General Walker reinforced the imperial narrative. Responding to reports that the Costa Ricans executed their American prisoners after the Battle of Santa Rosa, *The New York Herald* reiterated Vanderbilt's and Costa Rica's shared imperial narrative of the Walker expedition. The newspaper expressed its concern that such acts would only help Walker "establish his predominance over the five States."<sup>258</sup> The *Herald* also emphasized that Costa Rica responded to a Nicaraguan invasion, ignoring that Walker sent his soldiers there as a response to Costa Rica's declaration of war. Later, the *Herald* contended that such a defeat showed the "vanity which makes Americans think themselves superior to every people in the world."<sup>259</sup> The *Herald* evinced a growing concern that the regeneration narrative represented a façade of imperial ambition. While the newspaper did not oppose either concept, it disapproved of the concealment, for such suppression called into question the character of the leader of the American colonization effort.

Even if the Northern newspapers only inadvertently adopted the Allied Coalition's narrative, it became a primary point of discussion in their discourse on Walker's leadership and legitimacy. On April 3, *M'Arthur Democrat* of Ohio also depicted Walker as the belligerent in the Costa Rican conflict. It promoted Costa Rica's proclamation that Walker previously threatened to destroy Punta Arenas, and their attack

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<sup>257</sup> *The Daily Picayune*, May 3, 1856.

<sup>258</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-17/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>259</sup> *The New York Herald*, May 3, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-05-03/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

served as a preemptive defense to prevent Walker from reaching it.<sup>260</sup> The next day, the *Lewisburg Chronicle* of Pennsylvania justified Costa Rica's actions as a strategy to prevent being "ruled by a filibuster."<sup>261</sup> On April 7, *The New-York Daily Tribune* contended that the Rivas regime's previous attempts to maintain friendly relations with Costa Rica rested on the hidden motive of Walker to control its "political power and pecuniary resources."<sup>262</sup> In truth, this may have been an active reflection of Walker's ultimate motivations, even if it did not represent those of Patricio Rivas.

With this new narrative, Northern newspapers supporting Cornelius Vanderbilt undermined the noble regeneration message that originally elevated Vanderbilt, Kinney, and Walker to celebrated pedestals. Most importantly, they did so without having to contrast Walker to either of the other two men. Instead, this new narrative allowed Walker's foes to contrast his own actions to the very ideal of regeneration. Instead of a hero wishing to stabilize a war-torn region, these newspapers portrayed Walker as a belligerent focused more on visions of grandeur than on the wellbeing of Nicaragua. In doing so, they informed the public that Costa Rica served as the true upholder of liberal values, thus creating a new possible answer to the stability question.

The critics of General Walker also directly connected to this narrative of empire-building a slaving narrative. On May 16, the *Lewisburg Chronicle* contended that Southern support, provided by Senator Stephen A. Douglas and John B. Weller, evinced

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<sup>260</sup> *McArthur Democrat*. (McArthur, Vinton County, OH), April 3, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87075163/1856-04-03/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>261</sup> "Walker with his Hands Full," *Lewisburg Chronicle*. (Lewisburg, PA), April 4, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1856-04-04/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>262</sup> "Central American Affairs," *New-York Daily Tribune*, April 7, 1856. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-04-07/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Southern expansion plans. It described Walker's army as a "fugitive troop" with "schemes of Slavery extension."<sup>263</sup> Likewise, *The Bradford Reporter*, in Pennsylvania, called Walker "an agent of the Slave Power." It also explicitly connected this slave conspiracy to empire building, claiming that Walker, through the support that he received from Southern-friendly senators, planned to "plant slavery in Central America and then to annex the country to the Union."<sup>264</sup> *Wyandot Pioneer* of Ohio, in a political satire that characterized the "democratic principles" as "embodied" by the key leaders of the party, described Walker as pursuing "another slave state," which it described as "Nigger-agua."<sup>265</sup> The slaving narrative served more as a political tool to challenge the power of the South and the Democrats and did not offer a moral criticism against the idea of slavery under Walker. Most espousing this message feared the annexation that they anticipated would come under Walker. This distinction would later resurface after Walker did, in fact, reinstitute slavery in Nicaragua in September 1856.

As a result of such fears, newspapers that once praised Walker for acting as a *de facto* leader of Nicaragua used that very same point to warn Americans away from him. *The New York Herald* served as the vanguard of this narrative shift. They no longer depicted Walker and his phalanx as regenerators but as regulators. They argued that his presence was a "mockery of the Nicaraguan nationality." They contended that President

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<sup>263</sup> "Filibusterism in Congress," *Lewisburg Chronicle*. (Lewisburg, PA), May 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1856-05-16/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>264</sup> *Bradford Reporter* (Towanda, PA.), May 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024558/1856-05-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>265</sup> *The Wyandot Pioneer* (Upper Sandusky, OH), June 26, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87076863/1856-06-26/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Rivas existed as a “slave of the rulers of” Walker’s illegitimate regime. Finally, they argued that he was responsible for “destroying the legitimate government.”<sup>266</sup>

Newspapers outside of the United States continued the narrative of political discord that Cornelius Vanderbilt desired. Perhaps ironically, *The New York Herald*, which had displayed wavering support for Walker and had occasionally showed apprehension for his rule, revealed that British newspapers, particularly the *London Post*, posited a narrative that pitted Rivas and Walker as rivals operating distinct governments.<sup>267</sup> This narrative offered a sharp shift from older ones that described Rivas as Walker’s puppet president. Some newspapers, such as *The National Era* began to emphasize this political discord. The *Era*, on May 22, also mentioned a “Walker Government in Nicaragua.”<sup>268</sup> Both the British and Vanderbilt hoped that such a narrative would hinder future support for Walker.

Nevertheless, the Allied Coalition’s propaganda against General Walker succeeded in wavering the support of the United States government for Walker and the Rivas administration. Though Minister John Wheeler had shown almost immediate support for Walker, even before the end of the war with the *Legitimistas*, Secretary William Marcy and President Franklin Pierce had proven cold to Walker’s legitimacy. Marcy, the secretary of state for the United States, had refused to meet with Parker H. French. Instead, he branded French an outlaw filibuster. Marcy told French:

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<sup>266</sup> *The New York Herald*, June 25, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-06-25/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>267</sup> *The New York Herald*, March 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-03-21/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>268</sup> *The National Era*. (Washington, D.C.), May 22, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1856-05-22/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

“those who were chiefly instrumental in suspending or overthrowing the former government of that State were not citizens belonging to it; nor have those citizens, or any considerable part of them so far as is now known here, freely expressed their approval of, or acquiescence in, the present condition of political affairs in Nicaragua.”<sup>269</sup>

Walker accused Marcy of “willful misrepresentation of Nicaraguan affairs.”<sup>270</sup> Marcy censured Wheeler for his visit to Rivas, as well. He instructed him not to negotiate with the Rivas regime but to inquire, instead, about the revocation of the Accessory Transit Charter.<sup>271</sup>

However, it is likely that the Allied Coalition overplayed too soon this internationally-woven narrative of discord. Some of the newspapers that initially supported Vanderbilt after the fallout between the two parties shifted their support the more that the British appeared to interfere in the narrative. *The New York Herald*, in particular, highlighted the British media’s “silly article” that positioned President Rivas and General Walker as rivals.<sup>272</sup> While it did not hesitate to describe the regime in Nicaragua as the “Walker government,” it periodically reinforced the solidarity between the two leaders throughout the duration of Costa Rica’s initial campaign against Walker.<sup>273</sup> It explicitly reinforced the notion that President Rivas presided over the nation.

Newspapers still found fault with the actions of General Walker. After all, *The New York Herald*, during this same period, revealed apprehension for Walker’s imperial motives. It also depicted Nicaragua as belligerent to the Costa Ricans. Yet, it refused to

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<sup>269</sup> Wells, *Walkers Expedition to Nicaragua*, 100.

<sup>270</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 166.

<sup>271</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 232.

<sup>272</sup> *The New York Herald*, March 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-03-21/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>273</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-10/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

allow the Allied Coalition to push a narrative that delegitimized the American presence in Nicaragua.

The newspaper's almost paradoxical stance reveals that it did not participate in a deliberate plot against General Walker. It did, however, harbor severe reservations about him when it believed that his actions served to destabilize the new government. As those notions shifted, the newspaper returned to a cautious but positive narrative about Walker's success. The newspaper shared the ideals of Anglo-American interference in a destabilized Central America, but it cautiously searched for the proper people to head such interventions.

For *The New York Herald*, General Walker and President Rivas shared their sins just as they shared their successes. It criticized the *London Post* for trying to instigate a war between the United States and Nicaragua. It argued that the newspaper falsely depicted "two rival governments." It contended that the newspaper served as a mouthpiece for part of the British Cabinet. Finally, it utilized the interference by the British press to argue that such meddling evinced "a very good plan for the Powers of Europe" to regulate the morals of the United States.<sup>274</sup> Thus, the *Herald* portrayed the strife in Nicaragua as fueling British imperialism.

As *The New York Herald* gained a better understanding of the Pierce administration's policies regarding General Walker and President Rivas, it challenged their motives and logic. Satirizing the shadow government narrative that placed Walker as the true leader of the Rivas administration, the *Herald* described how the "Marcy-

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<sup>274</sup> *The New York Herald*, March 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-03-21/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Pierce administration” refused to recognize the Rivas regime precisely because it could not safely determine that Rivas was the true leader. Indeed, the newspaper asserted that the Rivas regime enjoyed “to a far greater degree the confidence of the people of Nicaragua, than does General Piece . . . in the United States.” It then described the administration’s decision to seize the *Northern Light*, a steamship transporting people and supplies for Walker, as an act of filibustering.<sup>275</sup>

However, *The New York Herald* then described how William Marcy and President Pierce interfered with Nicaraguan progress. It stated how the “blunders of the Marcy-Pierce rule” hindered an opportunity for “foreclosing the Central American controversy with England.” Indeed, it argued that the administration interfered in the actions of a regime that assured “stability of government over the Transit Route.” It argued that the Rivas regime promised “vastly increased growth in sugar, coffee, and other tropical products.” It contested that the regime allowed Americans to “bind California to the policy of the American Union.” It shunned a slave narrative arguing that Nicaragua provided a free labor rival to the “iron clamps of military despotism” of Cuba.<sup>276</sup>

*The New York Herald* ultimately fell back to an Anglo-American regeneration narrative. It described the Rivas regime as “an expression of American enterprise. . . indicative of the future of the whole of the North and Central American States.” It did ultimately describe Walker only three days later as the “chief” of Nicaragua.<sup>277</sup> Though

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<sup>275</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-10/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>276</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-10/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>277</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-13/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



not willing to portray General Walker as abusing his power over President Rivas, it described the “Nicaraguan movement” as “wholly Anglo-American in character.” As a result, it insisted that the new regime was “orderly in administration, just in principle, and beneficial in results.”<sup>278</sup> With this characterization of events, the *Herald* subtly placed Walker as the head of a harmonious administration, far from any discord depicted by his critics.

Other newspapers, particularly Southern, reinforced the regeneration narrative at this time. Louisiana newspapers took a particular interest in defending General Walker. *The New Orleans Daily Crescent*, while mourning the loss of a local who died in the Battle of Santa Rosa, described how the departed son of William P. Grayson died serving in the “army of regenerators under Gen. Walker.”<sup>279</sup> The newspaper contended he “became a true son of the South,” in dying, which reinforced its notions that the Nicaraguan and Southern causes intertwined. In June, *The Houma Ceres* celebrated how the “regenerators under Gen. Walker triumphed.” It described how not a single enemy remained in Nicaragua, which meant that no hindrances remained to “prevent the redemption and reunion of that noble country.”<sup>280</sup> Such news articles could be found throughout Southern papers.

The Pierce administration eventually folded slightly to the political pressure placed on it by these newspapers. After William Marcy dismissed Parker H. French,

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<sup>278</sup> *The New York Herald*, April 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-04-10/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>279</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, April 24, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-04-24/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>280</sup> *Houma Ceres* (Houma, LA), June 12, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83026391/1856-06-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Walker sent Padre Augustin Vijil to replace him. Marcy eventually recognized Padre Vijil as an ambassador from the Rivas regime, even though he still hesitated to acknowledge the regime's legitimacy.<sup>281</sup> As one of Walker's officers and friends, James Carson Jamison stated that this shift in policy "at once put a stop to the gyrations of the authorities to prevent the rush of American immigrants into Nicaragua."<sup>282</sup>

On June 23, Father Vijil requested to William Marcy that he send John P. Heiss to Nicaragua to serve as the United States' *charge d'affaires*.<sup>283</sup> Heiss was a long-time resident of Nashville, Walker's hometown. In February 1856, he served as the bearer of dispatches for the American State Department in Nicaragua. Walker believed that Heiss, through their similar backgrounds, would be friendly to his cause. Marcy accepted this request and send Heiss to serve as an ambassador for the United States while also being tasked with finding a solution to the Transit Route conflicts. After arriving, Heiss utilized his position to serve, as William Oscar Scroggs explains, Walker as his "defender and public relations main man."<sup>284</sup> Heiss provided Walker one more entry into the United States government, which allowed him to slow the campaign set out against him by Cornelius Vanderbilt.

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<sup>281</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 225.

<sup>282</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 225.

<sup>283</sup> "Documents. I. With Walker in Nicaragua. The Reminiscences of Elleanore (Callaghan) Ratterman. II. Walker-Heiss papers. Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Walker regime in Nicaragua," ed. William Oscar Scroggs (Nashville: 1916, reprinted from the *Tennessee Historical Magazine* by Nabu Public Domains). 334. I have chosen to pluralize States, since the Walker supporters often described the states as a plural entity.

<sup>284</sup> "Documents. I. With Walker in Nicaragua, ed. William Oscar Scroggs, 332.

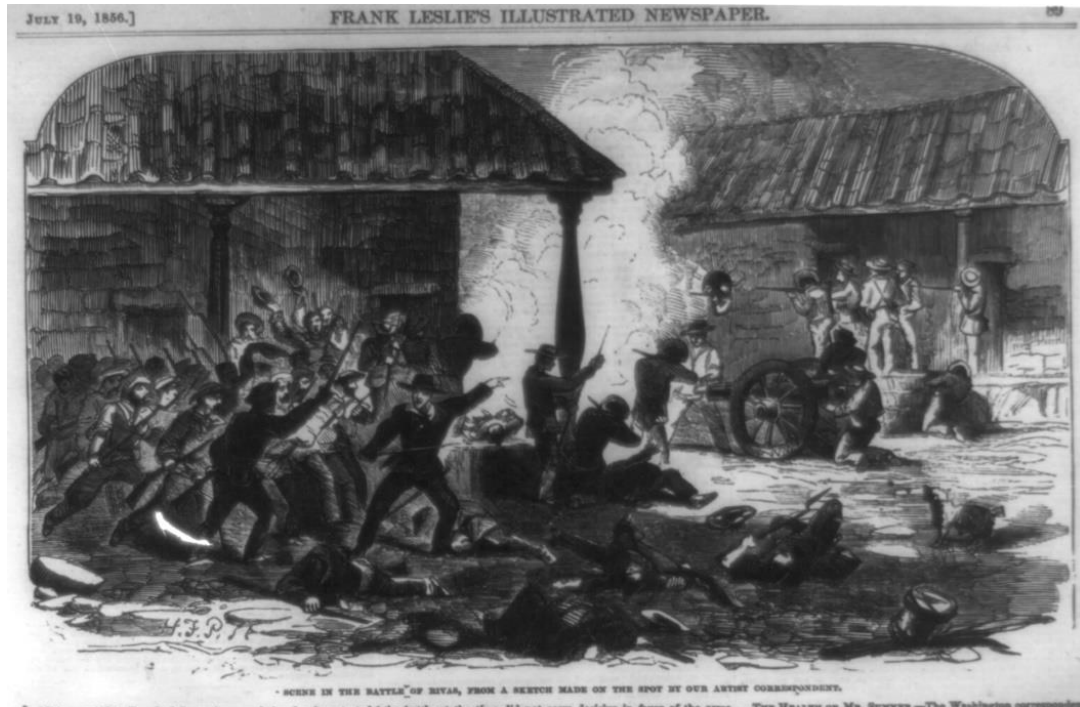


Figure 11. The Second Battle of Rivas, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*<sup>285</sup>

Ironically, as the regeneration narrative resurfaced as the primary account, General Walker set his sights on the presidency of Nicaragua. Equally important, President Rivas's support for Walker slowly disintegrated after the Costa Rican retreat. Though the initial invasion failed, the Allied Coalition still moved forward with Commodore Vanderbilt funding it. The main body of the Costa Rican army retreated from Rivas back to Costa Rica on April 29, 1856. However, Costa Rican spies remained, and *Legitimista* forces shortly resurged in pockets of Nicaragua. On May 6, the Nicaraguan military shot a Costa Rican suspected of involvement in the murder of wounded Americans during the Second Battle of Rivas at Saint George. On May 9, the

<sup>285</sup> *Gen. Wm. Walker's Exp. in Nicaragua Scene in the Battle of Rivas, from a sketch made on the spot by our artist correspondent*. 1856, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 2, no. 32 (July 19, 1856), p. 89. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99614038/>.

government hanged two “Chamorristas” believed to be involved in some murders at Omotepe Island.<sup>286</sup>

Through these new networks, the Allied forces began communications with President Rivas that ultimately severed his relationship with General Walker. The government of San Salvador followed the lead of Costa Rica and Vanderbilt by adopting the imperial narrative of Walker’s plans. On May 7, it messaged President Rivas that it considered the growing American presence in Nicaragua a threat to the independence of all of Central America.<sup>287</sup> On May 19, Walker discovered that Rivas had been attempting to negotiate a peace treaty with the Allied Coalition through secret communications to President Mora of Costa Rica.<sup>288</sup> Walker discovered this, which made him suspicious that President Rivas would succumb to the Allied demands for his removal. These suspicions were further agitated by a surge of “Servilists” in Chontales that Walker had to put down.<sup>289</sup>

While the Allied forces attempted to chip away at General Walker’s support system, borders, and legitimacy, the Rivas regime planned for the nation’s first election under the new republic. The regime began plans for this election in April and scheduled a succession of elections throughout the month to elect the president, senate, and representatives.<sup>290</sup> The regime hoped that the newly elected officials would be able to

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<sup>286</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, May 10, 1856.

<sup>287</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 216.

<sup>288</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 215.

<sup>289</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-06-02/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>290</sup> *The New York Herald*, May 22, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-05-22/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

form their government on May 5.<sup>291</sup> However, they did not hold the new election until after the Costa Rican army retreated. President Patricio Rivas, Máximo Jerez, Nordeste Ramirez, and General Mariano Salazar all ran for the position of president. All of the candidates were *Democraticos*.<sup>292</sup> Rivas received most of his support from Granada. Inhabitants in Leon favored Salazar. Nordeste received little support except in Leon, his home. Americans observing the election noticed that the political struggle resulting from the electoral process rested between Rivas and Salazar. Rivas claimed victory, but Jerez, Salazar, and Walker all exhibited discontent in the process of the elections and its results.<sup>293</sup>

Walker and the Americans grew increasingly suspicious that Vanderbilt's propaganda worked on President Rivas and other prominent native politicians. They feared that the very regime that they developed could be turned against them if Rivas remained in power. Native politicians became suspicious of the Cuban D. Domingo de Goicouria's, a key ally of Walker's, suggestion to have Nicaragua petition the Pope for an appointment of its own bishop. From Walker's point of view, it appeared as if the natives had distorted the suggestion to imply that Walker desired to remove Nicaragua from any relationship with the Holy See in Rome.<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, it appeared as if Rivas could no longer be counted on to deal with the growing opposition of San Salvadorians and Guatemalans to the north.

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<sup>291</sup> *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond, VA), April 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-04-21/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>292</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-06-02/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>293</sup> Though many of these names have appeared for the first time in this dissertation, I direct readers to keep them in mind for the remainder of this chapter. I am about to describe a complicated plot that involves several of them.

<sup>294</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 221.

Walker's relationship with President Rivas dissolved in June. On June 10, 1856, Walker strong-armed the cabinet to sign for an immediate election.<sup>295</sup> He originally planned to have Fermin Ferrer compete against Rivas for the position.<sup>296</sup> Walker met with Jerez several times on that day, and by the end of the day, General Walker had issued a decree to all Nicaraguans dissolving the provisional government. Walker met with both Rivas and Salazar on June 11, as he left Leon.

However, either Walker staged a coup at this time or Salazar framed Walker for doing so. Walker claimed that Escobar, the local military governor of the department, assigned his troops to guard an ammunition and weapons storage center. Salazar contested this claim, stating that the Americans attempted to capture the warehouse as part of a larger plot to assassinate President Rivas and his chief ministers.<sup>297</sup> Regardless, this action severed the ties between Walker and many of the native elites in Rivas's administration.

As a result of this event, President Rivas and Máximo Jerez fled to Chinandega, approximately 130 miles north. There, they barricaded the town and prepared for war against the American phalanx. From there, they sent communications to Guatemala's President Rafael Carrera, asking for his military support against General Walker.<sup>298</sup>

The fallout between Patricio Rivas and William Walker increased the American media's anxieties about Nicaragua's stability. In June, news surfaced that Cornelius Vanderbilt aided the Costa Ricans. Newspapers, such as the *Carroll Free Press* in Ohio,

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<sup>295</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 223.

<sup>296</sup> *The New York Herald*, August 10, 1856.

<sup>297</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 224.

<sup>298</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 226.

emphasized that “agents and other parties in the interest of the old Transit Company,” assisted President Mora in his war against William Walker. Such reports reminded the American public just how volatile Nicaragua would remain.<sup>299</sup>

Alongside such reports came a return of the health narrative. Though most newspapers focused on the presence of cholera in Costa Rica, some also re-focused on the health of Nicaragua, which served as a metaphor for its instability. American newspapers reported on the death of Judge J. Caleb Smith, the son of William Smith, who died of yellow fever in Granada in May.<sup>300</sup> Similarly, newspapers reported on the death of Watson G. Haynes, who was known for “procuring the abolition of flogging in the navy.”<sup>301</sup> He died of yellow fever along the Transit Route, at La Virgin. However, newspapers also highlighted the gravity of cholera. *The Carroll Free Press* described how “cholera had made sad havoc in the ranks of the Costa Rican army.” Though it listed General Walker “in good health,” and the American phalanx in “good condition,” it reported a severe outbreak of fever in Granada, which caused the death of several Americans. The newspaper also reported that Edmund Randolph was “dangerously ill.”<sup>302</sup> Such reports increased American anxieties that they were losing access to their transit route to California.

With such news affecting American hopes, General Walker took political action to secure the election that he desired. First, after regrouping in Granada, Walker issued a

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<sup>299</sup> *Carroll Free Press* (Carrollton, OH), June 12, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035366/1856-06-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>300</sup> *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), June 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1856-06-10/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>301</sup> *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond, VA), June 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-06-18/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>302</sup> *Carroll Free Press* (Carrollton, Ohio), June 12, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035366/1856-06-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

decree that reconstructed the provisional government granted by the power of the treaty of October 23, 1855.<sup>303</sup> He then named Fermin Ferrer, the acting commissioner of the Oriental and Meridional Departments, as the provisional president until the forthcoming inauguration.<sup>304</sup> Walker then reaffirmed the June 10<sup>th</sup> decree, which promised an election for president on the fourth Sunday of June, a procedure which would last for three days. He engineered the voting to occur in the Oriental and Meridional Departments. After the election, Ferrer declared General Walker president and had him inaugurated on July 12, 1856.

While the Rivas regime collapsed, one of General Walker's key allies, William Vincent Wells, released the first major publication that documented the history of the War in Nicaragua. The book *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua* was written before Walker won the election for presidency but released during his ascendancy to it. It validated Walker's position of power in Nicaragua. Wells provided a biographical account of Walker's life to demonstrate "the superior activity and intelligence of the Anglo-Saxon."<sup>305</sup> Wells outlined Walker's education, with special emphasis on his medical training. In fact, Wells, who was involved in mineral and metal exploitation in Honduras, helped a mutual friend of Walker acquire the initial contract that brought Walker to Nicaragua.<sup>306</sup> Wells was one of the first writers to emphasize the grey-eyed doctor's role as a combatant of disease.

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<sup>303</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 227.

<sup>304</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 228.

<sup>305</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 13.

<sup>306</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 41.



Wells stressed the transnational benefits of Nicaraguan regeneration. While stating that Walker had “paved the way to regenerate two millions [sic] of people,” Wells also emphasized that “the people of all nations” could benefit “from the establishment of enlightened freedom in Nicaragua.”<sup>307</sup> Wells argued that Walker’s presence in Nicaragua was conducive to “healthy trade” for foreign states.<sup>308</sup> Thus, in his argument about regeneration, Wells directed readers to perceive Walker’s conquest in a more regional lens with an emphasis on correlating health to economics.

To accentuate this point, Wells emphasized the resources available for cultivation and extraction, especially those that were deemed untapped under the hands of inferior leadership. Entire chapters were dedicated to detailing minerals, metals, and agricultural resources. He also outlined the potential methods required to maximize the extractions. Wells specifically summarized procedures used in the United States, such as hydraulic mining, that could be implemented in Nicaragua.<sup>309</sup> Wells attempted to guide readers to see American advancements in industry as answers throughout the Americas.

The American media engaged in a discussion with William Vincent Wells’s *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*. The *Mobile Daily Register* described it as “a very entertaining history of interesting and important contemporaneous events.”<sup>310</sup> Through newspapers such as *The New-York Daily Tribune*, Wells’s publisher highlighted the praise the book received. The *New York Times* noted how the book showed that Walker and his men would “exercise upon the cause of Freedom all over the world” through the

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<sup>307</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 262.

<sup>308</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 262.

<sup>309</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 123.

<sup>310</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-07-19/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

influence of their actions. *The New Orleans Delta*, in its assessment, described Walker as “the regenerator and reorganizer of Central America.” The *Poughkeepsie Press* praised Wells for removing “the misty opinions the general reader is apt to imbibe from the floating and contradictory rumors of the day.”<sup>311</sup> Though this intricate mixture of opinion, self-interested promotion, and propaganda, the careful placement of such positive reviews informed readers how to approach Wells’s study of the man whom he helped place in Nicaragua. Thus, William Walker began his presidency with control over his narrative and support from the American press.

### Conclusion

As of July 1856, it appeared as if the Allied Coalition had lost the regeneration war. Walker’s critics had abandoned the imperialist narrative promoted by the British and Costa Ricans. Many dissenting newspapers, such as *The New York Herald*, returned to earlier narratives that celebrated Anglo-American achievement through Walker’s actions. The coalition failed to deter Secretary Marcy from opening communications with Walker’s minister, Father Vijil. Furthermore, the American phalanx, despite suffering defeats to the Costa Rican army, withstood the initial invasion.

In fact, General Walker’s allies took command of the very narrative that Walker needed to repel the coalition’s multi-pronged attack against his stability. Through the use of print culture, allies, such as William Vincent Wells, Lieutenant P. E. Mooney, and *The New Orleans Daily Crescent* successfully took control over the evolution of the regeneration narrative. They focused the public’s attention away from the presence of

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<sup>311</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 31, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-07-31/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

disease and veiled the existence of insurgents throughout the countryside. They concealed the political manipulation that Walker utilized to control the Transit Route and replaced it with a narrative that placed the blame squarely on Commodore Vanderbilt's financial transgressions.

In turn, General Walker took advantage of his public image to take control of Nicaragua. American reports about Walker's motivations paradoxically positioned him as both a shadow president and as a self-sacrificing reification of Anglo-American civility. Such images allowed him to take credit for Nicaragua's stability without revealing his imperial ambitions. Thus, the people who went to hear Lieutenant P. E. Mooney's speech on Nicaraguan regeneration understood that Walker's ascendancy to the presidency served as a formality and did not represent political discord.

CHAPTER IV – THE DEMISE OF THE BOLIVAR OF NICARAGUA  
AND HIS REGENERATION MISSION

One of the specious arguments used at the North by the newspaper press against the continuance of the rule of Gen. Walker in Nicaragua is that the lives of some two or three thousand Americans have already been sacrificed in the effort to Anglo-Saxonize the country. These self-constituted Richard Cobdens declare, too, that the war in that region is not only sanguinary, but wholly unnecessary [sic] and murderous, and unscrupulously pronounce the young Bolivar of Nicaragua a filibuster of the direst stamp. – *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856<sup>312</sup>

Introduction

In July 1856, when William Walker ascended to the presidency of Nicaragua, most of the Northern press still reinforced his presence in the warring state. The stability of this country would determine future access to California. Aside from abolitionist newspapers, which had feared the political implications of his dominance since the original treaty in October 1855, prominent Northern newspapers continued to promote his governance there for over a year. While Walker certainly experienced periodic bouts of criticism for his strategies, decisions, and potential, the lofty idea that he could regenerate the region unified Americans. However, by December 1856, much of the Northern media had turned against Walker, for a series of military failures had led them to become unsure of his potential to stabilize the country.

For his supporters, such as *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, President Walker still embodied the message of regeneration that originally lured men to action in Nicaragua. Such devotees continued to depict him as the “Bolivar of Nicaragua,” and the “infant

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<sup>312</sup> “The Northern Pres and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.

Hercules of a Revolution.” As the *Daily Creole* contended, thousands of Americans had gone to Nicaragua, under Walker’s leadership, to Anglo-Saxonize it.<sup>313</sup> They went to save Nicaragua from “the influence of a climate filled from valley to mountain summit with pestiferous malaria.” More importantly, they went there as “champions of the down-trodden; the ignorant; the vilely degraded and oppressed.” They went to Nicaragua to help the “scarcely civilized natives,” because they believed themselves to be guided by “the finger of a higher power,” as “patriotic liberators,” of a sovereign republic at risk of losing its liberty.<sup>314</sup>

As *The New Orleans Daily Creole* revealed, the critics of William Walker relied on a narrative that depicted Walker as the wrong man to fulfill the regeneration mission. Though anti-Walker abolitionists had existed in small numbers since 1855, most of his detractors responded to his perceived failures and not his ideologies and strategies. They charged Walker with the “wholly unneascessary [sic]” loss of over two thousand American lives. They depicted him as “murderous.”<sup>315</sup> Though many abolitionists certainly connected his slave decree to the potential of an increased domestic “Slave Power,” even these critics understood the limitations of such an argument.<sup>316</sup> While such criticisms could certainly be used to deter some people from joining Walker, most joined him because of their belief in his regeneration mission and leadership. Thus, the literary

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<sup>313</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

<sup>314</sup> “The Northern Press and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.

<sup>315</sup> “The Northern Press and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.

<sup>316</sup> Also known as “Slaveocracy,” Slave Power was a term used to negatively describe the political power of slavers and slave-owning planters in the South. Though proponents for both a free-Nicaragua and a slaving-Nicaragua had seen the annexation of Nicaragua as beneficial to their respective causes, by the end of 1856, those who feared the annexation of Nicaragua believed that it could only lead to an increase in slave-state representation in Washington.

battleground revolved around highlighting his failure to be the leader of Nicaragua's regeneration or around the illumination of his success as a savior for the country.

In fact, *The New Orleans Daily Creole* certainly admitted that the slave decree increased criticisms against President Walker. Yet, it asserted that such claims were tied to Northern perceptions of his failures. It connected criticisms against Walker's labor policies to the ill-timed "traitorous exposition of a diplomatic *ruse* by Gen. Goicouria," a prominent general in Walker's army who once served as one of his preliminary allies for acquiring support in New York.<sup>317</sup> The *Daily Creole* insisted that, because of the actions of a former ally named Goicouria, a man whose potential financiers would have known as having disobeyed Walker by attempting to make peace with Vanderbilt, the Northern press saw Walker, "first [as] a weasel, and then, more like something which looks 'very [much] like a whale.'"<sup>318</sup> It thus contended that the character flaws and actions of Goicouria served as a greater motivating factor than the adoption of slavery for Walker's once supportive Northern allies to abandon him.

*The New Orleans Daily Creole* went even further and contended that the North allowed uncomfortable, short-term results to dictate their opinions about the ideals and strategies pursued by William Walker. In late November, he lost control of Granada to the Allied Coalition while in the process of destroying it. Many newspapers heralded this

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<sup>317</sup> Domingo de Goicouria was a native Cuban and brigadier general who originally helped pay the passage for 250 people from New Orleans to Nicaragua using Vanderbilt's money. Walker and Goicouria agreed to help each other in the liberation of both Nicaragua and Cuba. Walker utilized Goicouria to garner support in New York and perform diplomatic duties with Great Britain and France. However, political differences severed their relationship in late-1856. He attempted to regain Vanderbilt's goodwill on behalf of Walker, and Walker disagreed, which ended their partnership. Thus, Northerners were quite familiar with who he was, and the loss of Goicouria hurt Walker's relationships with wealthy and influential Northern businessmen, particularly those in New York.

<sup>318</sup> "The Northern Press and the Walker Movement," *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.

decision to illuminate the failures of Walker as a leader and evince the continued instability in Nicaragua. *The Daily Creole*, on the other hand, contended that the Northern press could not cope with the hardships of warfare, specifically the loss of American life that the *Creole* believed necessary for the regeneration of Nicaragua. The newspaper contended that war prevents stagnancy and elaborated that such detractors failed to realize that wars “only produce temporary unhappiness.”<sup>319</sup> Thus, the newspaper equated support for Walker with resolve.

*The New Orleans Daily Creole*, instead, offered the critics of the Grey-eyed Man of Destiny the chance to consider the benefits of supporting the regenerative qualities of war. The newspaper insisted that “War, Pestilence, and Famine we hold to be essential to the well-being of our race” while describing wars as part of the “law of divine wisdom.” It argued that wars prevent excessive population that lead to a planet incapable of sustaining a totally peaceful human population. The *Daily Creole* also reminded his detractors that they should consider “the war of races” in Nicaragua preferable to the “accumulated, aggregated, and never-ending miseries of the operatives of England.” This, of course, led its readers to correlate the failure to support the war effort with support for the anti-slavery British imperialist policies that so many Southerners had understood to be the ruin of the Caribbean.

Ultimately, *The New Orleans Daily Creole* reiterated an earlier New Orleans-based argument that pitted the South as the principle authorities concerning William Walker’s regeneration mission. It stated that “the North, save in invention, is behind the

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<sup>319</sup> “The Northern Press and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.

age,” and described the South as “the great champion of American Progressiveness.” Accordingly, Southerners, and not Northerners, acted as “true and valorious [sic] knights” aiding their “struggling kinsmen in Central America.” Through its support of Walker, the *Daily Creole* contended that Walker and his soldiers defended “the great principles of Republic liberty.” It dismissed Northern criticism as “fallacious reasoning and insane onslaughts” that would not “impede the progress of our American brothers” in Nicaragua.<sup>320</sup>

*The New Orleans Daily Creole* was right in its accusations that the temporary ailments of war discouraged Northerners more so than did slavery. By December, many Northerners lost faith that Walker could retain Nicaragua. He had experienced a series of military defeats that led to the loss and destruction of Granada. He alienated his Northern allies with the loss of Goicouria. Disease weakened what forces he held onto. Such defeats allowed the slavery argument to enter the failed regeneration narrative that doomed his recruitment efforts. Walker’s army spent the first half of 1857 holding tight to shifting fragments of the Transit Route, its only lifeline to reinforcements and supplies. Allied reinforcements had captured most of the country, and the remaining soldiers under President Walker deserted at increasingly higher rates. In May, Walker retreated back to the United States to regroup and take back control of the regeneration narrative so that he could gain the funds, supplies, and soldiers to muster his return.

This chapter traces the relationship between the American press and William Walker’s regeneration mission from his ascendancy to the presidency of Nicaragua to his

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<sup>320</sup> “The Northern Press and the Walker Movement,” *The New Orleans Daily Creole*, December 29, 1856.



execution in September 1860. It demonstrates that support for William Walker ultimately rested upon his image as a regenerator. His failure to hold Granada cascaded into a series of problems that chipped away at every aspect of his professed regeneration message. Southerners remained mostly loyal to Walker as they perceived the war to be vital to their own future while many Northerners abandoned him for Cornelius Vanderbilt. Despite being ousted in May 1857, the regeneration narrative survived and fueled three more expeditions, all of which failed. Throughout these attempts, Walker's legitimacy as a regenerator served as the focal point of the discourse on whether or not people should support his expeditions.

#### The Early Promises of a Walker Presidency

In July 1856, it appeared that William Walker's supporters had won control of the regeneration narrative in the American media. Both Northern and Southern media celebrated his climb to president of Nicaragua. The earliest reports of the election results came in late-July. American newspapers emphasized that Walker won a fair election. Many insisted that he had won as much as 21,000 out of 35,000 votes cast during the election.<sup>321</sup> In Baton Rouge, *The Morning Comet* "wrote that the "native population seemed highly delighted by the choice," and insisted that "the inauguration was carried

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<sup>321</sup> "Further from Nicaragua," *Nashville Union and American*, July 27, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress (henceforth referred to as *Chronicling America*). <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1856-07-27/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; "Inaugural Address of President Walker," *The Ashland Union* (Ashland, OH), August 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035173/1856-08-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and "Nicaragua," *Raftsmen's Journal* (Clearfield, PA), August 6, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85054616/1856-08-06/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). Earlier reports, such as those in the *Nashville Union and American* reported the aforementioned figures while later reports, such as those in the *Raftsmen's Journal*, stated that Walker received 14,000 out of the 21,000 total votes. By the middle of August, those numbers continued to dwindle to 11,000 out of 21,000 votes, as seen in *The Ashland Union*.

on with enthusiasm, seldom equaled in any country.” Attaching a regeneration message to his inauguration, it concluded that “the people now look forward to at least two years of contentment and prosperity to their country,” thanks to his rise in power.<sup>322</sup>

Newspapers throughout the United States printed Walker’s inauguration speech, which outlined his belief in the regeneration of Nicaragua.<sup>323</sup>

Much of the support that William Walker received in the press occurred because his newspaper, *El Nicaraguense*, had dominated the flow of information from Nicaragua to American newspapers. Newspapers all over the United States accredited *El Nicaraguense* as their primary or most frequent correspondent. North Carolina’s *Wilmington Journal*, for example, relied on *El Nicaraguense* for its coverage on the election as it insisted that “there was no doubt about Walker’s election by an overwhelming majority.” It celebrated the mounting forces under Walker, stating that he had, at the time, 1,800 soldiers under his command, a far cry from the 58 Immortals who landed in Realejo a year earlier.<sup>324</sup> Likewise, *The Richmond Enquirer* positioned Walker as Nicaragua’s stalwart guardian of sovereignty, following the narrative that Patricio Rivas had “invited enemies of the country to invade Nicaragua.”<sup>325</sup> Similarly, this story re-appeared throughout the country in such newspapers as the *Richmond Enquirer* and

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<sup>322</sup> “Letter from Central America,” *The Morning Comet* (Baton Rouge, LA), July 29, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064473/1856-07-29/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>323</sup> “Inaugural Address of President Walker,” *The Ashland Union* (Ashland, OH), August 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035173/1856-08-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>324</sup> “Nicaragua,” *Wilmington Journal*, July 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026536/1856-07-18/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>325</sup> “One Day Letter from California,” *Richmond Enquirer*, July 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1856-07-18/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Maryland's *The Cecil Whig*, which collectively evinced the power of *El Nicaraguense*, especially in Southern newspapers.<sup>326</sup>

Other newspapers followed suit. *The Washington Sentinel*, which had generally provided positive narratives about President Walker's presence in Nicaragua, relied on *El Nicaraguense* to reaffirm that "the great majority voted for the General."<sup>327</sup> Likewise, *The Daily Dispatch* published *El Nicaraguense*'s assurance that Patricio Rivas deserted not from disgust for Walker but because of Rivas's "fear of external enemies of the State and the approaching election."<sup>328</sup>

Even newspapers, such as *The New York Herald*, which had previously proved critical of William Walker's prospects, relied on *El Nicaraguense* for its interpretation of the election. Following the lead provided by Colonel John Tabor, *El Nicaraguense*'s editor and chief, the *Herald* insisted that Walker did not intend "to allow his name to be used as a candidate." Instead, it argued that he had hoped that Fermin Ferrer, the minister of relations, would win against Patricio Rivas. The *Herald* relayed Walker's account of the transgressions that followed, insisting that "certain treasonable documents. . . traced to Rivas," along with Ferrer's insistence "induced him to change his determination."<sup>329</sup> In a different article, the *Herald* described the transgressions passed between Rivas and

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<sup>326</sup> "Affairs in Nicaragua," *The Cecil Whig*, July 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016348/1856-07-19/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>327</sup> "The Presidency," *Washington Sentinel*, July 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1856-07-17/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>328</sup> "Central America," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), July 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-07-16/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); and William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (New York and Mobile: S. H. Goetzl & Co., 1860), 218. Such a report is quite consistent with how William Walker later depicted Patricio Rivas in his 1860 memoir. Walker considered Rivas an honest man who desired peace and cooperation but ultimately believed that peace would be attained through the appeasement of his neighbors.

<sup>329</sup> *The New York Herald*, August 10, 1856.

Walker as a “revolt of President Rivas and the Minister of War.”<sup>330</sup> Such reports only highlighted that the American public would first and foremost receive accounts approved by William Walker.

The American minister in Nicaragua, Joseph Wheeler, anticipated favorable public opinion and opened relations with the newly elected President Walker. On July 19, 1856, Walker received Wheeler at the government house in Granada.<sup>331</sup> Even Walker admitted that Wheeler took great liberties with his orders. Wheeler informed Walker that he had been “directed by the President of the United States to . . . establish relations with this State.” However, both Wheeler and Walker understood that President Franklin Pierce and Secretary William Marcy intended for that order to be carried out with the Rivas Regime while Walker still served as general.<sup>332</sup> Southern media celebrated Minister Wheeler’s interactions with President Walker, emphasizing that this meeting represented the renewal of “diplomatic relations.”<sup>333</sup> Walker, in turn, took advantage of his experience in journalism to take command of the regeneration narrative.

Nonetheless, though *El Nicaraguense* directed the narrative of President Walker within the American media, other sources of information bled into the overall story that encouraged readers to doubt his prospects. Much of the early criticisms did not focus on Walker’s legitimacy but on his ability to maintain the health and political stability of the region. Washington’s *The Daily Union* posited that “many of the natives consider the

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<sup>330</sup> “The Latest News,” *The New York Herald*, July 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-07-13/ed-1/seq-1/>>.

<sup>331</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 231.

<sup>332</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 232.

<sup>333</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), August 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-08-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). The newspaper did not appear concerned that Walker lacked a right to rule as much as it displayed a concern that some natives did not consider him as a legitimate leader.

new government a usurpation, and have declared against it.”<sup>334</sup> *The Evening Star*’s anticipation of an invasion evinced that the rift between Patricio Rivas and William Walker revitalized Cornelius Vanderbilt’s Allied Coalition. Though newspapers had successfully veiled the presence of the insurgent *Legitimistas* still present in Nicaragua, which detractors could have utilized to discredit Walker’s promise of domestic stability, news about Rivas’s decision to flee through Honduras opened up American eyes to the presence of a large hostile force along the northern border.

In July, other reports surfaced concerning the presence of a large Guatemalan force formed to remove William Walker. The *New-York Daily Tribune* reported that Patricio Rivas had announced before he severed ties with Walker that Guatemala, San Salvador, and Honduras had all raised armies to combat Walker, totaling approximately three thousand men.<sup>335</sup> However, other newspapers stated that the government of San Salvador had denied this large army passage, causing a celebration used to reinforce American faith in Walker.<sup>336</sup> In August, *The Daily Dispatch* of Richmond reported the presence of six hundred native followers of Rivas and added that four thousand Guatemalans aided them in their possession of Leon.<sup>337</sup> Some newspapers reported as many as nine thousand soldiers ready to invade Nicaragua.<sup>338</sup> Such reports did not reflect

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<sup>334</sup> “By Telegraph,” *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), July 26, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1856-07-26/ed-2/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>335</sup> “Central America,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 15, 1856.

<sup>336</sup> “Later from Nicaragua,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, July 14, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-07-14/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>337</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), August 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-08-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>338</sup> *New Orleans Daily Creole*, July 7, 1856.

newspapers' stances on Walker as much as they revealed that their dependencies on correspondents allowed detractors to spread wildly divergent rumors.

Supporters of President Walker utilized such reports to shift blame onto his enemies. Newspapers depicted the other Central American states as meddling foreigners. Whatever lack of stability that critics could find in Nicaragua could be blamed on them. *The New York Herald*, for example, implied that their presence prevented Walker from devoting all of his energies into the pursuit of the "internal order required for the advancement of material wealth and prosperity," required by Nicaragua. Instead, it contended that, because of their decision to interfere in Nicaragua's domestic affairs "without reason and without justice," Walker had to divert attention to organizing the "proper defense of the republic from external enemies which threaten its repose."<sup>339</sup> Thus, all setbacks could, ironically, be blamed on foreign invasions.

After the inauguration, critics of President Walker utilized news reports to insist that disease and desertion characterized the Walker regime. *The Daily Union* cited "frequent desertions," especially those of a Colonel Mender and a General Chillon. It also stated that "much sickness" could be found in Walker's camps. It further contended that Aspinwall, a key stop for many people traversing the Transit Route "was sickly."<sup>340</sup> Other newspapers, such as the *Evening Star* and the *Burlington Free Press*, reinforced similar stories of disease, usurpation, and desertion while also adding that they

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<sup>339</sup> "News from Nicaragua," *The New York Herald*, August 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-08-02/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>340</sup> "By Telegraph," *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), July 26, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1856-07-26/ed-2/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

anticipated an invasion at the end of the rainy season, likely in late-November.<sup>341</sup> These reports reminded the public that William Walker had not yet secured the health nor stability of Nicaragua. However, since much of this information came out of Greytown, the seat of Colonel Henry L. Kinney, supporters could dismiss it as rumor.

Newspapers supporting William Walker did not try to deny the presence of cholera, but, instead, they tried to focus on how its presence decimated Walker's enemies. *The Daily Dispatch* insisted that cholera and starvation annihilated both Rivas's six hundred soldiers in Leon as well as the four thousand Guatemalans who aided them.<sup>342</sup> On August 31, *The New York Herald* asserted that cholera and dysentery caused "fearful ravages," throughout Costa Rica, which they stated prevented the Costa Ricans from invading Nicaragua.<sup>343</sup> As late as October 3, newspapers, such as the *Daily American Organ* as well as the *Evansville Daily Journal*, reported that cholera hindered the Costa Rican offensive.<sup>344</sup> In fact, the epidemic in Costa Rica eventually claimed almost ten percent of the nation's population and had decimated its military ranks, which gave Nicaragua some relief along the Transit Route.

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<sup>341</sup> "From California and Nicaragua," *Burlington Free Press* (Vermont), August 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023127/1856-08-01/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); and "From California and Nicaragua," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), July 28, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1856-07-28/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>342</sup> "From Nicaragua," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), August 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-08-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>343</sup> "The News," *The New York Herald*, August 31, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-08-31/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>344</sup> "By Telegraph," *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 3, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015672/1856-10-03/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); and "Telegraphic News," *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), October 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1856-10-02/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Such supportive newspapers also re-shifted the onus of the disease's presence onto the recruits. *The New York Herald* often relied on this strategy. For instance, on August 2, 1856, the *Herald* insisted that the "health of the army remains good, but some fever is produced by the imprudencies [sic] of new recruits unaccustomed to the climate."<sup>345</sup> It later returned to this argument in September. The *Herald* once again insisted that "intemperance and other imprudences [sic]," caused "nine-tenths of the mortality." Though it did not challenge the presence of fever, it instead declared that fever existed as "simply intermittent," as well as "acclimative [sic]." The newspaper stated that "the bilious of northern latitudes," wanted "the inflammatory character of those, and putting on the typhoid just in proportion to the imprudence, neglect or exposure of the subject." It placed responsibility not on General Walker but on the traveler, stating that they must keep their "bowels regular, the liver free, observing sobriety and regular habits," while maintaining "well ventilated apartments," and partake in "whole exercise," while protecting oneself from "exhaustion in the hot sun."<sup>346</sup> Thus, the *Herald* reinforced the idea that each colonist could take measures to protect his own household.

As President Walker's press allies redirected readers' health concerns about Nicaragua, they also revitalized the regeneration narrative. On September 1, while explicitly pleading the case for Nicaraguan regeneration, *The New York Herald* focused

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<sup>345</sup> "From the New Orleans Courier," *The New York Herald*, August 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-08-02/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>346</sup> "Our Virgin Bay Correspondence," *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



its attention on the health and wellbeing of the Nicaraguan countryside. Placating fears that the ongoing cholera and fever epidemics would affect Americans, the *Herald* contended that President Walker selected “the finest and healthiest locations” to develop American colonies. It further argued that only “the pest house Granada” suffered from sickness, though it amended even this statement by arguing that disease abated there as well.<sup>347</sup>

While assuaging potential concerns about Nicaragua’s healthiness, *The New York Herald* argued for more public and political support in Nicaragua’s regeneration. It stated that Nicaragua should “be allowed the same path of regeneration in Central America which has been productive of so much benefit in India, Africa and the islands of the sea, under the impulse of European expansion.” It argued that “the regeneration of Spanish America throws [it] open to communication and commerce of the world,” and contended that the hindrance of President Walker’s plans for Central America doomed the United States to “live contiguous to the anarchy of the adjoining States,” and subjected the nation to “their jealous whims.” The *Herald* contested that “the greatest obstacles of the regeneration” process obstructed the participation of 25,000,000 people in world trade as well as the cultivation of millions of acres for world markets.<sup>348</sup> Ultimately, the paper placed the blame on Americans, particularly Secretary William Marcy and President

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<sup>347</sup> “Our Virgin Bay Correspondence,” *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>348</sup> “Encroachments of the European Powers,” *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Franklin Pierce, for adhering to the desires of Europeans meddling in Central American affairs.

*The New York Herald* reaffirmed that Europeans did, in fact, interfere with President Walker's regeneration plan. It argued that neighboring countries to Nicaragua, "under European aid and encouragement," marched into Leon. It stated that the "magnanimous powers of Europe," sought the "total destruction of the Americanos," for self-serving imperial goals.<sup>349</sup> Indeed, these charges seemed legitimate, for the newspaper supported such assertions by referencing the ten English warships that patrolled the Transit Route.<sup>350</sup> It effectively placed enough circumstantial evidence into the narrative to deflect successfully any blame that Walker could receive at that time.

*The New York Herald* juxtaposed the Allied coalition's warmongering to the peaceful will of the Nicaraguan people. It reminded the public that William Walker arrived on the invitation of Nicaraguans who hoped that he could "help settle the dispute" that led to its civil war. It also reminded readers that he led the assault on Granada that resulted in the peace treaty between the *Legitimistas* and the *Democraticos* and insisted that "common consent" from both parties led to Walker's position as commander-in-chief of the Nicaraguan army.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Additional from Central America," *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>350</sup> "The British Fleet at San Juan," *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>351</sup> Additional from Central America," *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Finally, *The New York Herald* asserted that the majority of Nicaraguans rested their hopes for peace in the leadership of William Walker. It stated that “[w]ith the exception of two or three hundred men who. . . are revolution makers by profession,” most Nicaraguans placed their hope for government stability in his hands, for the “best, most conservative, most intelligent, and most patriotic in the country, rallied on Gen. Walker as the man of the crisis and the only one capable of permanently maintaining the new order of things.” It continued by declaring that the “masses voted for him in superstitious faith that it was so ordained by faith.”<sup>352</sup> Thus, the newspaper insisted that Walker both existed as the legal authority of Nicaragua and the specialist that the public demanded.

The American press highlighted victories that distorted the power dynamics in Nicaragua to make his cause appear more favorable. The American phalanx had celebrated several small victories in the summer of 1856. *The Daily Dispatch*, in Virginia, lionized an American victory led by Captain John M. Baldwin, reporting that he led sixteen men in a route against 150 Chamorristas, killing twelve in the process.<sup>353</sup> President Walker had also sent Lieutenant Callender Irvine Fayssoux to command their primary naval vessel, the *Granada*, to intercept communications transmitted between Tempisque and La Union along the Gulf of Fonseca through boats and rafts.<sup>354</sup> On July

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<sup>352</sup> Additional from Central America,” *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>353</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), August 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-08-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). This is almost certainly John M. Baldwin, but it is possible that it actually refers to Thomas Baldwin, who would have been a First Lieutenant.

<sup>354</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 239-240.

27, Fayssoux captured a *bungo* carrying several passengers.<sup>355</sup> On the next day, he seized a large boat from Tempisque, which harbored Mariano Salazar. Salazar, who had run for president in the 1856 election, sided with President Rivas after the June *coup d'état* divided the *Democraticos*. Walker had Salazar executed as a traitor on August 3. News of this execution and others like it reached American newspapers only a few weeks later, which collectively depicted Walker as in control of the stabilizing efforts.

The combined efforts by the American press and *El Nicaraguense* worked. Starting in August 1856, Walker experienced monthly surges in recruitment numbers until December, when a combination of bad press and the loss of the Transit Route hindered Walker's much-needed access to reinforcements. However, in the autumn months of that year, it appeared as if Walker would succeed as president of Nicaragua and bring stability to the region.

#### The Failed Man of Destiny

However, despite the appearance of success in Nicaragua, the media only veiled what proved to be an almost immediate descent by President William Walker. In truth, he had won small victories because he concentrated his forces as he gave up extensive tracks of Nicaragua to the Allied Coalition. Though many contemporaries blamed Walker's slave labor decree as the watershed moment of his decline, Walker maintained much of his support structure in the South until February 1857 and even sustained important Northern press support as late as January of that year.

As long as the possibility existed that he could regenerate the region, many important financiers continued to provide him money and supplies, while the allure of

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<sup>355</sup> A *bungo* is a dugout canoe.

land and regeneration continued to bring recruits from all over. Northern criticisms about the slave decree did not challenge the regeneration narrative, at least not at first. The regeneration narrative collapsed because news about desertions, the ill treatment of his own soldiers, continued defeats, the spread of disease, the loss of the Transit Route, and the destruction of Granada all collectively illuminated Walker as a failed president. Walker had always subjected his soldiers to harsh treatment, but, while he succeeded in Nicaragua, such news barely reached American readers. Furthermore, news delays and *El Nicaraguense's* control over it perpetuated Walker's appearance as a hero for several months, which rewarded him with a steady supply of troops.

Starting in late-August, the American phalanx experienced a series of defeats and setbacks that permanently weakened their position in Nicaragua. *Legitimista* brigades continued to roam the countryside, ambushing bands would attack American troops during their foraging expeditions. They particularly jeopardized the American presence along the Tiptiapa River, which connected Lake Managua to Lake Nicaragua.<sup>356</sup> Responding to American attempts to counter their movements, on September 14, 1856, the *Legitimistas* won a decisive victory at the Battle of San Jacinto, in Managua, which resulted in the death of Lieutenant Colonel Byron Cole and further compromised the American grip on Lake Managua.<sup>357</sup> This victory allowed the enemy to advance onto Granada.

Initially, newspapers supporting President Walker continued to conceal the severity of the situation. *The New York Herald* reported but buried the news of this defeat

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<sup>356</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 283.

<sup>357</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 286.

under the assertion that the “position of President Walker had been much improved, both in military and political resources.” It also assuaged anxieties over the defeat with its assurance that Walker’s sixteen hundred men remained “in good health and under perfect discipline.” It reassured its readers that, despite the defeat, the enemy also suffered heavy casualties in the battle and that “much sickness prevailed in their ranks,” at Leon.<sup>358</sup> Such reports, especially from a newspaper such as the *Herald*, which had previously proven fickle in its support for the grey-eyed president, informed readers that the prospects of the future should be weighed heavier than news of about the past.

However, the control that President Walker’s allies exerted over the regeneration narrative began to wane. Newspapers, including those in the South, displayed anxieties about Walker’s prospects. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* in Virginia, for example, contended that earlier reports had underemphasized the implications of his defeat at San Jacinto. Though it acknowledged the severe casualties sustained by the “enemy” *Legitimistas*, it reported that the American soldiers had evacuated Masaya and stated that Walker’s forces “were concentrating at Granada,” and that the enemy advanced upon them.<sup>359</sup> Likewise, the *New-York Daily Tribune* reported that the “Leonese” remained in Managua and fortified it.<sup>360</sup> These reports highlighted the diminishing power of the Walker regime, despite the wishes of the writers.

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<sup>358</sup> “Arrival of the Tennessee,” *The New York Herald*, October 3, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-10-03/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>359</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* (Wheeling, VA), October 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1856-10-20/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>360</sup> “Nicaragua,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-10-22/ed-1/seq-6/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

While reporting on the Allied advance against Walker, newspapers began anticipating a decisive battle between the Allied forces and the American phalanx. In particular, the *Holmes County Republican* contended that the Allied Coalition killed many of Walker's men as it advanced to Granada and reported that "the enemy," had two thousand troops and expected another nine hundred to a thousand more reinforcements in its attack on Granada.<sup>361</sup>

The anticipated battle eventually occurred. In early October, the Allied forces marched onto Granada. After losing Managua, the Americans retreated south to Masaya but soon abandoned Masaya for Granada. The Allied forces halted at Masaya with a combined force of approximately 2,400 soldiers. At the head of these forces stood General Belloso and General Martínez.<sup>362</sup> President Walker moved to stifle their march to Granada. Though he had over sixteen hundred soldiers under his command, disease and injuries allowed him to only organize approximately eight hundred of them to defend the route to Granada.

On October 11, President Walker moved his forces toward Masaya. Though outnumbered, he hoped to rely on his two twelve-pound howitzers to defeat the enemy. His forces reached Masaya shortly after nightfall, and after a series of sporadic gunfights throughout the night, President Walker's forces opened fire with the howitzers onto a small plaza at dawn, on October 12.<sup>363</sup> At first, it appeared as if Walker had gained

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<sup>361</sup> *Holmes County Republican*, October 23, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028820/1856-10-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>362</sup> James Carson Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua or Reminiscences of an Officer of the American Phalanx* (Columbia, MO: E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1909), 127-128. Jamison likely referred to Ramón Belloso and Tomás Martínez. Ramón Belloso was a prominent general in the Allied Coalition, and Tomás Martínez later served as the president of Nicaragua after the Allied forces removed Walker in 1857.

<sup>363</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 127-128.

control over at least a part of Masaya; however, he quickly realized that Masaya served as a diversion used against him. While Walker attacked Masaya, General José Víctor Zavala launched an attack with about seven hundred men on Granada, the capital of the Walker regime which had only about two hundred men guarding it.<sup>364</sup> Walker halted the assault on Masaya and returned to Granada. After Walker's advanced companies reached the plaza of Granada, their forces scattered the Allied coalition, who left behind their wounded and dead. Many civilians died before Walker's soldiers arrived, including several prominent Americans and children. The American phalanx retaliated by killing most of the captured Allied forces. Jamison reported the deaths of over two hundred enemies and over one hundred Americans.<sup>365</sup>

Though *El Nicaraguense* broke the news as early as October 18, 1856, Americans received only sparse reports about it until the end of October. The earliest accounts could only state that Walker had won at Granada.<sup>366</sup> Newspapers that did report on the subject when the news first arrived provided absurdly inaccurate reports. Some newspapers too eagerly stated that the enemy had lost over eleven hundred men at Granada while contending that Walker had suffered less than sixteen fatalities.<sup>367</sup> These false assessments provided deceitful hopes about the prospects of a Walker-led Nicaragua.

Better reports on battles at Masaya and Granada did not arrive until the middle of November. Unfortunately for President Walker, the reports that portrayed the

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<sup>364</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 128.

<sup>365</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 129-130.

<sup>366</sup> *Nashville Union and American*, October 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1856-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>367</sup> "Later from Nicaragua," *The Abbeville Banner* (Abbeville, SC.), October 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026945/1856-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Guatemalan and Salvadoran forces as barbaric, also inadvertently reminded readers of the consequences of colonizing a politically unstable republic. Newspapers highlighted how women and children fled with terror. They reported how the Allied coalition attacked the home of the American Minister, John H. Wheeler.<sup>368</sup> In doing so, they unintentionally highlighted that Walker could not even protect his own capital.

*The New York Herald*, one of President Walker's preeminent allies, offered a horrifying assessment of the battle. It stated that "everywhere the footstep was turned, the eye rested on some lifeless object that reveal the merciless nature of the combat" by highlighting testimonies that described "volumes of brains distributed in solid masses on the floors." The paper also mentioned looting, stating that "[t]he houses were stripped of everything that was valuable," and that "[t]he rights of private property were everywhere violated." It described the massacre that occurred before Walker's reinforcements countered General Zavala's siege as a "sickening spectacle" while accusing the *Legitimistas* of staining their hands with the blood of the innocent.<sup>369</sup> If Walker could not be depicted as bringing stability to Nicaragua, then at least his enemies could be portrayed as the culprits for his failures.

Newspapers focused on the deaths of civilian Americans. In particular, they fixated on the death of John B. Lawless, a naturalized American originally from Ireland. Lawless had resided in Granada for many years and likely even harbored sentiments for the *Legitimistas*.<sup>370</sup> *The Daily Dispatch* described how the Allied forces dragged him out

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<sup>368</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-11-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>369</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-11-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>370</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 297.

of his own home to kill him.<sup>371</sup> Similarly, newspapers also emphasized the deaths of a Reverend D. H. Wheeler, a member of the American Bible Society and William J. Ferguson, a Methodist preacher. *The New York Herald* lamented that “neither their national character nor their sacred calling” could prevent the murders.<sup>372</sup> Such reports contributed to the diminishing recruitment numbers that President Walker received after November. Many Americans feared that the regeneration of Nicaragua was a lost cause as a result of the negative press coverage. Newspapers had spent the last year reveling in the improvements made in Nicaragua under the leadership of Walker, and now, potential colonizers could not even be guaranteed safety as civilians.

Other Americans, particularly in the North, abandoned Walker’s cause after learning about his decree to re-institute slavery in Nicaragua. However, most critics did not initially consider an abolition criticism to be the most effective strategy to combat Walker’s recruitment efforts. Rumors had long persisted that Walker aimed to re-institute slavery in Nicaragua, so most who opposed it already detested Walker based on this prospect. News of Senator Stephen Douglas and Senator John Weller’s potential schemes for slave expansion through the recognition of Walker dated back to May. Regardless, Walker still received periodic surges of recruits from New York.<sup>373</sup>

When news of the slave decree finally reached American shores, most newspapers, even those critical of President Walker, maintained their focus on troop

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<sup>371</sup> “The Granada Massacre,” *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond, VA), November 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-11-19/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>372</sup> *The New York Herald*, November 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-11-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>373</sup> “Filibusterism in Congress,” *Lewisburg Chronicle* (Lewisburg, Pa.), May 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1856-05-16/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

movements, supply lines, passenger arrivals, and military defeats. On October 20, the *Evening Star*, which had been a reoccurring critic of Walker's regime, offered only one sentence about the decree while providing over forty lines of information about the execution of Lieutenant Jennings Estelle, a criminal in Nicaragua. Similarly, it otherwise adopted and re-published the same narratives found in American press supportive of Walker's regime while providing eight lines about the Battle of San Jacinto, and other news about recruitment reports, passenger arrivals, and military movements.<sup>374</sup> Aside from the publication of Estelle's confession, the *Evening Star's* initial coverage paralleled reporting found in newspapers throughout the South, such as the *Richmond Enquirer* and the *Nashville Union and American*.<sup>375</sup> Almost identical attention occurred in other Northern newspapers, such as the *Belmont Chronicle* and the *Holmes County Republican*.<sup>376</sup> The sparse details provided in the initial statements evinced the lack of urgency that the American press felt about the decree.

However, some newspapers did provide more in-depth coverage of the slave decree soon after. Most that did criticize Walker's decision did so by shifting the narrative away from a regeneration question to one of annexation and domestic politics. Newspapers used Walker's decree to attack not him but, instead, the Democrat party and

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<sup>374</sup> "Later from Nicaragua," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), October 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1856-10-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>375</sup> "By Telegraph," *Nashville Union and American*, October 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1856-10-21/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); and "Later from Nicaragua- The Arrival of the Steamer Texas from San Juan," *Richmond Enquirer*, October 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1856-10-21/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>376</sup> "From Nicaragua," *Belmont Chronicle*. (St. Clairsville, OH), October 23, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026241/1856-10-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; *Holmes County Republican*. (Millersburg, Holmes County, OH), October 23, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028820/1856-10-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Mr. James Buchanan. In Pennsylvania, *The Lewisburg Chronicle* returned to the slave decree and once again linked Walker's regime in Nicaragua to the threat of American political stability. It argued that filibusters hoped that the election of Buchanan would allow them to utilize Walker's advantage to annex both Cuba and Nicaragua and then asked its readers to contemplate if they want "[t]wo more Slave and Catholic States" in the Union.<sup>377</sup> Even explicitly abolitionist newspapers, such as Ohio's *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, focused their attention on the prospective shifting balance of Slave Power that Walker's decree implied. The *Bugle* warned that Walker's decree prepared Nicaragua for its admission to Union.<sup>378</sup> These critics feared the political implications of a Buchanan presidency, for they knew that Pierre Soulé, a Louisiana Senator and the most prominent of Walker's allies, was also friends with Buchanan. Furthermore, they understood that both Buchanan and Soulé had a history of trying to annex Cuba and saw Nicaragua as the next-best choice for Southerners trying to acquire a new slave state.

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<sup>377</sup>"More Slavery," *Lewisburg Chronicle*, October 24, 1856. *Chronicling America*, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1856-10-24/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>378</sup>"Reestablishment of Slavery in Nicaragua," *Anti-slavery Bugle* (New Lisbon, OH), October 25, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1856-10-25/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Figure 12. Pierre Soulé, circa 1853<sup>379</sup>

Other newspapers tied Walker's decree to the possibility of disunion and not annexation. In Indiana, *The Evansville Daily Journal* feared that the laws concerning the abolition of the African slave trade limited American law enforcement to the importation of slaves and offered no real regulations to deter the exportation. It insisted that Southern

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<sup>379</sup> *Pierre Soulé, American minister to Spain, 1853*. The the Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003674491/>.

states would be able to create a new export industry that would allow them to provide “regular export trade of slaves to Nicaragua.” It feared that this trade would allow Southern states the financial and political means for disunion. However, the paper also attached a regeneration message to this predicament, stating that “a large immigration of Southern farmers and planters with their slaves” could clear the “thick forests and matted vegetation which shade the soil and render the climate unhealthy.” It concluded that such progress would “no doubt reconcile the men of the North to the measure.”<sup>380</sup>

On October 20, 1856, *The New York Herald* provided a detailed assessment of how the Nicaraguan slave decree fit into American politics and the upcoming election. It connected the decree to Pierre Soulé, who recently returned from Nicaragua “as a sort of volunteer democratic ambassador.” Describing Soulé as “Mr. Buchanan’s right-hand man,” the *Herald* noted that with Buchanan’s election, it would be easy for Soulé to “secure the admission of Nicaragua as a slave state.” The paper insisted that this was part of a six-point plan designed by the Democrats to admit Kansas, Nicaragua, Cuba, half of California and all of Mexico as slave states while carving out another slave state in Texas. It concluded that the re-establishment of the African slave trade would soon follow if Buchanan won the election.<sup>381</sup> Its primary concern in this prediction was an ensuing war with England, France, and Spain that would result from what it considered to be an inevitable conclusion if Buchanan won the election. It did not oppose, however, the reintroduction of slavery to Central America.

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<sup>380</sup> “Slavery in Nicaragua,” *The Evansville Daily Journal*, October 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015672/1856-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>381</sup> *The New York Herald*, October 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-10-21/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Figure 13. James Buchanan<sup>382</sup>

In fact, *The New York Herald* explicitly distinguished its concerns about the expansion of “Slave Power” within the United States that would come with Nicaragua’s statehood from concerns about the reinstatement of slavery in Nicaragua. The *Herald* contended that, from within the conflict in Nicaragua, “hung the destiny of Nicaragua” not the fate of the United States. It reminded its readers that Walker’s mission, including the reinstatement of slavery, was a mission of regeneration. It argued that the battles

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<sup>382</sup> Buttre, John Chester, Engraver. *James Buchanan / daguerrotype by Brady; engraved by J.C. Buttre*. [Between 1857 and 1870]. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002722619/>.

between the American phalanx and the Allied Coalition “would decide whether the new principles of social and political government, including the probable introduction of slavery. . . were to be fostered and developed, or whether Nicaragua should revert back to its Spanish-Indian dynastics [sic].”<sup>383</sup> Nevertheless, *The New York Herald* did not disapprove of the actual reinstatement of slavery in Nicaragua.

Likewise, other newspapers also rallied to President Walker’s slavery decree with a message of regeneration. Only days after news of the declaration arrived, the *Richmond Enquirer* celebrated the “heroic movement” led by Walker and stated that his actions had “introduced American genius and enterprises into that lovely region.” It then reminded readers that Walker aimed to “regenerate Central America from the servile sloth of ages,” brought upon it by the “iron rule of aristocratic or priestly oppression.”<sup>384</sup> Thus, for many, the prospects of a stable and prosperous Nicaragua outweighed any concerns about the righteousness of the decision.

Some newspapers, however, did take a moral stance against Walker’s decree. *The New York Sun*, which the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* described as an “organ of the Cuban Junta,” described him as “a most unmitigated scoundrel, for whom no terms of denunciation can be too severe.” The *Sun* contended that Walker “deliberately imposed a system of bondage” on a people who had already “nobly emancipated themselves” and concluded that this decision was “the most fatal step Walker has taken” and assured its

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<sup>383</sup>*The New York Herald*, October 21, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-10-21/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>384</sup>*Richmond Enquirer*, October 24, 1856. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1856-10-24/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



readers that the Nicaraguans would not endure such subjugation.<sup>385</sup> In doing so, the *Sun* portrayed Walker as having reversed the progress that Nicaragua already experienced, which made him an anathema to the idea of regeneration without explicitly challenging the correlation.

Other critics chose to tie the immoralities of slavery and annexation to the regeneration message. *The National Era* argued that the Southern regeneration plan for Nicaragua involved conquest, slavery, and annexation as a substitute for freedom.<sup>386</sup> It mocked the use of the word regeneration and stated that “the Regenerator” failed to indoctrinate “the poor natives. . . in the blessings of regeneration” and stated that the labor decree led to the march of the Allied army onto Granada. Though the battle had already occurred, its results had not yet reached American shores. The *Era* sarcastically posited that these four thousand soldiers fought “in favor of the obsolete institution of Freedom.” Thus, the *Era* concluded that the “natives of the country which Walker has conquered, submit with a very bad grace to his regenerating process.”<sup>387</sup> The *Era* veiled the voices of Nicaraguan support that Walker did receive by delegitimizing them in favor of those who opposed him, for Walker certainly had many native supporters.

Americans quickly reacted to the slave decree by preparing for their own participation in Nicaragua. Within days of the initial report, new articles surfaced throughout the United States that slavers in New York had begun preparing ships to “take

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<sup>385</sup> “Walker’s Slave Decree,” *Wheeling Daily intelligencer* (Wheeling, VA), October 25, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1856-10-25/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>386</sup> *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), October 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1856-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>387</sup> *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), October 30, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1856-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

advantage of Walker's recent decree."<sup>388</sup> Within the first ten days that Americans learned about the reinstatement of slavery, newspapers further reinforced these original suspicions noting that "Northern men fit out vessels to steal and transport slaves to that country."<sup>389</sup> And, as previously stated, Walker's American agents continued to achieve success in their recruitment efforts for the American phalanx until December. On October 27, a week after news broke of the slaving decree, 350 recruits left New Orleans for Nicaragua on the steamer *Tennessee*.<sup>390</sup> Similarly, on November 26, the *Tennessee* once more departed for Nicaragua with another batch of three hundred recruits.<sup>391</sup> Even *The Evansville Daily Journal* feared Walker's recruitment success. In November, it reported that "a large and respectable company of emigrants are organizing at Louisville. . . for Nicaragua." It lamented that such efforts would "soon make his [Walker's] position unassailable by his enemies, and the American Rule in Central America will become a fixed fact."<sup>392</sup> Such reports suggest that the issue of support for Walker would not be won by attacking his slavery position alone.

However, President Walker's recruitment efforts did falter as news of his military failures continued to reveal the political instability of the region. After his defense of Granada, he experienced another series of military engagements that ultimately weakened

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<sup>388</sup> "Probable Slave Expedition," *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), October 23, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1856-10-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>389</sup> *Weekly North Carolina Standard* (Raleigh, NC), October 29, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84045030/1856-10-29/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>390</sup> *Burlington Free Press*, October 31, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023127/1856-10-31/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>391</sup> *The Daily Dispatch*. (Richmond, VA), November 29, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-11-29/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>392</sup> *The Evansville Daily Journal*, November 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015672/1856-11-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

his control of the Transit Route and caused him to abandon Granada. In early November, a Costa Rican force left Masaya, under the leadership of General José Maria Cañas, the brother-in-law of Rafael Mora, to capture Virgin Bay.<sup>393</sup> After two days of fighting, Walker's force of approximately 250 soldiers scattered a much larger force of approximately 800 soldiers.<sup>394</sup> However, despite the victory, his soldiers were unable to pursue the enemy during the route. Thus, they allowed Cañas to reach Rivas, which allowed the Costa Ricans to remain within range of the Transit Route. Walker returned to Granada on November 13 to prepare for his attack against General Belloso with the hopes of loosening the grip that the Allied Coalition held on the lands surrounding his dwindling republic.<sup>395</sup>

While Walker prepared for his attack on Masaya, General Máximo Jerez reinforced Rivas with an additional seven hundred men. On November 15, about 560 of Walker's soldiers marched from Granada to Masaya. However, after learning of Jerez's movements, Walker split his forces, sending 260 men to Granada. Then, with about 300 men, Walker attacked Masaya. Though the American phalanx captured the suburbs of Masaya, over 50 of them died and more than 40 were wounded on the first of what became three days of fighting. After the third day of combat, Walker retreated back to Granada, losing approximately one-third of the men whom attacked Masaya.<sup>396</sup> He returned to his capital a defeated man.

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<sup>393</sup> Masaya is just northwest of Granada.

<sup>394</sup> The fighting commenced on November 10, 1856.

<sup>395</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 304-307.

<sup>396</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 308-312.

After returning to Granada on November 18, Walker announced his decision to abandon it. However, he also prepared for the deliberate destruction of Granada by his forces.<sup>397</sup> Soon after news spread about its impending destruction, the Allied Coalition marched to Granada. General Beloso attacked the American forces in Granada on November 24.<sup>398</sup> Beloso hoped to end the war against Walker with a decisive victory before the Americans could regroup in a new town. The fighting lasted for several days, and, by the end of November 27, much of the town had been destroyed. Nevertheless, by December 1, cholera and typhus broke out in both camps. The fighting continued until the Americans finally retreated to the island of Omotepe on December 14.<sup>399</sup> The Americans had successfully destroyed Granada and prepared for their flight to Rivas.

Though the American forces had some success during this period, the American media focused its attention on the destruction of Granada. Supporters of President Walker depicted it as a strategic maneuver. On December 15, the *Nashville Daily Patriot* argued that its destruction was “called for by the exigencies of the times.” The *Patriot* described Walker’s triumph at Granada as “bloody as well as brilliant” while estimating that the Allies had lost almost three thousand men. It concluded that “Walker’s career continues to be a success,” while anticipating conflicting reports that “psalm-singing Yankees” would contradict their conclusions.<sup>400</sup> And, as predicted, his critics did precisely that.

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<sup>397</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 313.

<sup>398</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 314.

<sup>399</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 340.

<sup>400</sup> “The News from Nicaragua,” *Nashville Daily Patriot*, December 15, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86053516/1856-12-15/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Nevertheless, even President Walker's supporters lamented over the instability that the destruction of Granada evinced. Some newspapers attempted to depict the destruction of and retreat from Granada as a medical decision. In Virginia, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* credited Walker with "several successful battles" while insisting that Walker "found it necessary to evacuate Granada on account of the sickness which prevails so extensive among the white residents." It credited Walker for moving the sick and wounded to Ometepe while sending General Charles Frederick Henningsen to destroy the city so that the enemy could not fortify it in their absence.<sup>401</sup> The *Houma Ceres* also insisted that Walker considered Granada "too sickly" to service him.<sup>402</sup> Many newspapers, such as *The Daily Dispatch* re-affirmed this narrative while usually highlighting Walker's benevolence for providing a three-day notice to allow the residents to evacuate.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> "Later from Nicaragua," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, December 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1856-12-19/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>402</sup> "From Nicaragua and California," *Houma Ceres*, December 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83026391/1856-12-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>403</sup> "Two Weeks Later from California," *The Daily Dispatch*, (Richmond, VA), December 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-12-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Figure 14. Major-General Charles Frederick Henningsen of the Army of Nicaragua<sup>404</sup>

Many newspapers, even in support of President Walker’s prospects, discussed the looming presence of insurgents and foreign enemies, all of which highlighted Walker’s limited control over his own republic. Just days after describing Walker’s decision as “brilliant,” the *Nashville Daily Patriot* described the destruction of Granada as “a measure defended as one of military precaution.” It suggested that the decision exhibited

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<sup>404</sup> *Frederick Henningsen*. 1857. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002723413/>.

that the Allied Coalition in Nicaragua remained neither “few nor insignificant.” Yet, it still credited Walker for “clearing Nicaragua of the great bulk of the invaders.”<sup>405</sup>

The *New-York Daily Tribune* attempted to deny the credibility of such claims. Though it initially reported that Walker “fired the place,” it soon recanted on this story.<sup>406</sup> While it admitted that Walker “could no longer hold” Granada, the *Tribune* insisted that news reports of the destruction of Masaya appeared “to be unfounded” while similar reports for Granada were neither certain nor even probable. The paper did lament, however, that “without stores, provisions, or resources, the position of Walker must be sufficiently deplorable.”<sup>407</sup> Thus, despite its efforts, it could find no scraps of information to structure a positive narrative for Walker.

The *Democrat and Sentinel*, in Pennsylvania, explained why conflicting stories existed. On December 17, 1856, the newspaper clarified the origins of the various reports concerning Granada, which in turn made it appear as if Walker’s allies deliberately conveyed inaccurate information to delay the truth from affecting his recruitment efforts. None of the news that arrived for these early reports came from sources that witnessed the end of the battle for Granada. News reports concerning Walker’s defeats arrived on the steamship *Tennessee*, the ship that arrived in Key West carrying the cholera bacteria. The *Tennessee* left San Juan del Sur on December 4, 1856. The newspaper then linked the positive news stories to New Orleans. In New Orleans, newspapers received their

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<sup>405</sup> “The News from Nicaragua,” *Nashville Daily Patriot*, December 20, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86053516/1856-12-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>406</sup> “Important from California,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-12-13/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>407</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1856-12-16/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

information from the steamship *Texas*, which arrived in New Orleans on December 12, after leaving San Juan del Sur on December 5.<sup>408</sup> If the *Texas* had cholera on board, pro-Walker writers veiled its presence. The one-day difference between the two sources made the positive narrative carried by the *Texas* appear to be a counter-measure designed to control the damage caused by the more negative information provided by the *Tennessee*.

The *Democrat and Sentinel* also cited a third source, *The Panama Herald*, which offered an initial but incomplete assessment of the battle, as well. On December 4, 1856, *The Panama Herald* announced that the Allied Coalition had not yet captured the capital but had taken control over Walker's house. There, it claimed that they found letters being written to Napoleon III and Lord Clarendon. It stated that those letters requested recognition, noting that it was "the only means of preventing the annexation of Central America to the United States." The *Democrat and Sentinel* then claimed that such a report was consistent with the orders that President Walker had once instructed General Domingo de Goicouria to follow on his diplomatic ventures.<sup>409</sup> Before the fallout between Goicouria and Walker, Americans had understood that Walker had tasked the Cuban general with establishing political relations with European powers, so the inference about the details of such negotiations was easy for the paper's readers to accept.

However, critics utilized the negative news to highlight not just Walker's failure but also the fallacious claims surrounding the regeneration narrative that his allies promoted. *The Lewistown Gazette* contended that "those interested in the success of the

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<sup>408</sup> *Democrat and Sentinel* (Ebensburg, PA), December 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071378/1856-12-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>409</sup> *Democrat and Sentinel* (Ebensburg, PA), December 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071378/1856-12-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Americans” release “unblushing falsehoods” through channels that supplied “the great bulk of information.” It posited that Walker destroyed Granada to drive his enemies out of the strongholds within the city.<sup>410</sup> Likewise, *The Daily Union* responded to the humanitarian and health narrative that depicted Walker as a savior. It reminded its readers that the disease festering in Nicaragua threatened American lives abroad and at home. The *Union* was one of the first newspapers to state that the steamship *Tennessee* suffered from a cholera outbreak while returning from San Juan del Sur and reported that thirteen passengers had died. It contended that the American phalanx suffered “from want of provisions and clothing” and were “dying from disease,” and it further concluded that the five hundred passengers on the *Tennessee* “had been driven from every place in Nicaragua, except the Transit Route.”<sup>411</sup> Thus, his critics could make a strong case that Nicaragua was, as a region, less healthy in the end of 1856 than it was before he even arrived, at least for Americans.

Similarly, the *Evening Star* encouraged potential recruits to feel anxious about embarking for Nicaragua by portraying Walker as having failed at protecting Anglo-American interests and colonies throughout the republic. Relaying information previously published in the *Courier and Enquirer*, the *Star* highlighted the dire position of the American phalanx. It emphasized how the loss of Masaya and Nindirí meant that the phalanx had already lost their major suppliers of their daily provisions. The paper also contended that Walker’s plan to retreat to Rivas would leave the army “just as badly off

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<sup>410</sup> “Nicaraguan News,” *Lewistown Gazette*, December 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83032276/1856-12-18/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>411</sup> “By Telegraph,” *The Daily Union* (Washington), December 13, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1856-12-13/ed-2/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

there, as there is nothing to be had there.” The *Star* insisted that Walker soon intended to retreat from either Virgin Bay or San Juan del Sur.<sup>412</sup> Walker, in fact, likely had begun his preparations for retreat back to the United States by this point, though he still held out hope that reinforcements would come and allow for a reversal of fortune.

Other newspapers soon adopted the futility narrative that portrayed Walker as a deceitful failure. In Ohio, both the *Meigs County Telegraph* and *Cincinnati Commercial* contended that Walker had lied about the entire mission in Nicaragua. Targeting the “gathering of the native Pennsylvanians” who “indulge in filibustering hysterics,” these newspapers argued that Walker and Pierre Soulé only intended to use Nicaragua as “a depot for men and munitions of war, to be gathered for a descent upon Cuba.” The newspaper argued that “[t]he boasting about the beauty and riches of the Nicaraguan county is all a humbug” full of “mere fictions” about “coffee plantations and forests of precious woods.” It contended that Walker did not “possess a single square mile of territory ‘free of encumbrance’ in Central America,” and further described all of the titles awarded by the regime as being “worth precisely so much waste paper.” All of this, it argued, came at the cost of two thousand lives.<sup>413</sup> Thus, the paper contended that Walker’s deception would bring nothing but death to honest Americans tricked into joining him.

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<sup>412</sup> “Spirit of the Morning Press,” *Evening Star* (Washington), December 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1856-12-16/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>413</sup> “The Filibustering in Nicaragua,” *Meigs County Telegraph* (Pomeroy, OH), December 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038183/1856-12-16/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). *Meigs County Telegraph* credited its report to the *Cincinnati Commercial*.

In positing the Cuban scheme theory, newspapers once more connected President Walker's labor decree to domestic politics through an international arena. Newspapers argued that President Walker, Pierre Soulé, and "Buchaneers" would pressure the newly elected president "into war for the acquisition of more slave territory." Newspapers accused the Democrats of using such a strategy to preserve the survival of their own political party. Thus, the critics of Walker argued that the War in Nicaragua was not one of regeneration but one of party politics over Slave Power.<sup>414</sup>

Walker's press allies responded to the degrading reports about Granada by, once more, trumpeting the regeneration message. Newspapers, such as the *Boston Post* and *The Daily Picayune*, suggested that Walker served as "a leader in the work of human progress" through his work in the "regeneration of Central America."<sup>415</sup> The *Times-Picayune*, in New Orleans, cited General John Quitman in describing Walker "as an instrument in the hands of Providence for the civilization of Central America and its moral and political regeneration."<sup>416</sup> Thus, the message of regeneration remained firm along the Gulf South.

William Walker never regrouped from the defeat at Granada. Though his forces occupied Rivas on December 16, Walker had lost control over most of Nicaragua and had retained possession over only a part of the Transit Route. Walker suffered a critical defeat on December 23 when a Costa Rican company of 120 men, led by an American named

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<sup>414</sup> "The Filibustering in Nicaragua," *Meigs County Telegraph* (Pomeroy, OH), December 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038183/1856-12-16/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>415</sup> *The Daily Picayune*, December 17, 1856, *The Daily Picayune* cited the *Boston Post* in an article that compares the literary works of William H. Prescott to the actions of Walker.

<sup>416</sup> *Times-Picayune*, December 25, 1856.

Sylvanus M. Spencer, ambushed his camp stationed at the mouth of the Sarapiquí River, which connects the center of Costa Rica to the San Juan River.<sup>417</sup> The next day, Spencer took possession of all of the steamships at Punta Arenas and effectively severed Walker from accessing any supplies and soldiers sent to him.<sup>418</sup>

By the end of January 1857, Allied forces had isolated the American soldiers at Rivas. General Charles Frederick Henningsen described how the Allies effectively inhibited the Americans from “all communication with the Atlantic States by the unlawful seizure of the transit steamers.” The Allies, knowing this, attempted to besiege Rivas on January 27, 1857. However, Walker responded to this attempt by commencing a series of offensive attacks in the surrounding environ, which prevented the siege from working. Starting on January 29, the Americans attacked Obraje once and San Jorge four times, with the final assault occurring on March 16. They also partook in a series of military sweeps along the Transit Route and relied on small skirmishes to continue delaying the Allied siege.<sup>419</sup> While the attacks succeeded in slowing down the Allied march against them, they only delayed the inevitable.

Despite President Walker’s loss of much of Nicaragua and the destruction of Granada, Southerners particularly along the Gulf Coast continued to espouse a message of regeneration that defined Walker as the key to the future of Nicaragua. On January 21, 1857, *The Daily Picayune*, for example, highlighted a meeting held by the “friends of

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<sup>417</sup> “Nicaraguan Affairs,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 29, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-01-29/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 344.

<sup>418</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 345.

<sup>419</sup> Peter F. Stout, *Nicaragua: Past, Present, and Future; A Description of Its Inhabitants, Customs, Mines, Minerals, Early History, Modern Filibusterism, Proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal and Manifest Destiny* (Philadelphia: John E. Potter, 1859), 225-227.

Nicaragua,” a New Orleans-based organization that aimed to assist the “minister of regeneration” in his plight. The *Picayune* described the potential failure of Walker as “not only a death-blow to liberty in Central America but to all hope for the extension of Southern principles.” This organization, which included such prominent political figures as Pierre Soulé and Edward Rawle, a member of an elite slaving family, worked in tandem with many of Walker’s officers, particularly Colonel E. J. C. Kewen. The group relied on newspapers to highlight the “hypocritical interposition of the British forces,” which they argued inhibited American development of Nicaragua and turned much of it into a “desolate waste.”<sup>420</sup> With these claims, his allies continued to place blame onto foreign interlopers.

Similarly, other Southern newspapers followed suit. Some newspapers, such as *The Daily Dispatch* in Richmond, promoted the New Orleans-based organization and its ideals by reporting on the group’s resolutions, particularly its anti-British sentiments.<sup>421</sup> While describing a narrative of Walker’s “success” in Nicaragua, the *Memphis Daily Appeal* informed its readers that Walker still had “2,000 fighting men at his command,” and was expecting 500 more reinforcements from San Francisco.<sup>422</sup> Relying on news from December, many Southern newspapers continued to report that Walker’s soldiers had “scattered their enemies.”<sup>423</sup> Southern newspapers broadcasted similar pleas and

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<sup>420</sup> “Nicaraguan Meeting, *The Daily Picayune*, January 27, 1857.

<sup>421</sup> “Nicaraguan Meeting,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 28, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-01-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>422</sup> “From Nicaragua- Reported Success of Walker,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, January 21, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1857-01-23/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>423</sup> “Walker and Nicaragua,” *Daily Nashville Patriot*, January 24, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn96091000/1857-01-24/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

narratives until President Walker's retreat in May. In early February, Southern newspapers maintained emphasis that Walker still commanded more than one thousand men and relied on testimonies from veterans of the war, such as Captain Henry C. Cook, who "hoots at the idea of General Walker's force being either defeated or compelled to capitulate."<sup>424</sup> They sustained, through these messages, a narrative of hope.

In the early months 1857, *The New York Herald* continued to serve as the vanguard for Northern support for Walker. In January, the *Herald* blamed much of Walker's troubles along the Transit Route on Cornelius Vanderbilt. Relying on the testimony of Captain Charles W. Kruger of Walker's army, the reporter stated that Vanderbilt had given the American Captain Spencer forty thousand dollars to fund the Costa Rican invasion of the Transit Route.<sup>425</sup> The *Herald* also continued to espouse the health benefits of Nicaragua, stating that, "there is no place in the world healthier or that has a finer climate than parts of Nicaragua," while relying on passenger testimonies to insist that Walker's men remained in "excellent condition."<sup>426</sup> In another article, the paper also published the testimony of General William L. Cazneau, who, when asked about the health of Nicaragua, responded, "I consider it as healthy as any tropical country and more so than many portions of our own- Illinois, for instance more die of fever there

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<sup>424</sup> "Walker – Nicaragua," *The Athens Post* (Athens, TN), February 13, 1857.

<sup>425</sup> "Operations on the San Juan," *The New York Herald*, January 26, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-01-26/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>426</sup> "Incidents in the Siege of Granada," *The New York Herald*, January 26, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-01-26/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

than in Nicaragua.”<sup>427</sup> It maintained the narrative that Walker’s own men had “the greatest confidence in his ultimate success.”<sup>428</sup>

Throughout this period, Walker continued to receive recruits, though sporadically. The loss of control along the Transit Route because of what *The New York Herald* described as “[t]he war between two transit companies,” prevented Walker from receiving a steady supply of recruits from the steamers in the Atlantic. Nevertheless, newspapers continued to emphasize the success of Walker’s recruitment efforts. As previously stated, despite the heavy losses, newspapers continued to report Walker’s enlistment numbers as being anywhere between one to two thousand men. *The New York Herald* continued to highlight that the passenger ships designed to transport civilians across the isthmus still carried enlistees.<sup>429</sup> Even newspapers reporting on Walker’s imminent demise, such as the *M’Arthur Democrat*, described how Walker continued to receive “large reinforcements.”<sup>430</sup> Thus, Americans began exhibiting concern that the narrative of the war would become one of futility.

However, both Northern and Southern newspapers once supportive of William Walker began abandoning hope for him in early January. Primarily, newspapers lost confidence that Walker could rebound from his defeats in November and December and

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<sup>427</sup> “The Nicaragua Filibuster Case,” *The New York Herald*, February 7, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-02-07/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>428</sup> “Incidents in the Siege of Granada,” *The New York Herald*, January 26, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-01-26/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>429</sup> “Incidents in the Siege of Granada,” *The New York Herald*, January 26, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-01-26/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>430</sup> “Gen. Walker,” *M’Arthur Democrat* (McArthur, OH), January 22, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87075163/1857-01-22/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

even challenged the character of Walker. The *New-York Daily Tribune*, relying on the testimony of a gentleman who claimed to have met Walker in Rivas, posited that Walker had “abandoned all hopes of himself opening a communication across the lake” while predicting that Walker contemplated “a speedy embarkation” out of the country.<sup>431</sup> *The National Era* reported correlated the reports of Walker’s success and prospects with “confused rumors” created by New Orleans newspapers and, instead, highlighted that the Costa Ricans, aided by British, had “got in the rear of Walker, taken possession of the river and cut off supplies and reinforcements.”<sup>432</sup> In Illinois, *The Ottawa Free Trader* posited that Walker was already debating terms for surrender.<sup>433</sup> Such reports, newspapers wished, would deter future recruits from their inevitable deaths.

Writers critical of Walker highlighted the increased desertions within the Nicaraguan Army to depict Walker as a tyrant. *The Ottawa Free Trader* described how Walker’s men “were rapidly deserting,” and that the Costa Ricans, under President Juan Mora, lured Americans away from Walker’s service by offering them free pardons and passage back to the United States.<sup>434</sup> The *New-York Daily Tribune* contended that “the greater part of Walker’s men are only kept by fear of being retaken and shot.”<sup>435</sup> Even Southern newspapers began promoting this new element of the story. *The Daily Dispatch*

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<sup>431</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1857. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-02-25/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>432</sup> “Nicaraguan Affairs –Situation of Walker,” *The National Era*, January 22, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1857-01-22/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>433</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *The Ottawa Free Trader*, January 31, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84038582/1857-01-31/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>434</sup> “From Nicaragua,” *The Ottawa Free Trader*, January 31, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84038582/1857-01-31/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>435</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-02-25/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



of Virginia, relying on news received from the steamship *George Law*, described the deserters as “poor fellows who have escaped from Walker’s clutches.” It described the deprived condition of the men and posited that “nine-tenths of the soldiers would willingly leave if they had the means.”<sup>436</sup> These reports called into question the stewardship of the president, which jeopardized his ability to convey a regeneration message. Though stories of desertion occurred in previous months, supporters could consider the sources that provided them too unreliable and biased to be accurate.

By late winter, newspapers corroborated assertions that Walker failed as a leader with quantitative evidence, especially in the South. On March 4, 1857, the *Weekly North Carolina Standard* reported that twelve deserters fled to Panama.<sup>437</sup> On March 31, The *Daily Nashville Patriot* described how one hundred deserters left Nicaragua for New York.<sup>438</sup> On April 10, the *Memphis Daily* reported that “some twenty more deserters” arrived back in the United States on the *West India Royal*.<sup>439</sup> Such news reports reinforced both the futility of Walker’s campaign as well as his inability to instill discipline within the country.

Newspapers also began re-focusing on the health failures in Nicaragua. Cholera outbreaks continued to take a toll on Walker’s soldiers as well as his prospects for future

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<sup>436</sup> “Ten Days Later from Walker’s Camp,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), February 16, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-02-16/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>437</sup> “Later from California, Nicaragua, &c,” *Weekly North Carolina Standard* (Raleigh, NC), March 4, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84045030/1857-03-04/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>438</sup> “By Telegraph,” *Daily Nashville Patriot*, March 31, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn96091000/1857-03-31/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>439</sup> “San Juan del Norte, March 10, 1857” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, April 10, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1857-04-10/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

support in the United States as obituaries of those who died continued to increase. Since many of the soldiers going to Nicaragua had left from New Orleans or were from Southern towns, Southern newspapers became some of the primary broadcasters of the presence of cholera. For example, *The Home Journal*, in Tennessee, reported on the death of DeWitt C. Withthorne, a former resident of Shelbyville Tennessee who died from cholera.<sup>440</sup> Both the *The Daily Dispatch* and *The Daily Union* reported on the death of Henry C. Langdon a resident of Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>441</sup> *The Washington Union* provided a twenty-three-line obituary for Henry Livingston Breese, who died in November 1856. The *Union* opened this obituary with “[d]ied of cholera, at Granada,” then proceeded to highlight his bravery, character, and his father’s status as a judge.<sup>442</sup> These reports reminded readers that their homes lost some of the best that the country had to offer to a futile war in a foreign land.

As such news reports continued to accumulate, newspapers directly challenged the health narrative. The *New-York Daily Tribune*, on the same page, that it criticized *The Daily Creole* for proclaiming that “the friends of the regeneration of Nicaragua should rejoice,” insisted that the present healthy state of Rivas would soon change in only six

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<sup>440</sup> *The Home Journal* (Winchester, TN), February 13, 1857. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn97065087/1857-02-13/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>441</sup> *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 27, 1857. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-01-27/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017);  
*The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), February 17, 1857. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1857-02-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017);  
*El Nicaraguense*, June 7, 1856. Henry C. Langdon had been present in Nicaragua since at least June 7, 1856, for he had mail waiting for him at the post office in Granada. *The Daily Union*, which often proved critical of Walker, described Langdon as “a promising youth of twenty-two years, and the eldest son of C. C. Langdon, for many years past editor of the *Mobile Advertiser*,” to emphasize that Walker’s failures proved to be a loss for more than just those who left but a loss for all.

<sup>442</sup> “Obituary,” *The Washington Union*, May 7, 1857. *Chronicling America*.  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82006534/1857-05-07/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

weeks, as it predicted the re-emergence of cholera, fevers, and dysentery.<sup>443</sup> Multiple newspapers insisted that 5,400 Americans had “perished in battle and by fever in Nicaragua, since Walker’s usurpation.”<sup>444</sup> Even Walker’s New Orleans allies admitted that “three years of exposure to the tropical sun of Sonora and Nicaragua, their chills and fevers and anxiety,” had aged him at least six years.<sup>445</sup> The *Lewisburg Chronicle* accused Walker of wasting the lives of thousands of “the best men of the country” by allowing them to burn “with fever in close, filthy hospitals” while feeding them “putrid mule meat.”<sup>446</sup> Americans, as such newspapers surmised, could no longer expect a healthy life in Nicaragua.

Though newspapers had previously challenged the domestic implications of the slavery decree, many began correlating slavery to Walker’s judgment. The *New-York Tribune* posited that this decision showed “his short-sighted and ruinous policy toward the people” and described him as a dictator.<sup>447</sup> The *National Era* described the decree as “a declaration of war against the whole nation” that “put the personal liberty of every man, woman, and child in peril and stamped the movement of Walker as piratical and

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<sup>443</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-02-25/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>444</sup> “The Advantages of Filibustering,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 20, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-03-20/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); *The Spirit of Democracy* (Woodsfield, OH), April 1, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038115/1857-04-01/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>445</sup> *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), February 27, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1857-02-27/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). The *Daily Union* referenced a *New Orleans Picayune* correspondent who visited Walker’s camp in Rivas.

<sup>446</sup> “National Morality,” *The Lewisburg Chronicle*, May 1, 1857. *Chronicle America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1857-05-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>447</sup> “Details of Walker’s Operations in November and December,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 27, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-01-29/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

barbarous.”<sup>448</sup> The *Anti-Slavery Bugle* and *Putnam’s Monthly* also argued that Walker’s policy led to “destitution, starvation, agonized deaths, by loathsome diseases and mortified wounds.”<sup>449</sup> They correlated the immoralities associated with the regime’s policies to the deteriorating health conditions in Nicaragua.

President Walker never recovered from the loss of Granada and fled Nicaragua in May 1857. Though the negative press coverage did not put an end to Walker’s recruitment efforts in New York, San Francisco, and the South, it almost certainly affected the quantity of recruits that he received. With the British assisting the Costa Ricans in their temporary control over the Transit Route, Walker lost his ability to guarantee that those who did leave from the Atlantic side could consistently reach his forces on the western side of Lake Nicaragua. Furthermore, both Costa Rica and Guatemala continued to send fresh reinforcements, which numerically overwhelmed Walker’s tired and sick phalanx.<sup>450</sup> The Allied Coalition successfully prevented the Americans from foraging for supplies, which exacerbated their health conditions.<sup>451</sup> Without food and proper care, Walker and his soldiers could no longer attempt to re-acquire lost territory.

#### Walker’s Retreat and Subsequent Expeditions

Thus, on May 1, 1857, William Walker began his retreat back to the United States. He did not sign a treaty with the Allied forces but instead signed into an

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<sup>448</sup> “Nicaragua,” *The National Era* (Washington, D.C.), February 5, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026752/1857-02-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>449</sup> “Filibustering,” *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (New Lisbon, OH), April 11, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1857-04-11/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). The *Anti-Slavery Bugle* published an article that it contributed to *Putnam’s Monthly*.

<sup>450</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 393.

<sup>451</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 403.

agreement with Commander H. Davis, a United States naval officer, his terms for removal from Rivas. Walker and sixteen officers embarked from San Juan del Sur on the *St. Mary's* to Panama, where they embarked for the United States. As part of this agreement, Captain Davis pledged to protect the natives of Central America who supported Walker. Thus, Walker left Nicaragua without admitting defeat, nor did Walker agree to a truce with his enemies.

Despite his failures, the regeneration narrative allowed William Walker to return to the United States an illustrious hero almost everywhere he went. Even newspapers that were once critical of Walker highlighted his celebratory status. Upon his arrival in New York on June 16, the *Evening Star* proclaimed that “he met an enthusiastic reception” at City Hall.<sup>452</sup> Newspapers across the country promoted Walker’s speeches on regeneration, as he pleaded for assistance in his proposed return to Nicaragua.<sup>453</sup> At a speech in New Orleans, The *Lancaster Ledger* described the crowd as patriotic as well as “the real representatives of New Orleans,” who presented Walker with shouts of support that “waked the far off echoes.”<sup>454</sup>

As William Walker toured the United States, he proposed his return to Central America. As Charles Doubleday stated, “[n]o sooner had General Walker reached the United States than he began fitting out an expedition to re-enter Nicaragua and resume

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<sup>452</sup> “Gen. Walker’s Reception,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), June 17, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1857-06-17/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>453</sup> “General Walker’s Return to Nicaragua,” *Weekly North Carolina Standard* (Raleigh, N.C.), June 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84045030/1857-06-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>454</sup> “General Walker at New Orleans,” *The Lancaster Ledger* (Lancaster, S.C.), June 17, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026900/1857-06-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

the rights and powers of which he so resolutely maintained he had been wrongfully deprived.”<sup>455</sup> The American media eagerly covered the possibility of future regeneration missions. In June, *The Weekly North Carolina Standard* highlighted Walker’s call for regeneration, in which Walker declared “[i]t was left for us to Americanize Central America,” while asking “[o]n whom rested the right of regenerating the amalgamated race?”<sup>456</sup> Even if Walker had failed, Americans still desired the fulfillment of the same promises that he offered.

Such coverage only amplified as the months grew. Some newspapers, such as *The Independent Press* and the *New Orleans Delta*, tracked the movement of Walker’s key officers in anticipation for a return campaign. The *Delta*, in September, believed that Colonel Samuel A. Lockridge had prepared a second army of five hundred men for a return to Nicaragua.<sup>457</sup> By October, other newspapers reported numbers of men as high as two thousand and monies over \$200,000 in financing.<sup>458</sup>

Not all of Walker’s former supporters believed that a return campaign would occur. In July, the *New York Herald* posited that Walker left an impression in New Orleans that he would “soon be back in Nicaragua, and re-conquer all that he lost.” However, it lamented that President Buchanan showed no sign of “touching Central America” and that he had already “exhausted his resources.” It concluded that “all this

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<sup>455</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons The Knickerbocker Press, 1886), 163.

<sup>456</sup> “Gen. Walker’s Return to Nicaragua,” *Weekly North Carolina Standard* (Raleigh, N.C.), June 17, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84045030/1857-06-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>457</sup> “Lockridge and Walker,” *The Independent Press* (Abbeville C.H., S.C.), September 25, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93067882/1857-09-25/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). *The Independent Press* referenced the *New Orleans Delta*.

<sup>458</sup> “Gen. Walker,” *Southern Sentinel*, (Plaquemine, LA), October 28, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064476/1857-10-28/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

preaching of Walker's early return to Nicaragua" was "sheer humbug."<sup>459</sup> It also noted that Walker had lost much of his former "prestige," and believed that the "filibustering capitalists," would not invest further in such a campaign. Analysis from the *Herald* demonstrated that even many of his key allies, particularly in the North, were weary of the toll of the campaigns.

Southern newspapers responded to what they perceived to be the abandonment of Northern support for William Walker. New Orleans newspapers, such as the *New Orleans Courier*, continued to lead the charge in depicting the Nicaraguan mission as a Southern duty. By October, other Southern newspapers, such as the *Memphis Daily Appeal*, distributed arguments concerning the prospects of a Walker-led Nicaragua. The *Daily Appeal* stated that it had "full confidence in the final success of the Nicaraguan cause." It contended that the Northern press entertained "its readers with bogus accounts. . . avowing that William Walker will never return to his adopted country." It concluded that "[n]othing, however, seems likely to mar his ultimate triumph, or to prevent a man of the General's unswerving faith [from] establishing American institutions in Nicaragua."<sup>460</sup> Thus, Southerner newspapers portrayed themselves, through their overt support for William Walker, as the guardians of American civilization.

The prospects of a second expedition re-oriented the conversation, once more, towards the regeneration of Nicaragua. As early as July, newspapers in the South correlated the large crowd attendance that General Walker attracted to his messages

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<sup>459</sup> "Gen. Walker on His Travels," *The New York Herald*, July 16, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-07-16/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>460</sup> "Gen. Walker," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, October 13, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1857-10-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

concerning “his efforts to regenerate Nicaragua.”<sup>461</sup> In September, *The Times-Picayune* reverberated General Walker’s plea and correlated the second conquest to regeneration, stating that “twenty young men, principally from Jackson, . . . go to New Orleans with a view to uniting their fortune with General Walker and aiding him in making one more effort for the regeneration of Nicaragua.”<sup>462</sup> *The New Orleans Delta* celebrated the presence of E. J. C. Kewen in the city, whom it lauded for his “untiring efforts in behalf of the regeneration of Nicaragua.”<sup>463</sup> Likewise, even newspapers critical of Walker, such as the *Evening Star*, accepted that Walker’s potential recruits sought Nicaragua’s regeneration.<sup>464</sup>

His detractors participated in this narrative, though they did not present him as a legitimate regenerator. Instead, they re-oriented the regeneration message back to the original creation of the Transit Route. New York newspapers, in particular, served as prominent promoters of the alternative message, as they attempted to dissuade future support for Walker. The *New-York Daily Tribune* described General Walker’s expedition as one of “conquest and occupation.” It contended that the “operation for introducing North American ideas and civilization into Central America,” had already begun “through the facilities given to trade by the Transit route.” It correlated the actions of Commodore Vanderbilt’s Accessory Transit Company to the “rapid extension throughout

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<sup>461</sup> “Arrival of Gen. Walker,” *Nashville Union and American*, July 7, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1857-07-07/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>462</sup> “For Nicaragua,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), September 28, 1857.

<sup>463</sup> “Personal Intelligence,” *The New York Herald*, December 12, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-12-12/ed-1/seq-8/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). *The New York Herald* references a publication in *The New Orleans Delta*.

<sup>464</sup> “Filibustering Movement at the South,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), October 9, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1857-10-09/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Central America of the coffee cultivation” that occurred. It then argued that Walker both failed “in his own enterprise of force, violence, and robbery,” and had “broken up the peaceful commercial system that preceded him,” contending that the Americans in Nicaragua “felt the blighting effect of his presence.”<sup>465</sup>

Similarly, though *The New York Herald* had once supported Walker, it, too, returned to a Vanderbilt-oriented regeneration message. The *Herald* enthusiastically commented that “the filibustering commodores are about to take our advice, and unite in one grand scheme for regenerating Nicaragua and re-opening the Transit route.” It forgave Vanderbilt for his previous transgressions against Nicaragua, stating that “the Accessory Transit Route Company was sort of a tender upon the big project of the canal, and, under the management of Commodore Vanderbilt and Joe White, was to do all the business until the carrying trade should grow large enough to demand the canal.” It then contended that William Walker’s anticipated “grand dash to Nicaragua” with “three thousand Georgia militia” could “prove to be a wet blanket” for Vanderbilt’s new plan for restoring the Transit Route.<sup>466</sup>

Such reports evinced American fears about the fragility of their access to California. They also served as a response to the new Nicaraguan government’s stance on filibustering. After Walker’s removal, a new canal and transit contract re-opened access to Nicaragua for American passengers. However, the new government threatened its

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<sup>465</sup> *The New-York Daily Tribune*, October 27, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030213/1857-10-27/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>466</sup> “The New Combinations Relative to the Nicaraguan Transit Route,” *The New York Herald*, September 11, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1857-09-11/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

closure if filibustering continued. On August 31, 1857, the new Nicaraguan government declared:

From the moment that such freebooters may make their appearance, and that it shall be known that they are preparing a new invasion, or that in effect they intend such against the Republic or against the other States of Central America, the Transit shall be suspended, as all the effects of the agreement entered into with the Maritime Canal Company on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>467</sup>

Thus, regardless of Walker's motives or any regeneration ideals harbored by his supporters, his continued interference threatened the stability of the best route to California.

Nevertheless, in November, Walker attempted his second regeneration campaign. As *The True Delta* later contended, Walker made no effort to hide this scheme and made his plans "very public," with a headquarters "familiar to everyone [sic] in New Orleans."<sup>468</sup> As the festering rumors of this possible and increasingly likely campaign proliferated, the United States government decided to take action against Walker. On November 10, 1857, a United States Marshall attempted to detain Walker with charges of violating United States neutrality laws. Newspapers quickly circulated information that Walker had been detained, but that, after acquiring the services of Pierre Soulé, he was released on bond.<sup>469</sup> Walker then escaped with four hundred men on board the steamship *Fashion* with, as the *Daily Nashville Patriot* described, "an immense quantity of arms,

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<sup>467</sup> Peter F. Stout, *Nicaragua*, 236-237.

<sup>468</sup> "General Walker's Escape," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), November 18, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-11-19/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>469</sup> "General Walker's Escape," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), November 18, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-11-19/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

ammunition, and provisions.”<sup>470</sup> As Laurence Greene explains, many of Walker’s crew onboard the *Fashion* were veterans, including six of the original “immortals.” Walker also brought with him the former editor of *El Nicaraguense*, John Tabor, to revitalize his precious newspaper.<sup>471</sup>

French and British ministers successfully protested the United States’ perceived inactions against Walker. As the *Nashville Union and American* reported, their ministers implied that “the escape of Walker from our shores lies in the weakness and inefficiency of our government.”<sup>472</sup> Such protests and the media’s capturing of it fueled the United States government to take action. *The Washington Union* asserted that President James Buchanan conveyed “the assurance that this government would not permit any armed bodies of men to depart from its coast with an intention of making war upon any other neighboring people” and declared “that the administration has been in earnest in attempting to arrest the hostile expedition of Walker against Nicaragua.”<sup>473</sup> Thus, the United States’ forces prepared to meet Walker in Greytown.

Walker arrived at Greytown on November 24, 1857. However, he slipped past the *Saratoga*, which the United States navy had sent there to protect the Transit Route from him. Instead, Walker landed his forces at the mouth of the Colorado River with the hopes

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<sup>470</sup> *Daily Nashville Patriot*, November 13, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn96091000/1857-11-13/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>471</sup> Laurence Greene, *The Filibuster: The Career of William Walker* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1937), 305-306.

<sup>472</sup> “Protest Against the Walker Expedition, &C.” *Nashville Union and American*, December 5, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1857-12-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>473</sup> “Walker and the Federal Officers,” *The Washington Union*, December 3, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82006534/1857-12-03/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

of capturing the Transit Route.<sup>474</sup> Ultimately, in early December, Captain Hiram Paulding of the United States navy captured Walker and his forces, took them prisoner and returned them to New Orleans to stand trial for violating the neutrality laws.<sup>475</sup> Despite the efforts of the British Consul to push for their prosecution, the people of New Orleans and Mobile saw the regenerators, as Charles Doubleday stated, as “the heroes of the hour.”<sup>476</sup> After many postponements, the trial occurred in May 1858, which resulted in a mistrial. Ten jury members voted for an acquittal and two voted for conviction.<sup>477</sup> This failure to convict Walker encouraged a renewal of spirits within the Gulf South inhabitants to fulfill his mission in Central America.

Almost immediately upon Walker’s return to the United States, his supporters revitalized the regeneration narrative. At a dinner held in Richmond, Virginia, in honor of Walker, people toasted “to the progress of free institutions.” Walker continued to describe his actions as part of a larger “revolution inaugurated in Central America” while contending that U.S. naval actions against him had twice inhibited his attempts to “Americanize Central America.” At that dinner, James A. Season declared that Walker “sought only to regenerate” while comparing the Nicaraguan affair to the history of Virginian settlers, claiming “Virginians were the pioneers of that law.” He stated that Walker sought “the regeneration of Central America by introduction of a higher order of civilization.”<sup>478</sup> Even, John Slidell, a political rival to Pierre Soulé and critic of Walker,

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<sup>474</sup> Greene, *The Filibuster*, 306

<sup>475</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 164.

<sup>476</sup> Doubleday, Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 196.

<sup>477</sup> “Gen. Walker’s Trial,” *Nashville Patriot*, June 4, 1858. *Chronicling America*.

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85033711/1858-06-04/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>478</sup> “Dinner to Gen. Walker,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), January 15, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1858-01-15/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

described the entirety of his military actions as a “mission of regenerating Mexico and Central America.”<sup>479</sup> Newspapers supportive of Walker latched onto Slidell’s insistence that he “understood the regeneration of Central America.”<sup>480</sup> Perhaps at this point in time more than any other did Americans depict him as not just a regenerator but the most prominent regenerator in the world.

As divisive of a public figure as William Walker had become, he still managed a third expedition. However, even before this third campaign, rumors proliferated that Walker had set his eyes on the Yucatan as part of a grander strategy to conquer Cuba.<sup>481</sup> Such rumors opened up the discourse about the sincerity of Walker’s professed motives. Nevertheless, once more, Walker successfully led an expedition out of Mobile for Nicaragua. In late 1858, Walker chartered the services of Captain Harry Maury of the *Susan* to carry a crew of one hundred men to meet him in Omoa, Honduras, a town west of La Ceiba, near the Caribbean Coast. After escaping a revenue cutter in Mobile, the *Susan* passed Cape San Antonio as it prepared for its course. However, the schooner struck a coral reef on December 16, 1858, at Glovers, just sixty miles from Belize, which impaled the ship.<sup>482</sup> After being stranded for three days, fishermen rescued the passengers and brought them to an island where they remained for eight more days. There, the

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<sup>479</sup> John Slidell, “The Arrest of William Walker: Speech of Hon. John Slidell, of Louisiana on Neutrality Laws, delivered in the United States Senate, April 8, 1858,” (Washington, D.C., 1858), 3. Despite acknowledging Walker’s regeneration mission, John Slidell proved to be very critical of William Walker. He criticized Walker for his strategies as much as he did for his failures. I posit that much of this criticism rested on the on-going feud between him and Pierre Soulé, for they often found themselves on opposite ends of domestic and foreign policies, despite similar motives and goals.

<sup>480</sup> *The Opelousas Patriot*, May 1, 1858.

<sup>481</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, September 4, 1858. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1858-09-04/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>482</sup> “Important from Central America,” *The New York Herald*, January 3, 1859. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1859-01-03/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 165.

British sloop of war *Basilisk* carried them back to Mobile, where they arrived on January 1, 1859.<sup>483</sup> Upon landing in Mobile, the city hoisted the Nicaraguan flag as its citizens greeted Captain Maury and prompted him to give a public speech.<sup>484</sup> Despite another failure, Gulf South inhabitants remained adamant in their support for him.

Again, William Walker's supporters relied on a narrative that highlighted his relationship with the *Democraticos* to legitimize his motives. In early January, newspapers erroneously reported the successful landing of the *Susan* at Puerto Cabello, Honduras. Such coverage came with news that the Democrats in Nicaragua awaited Walker's march from Honduras. These reports further added that Democrats in Honduras aided the landing party.<sup>485</sup> Despite the failure, the American press also continued to attach the term regenerator to William Walker. In an article from March 1859, referring to William Walker's conversion to Catholicism and pursuit of priesthood, *The Southern Enterprise* described "Father Walker" as "the regenerator of Nicaragua."<sup>486</sup> Such reports continued to portray William Walker as a viable solution to Nicaraguan political affairs.

In response to continued support for William Walker, a former soldier of his, named David Deaderick III, published a scathing criticism against Walker through the *Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, titled, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," starting in late 1859. Deaderick, under the alias Samuel Absalom, served as a key

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<sup>483</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 165.

<sup>484</sup> "Return of the Filibusters to Mobile," *Orleans Independent Standard* (Irasburgh, VT), January 7, 1859. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84022548/1859-01-07/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>485</sup> "The Schooner Susan- Landing of the Filibusters, &C," *The Daily Exchange*, January 3, 1859. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83009573/1859-01-03/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>486</sup> "Father Walker," *The Southern Enterprise*, March 31, 1859. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85027003/1859-03-31/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

detractor to Walker's presence in Nicaragua. Deaderick did not oppose filibustering in Nicaragua; he did not oppose the regeneration of Nicaragua, nor was he even against any of the imperial implications or economic exploitations associated with Walker's war. On the contrary, Deaderick fully supported these ideals. Instead, he completely challenged the validity of Walker's rule. He pleaded for the public to seek alternative leadership and used his own experience in Nicaragua to highlight Walker's callousness, ineptness, and evils. He attacked the health message associated with Walker, stating that his physicians neglected their patients and that everyone was sick from fevers. His memoir stated how his soldiers despised him as a leader and how Walker failed to live up to the ideals of liberation and civility that he proclaimed in his fundraising campaigns. Thus, while Walker recruited for his final expedition to Central America, Deaderick wrote his memoir to deter potential recruits from joining Walker.

As a response to such criticism, William Walker published his own memoir, *The War in Nicaragua*, in March 1860, while in Mobile. It is clear through Walker's account that he knew that he had to address Deaderick's message of health. It is also clear that he knew that he could not deny the presence of cholera, unlike Wells, who dismissed its importance in 1856. Walker addressed the concept of regeneration, the presence of yellow fever, cholera, and miasmas as well as his ability to provide health care for not just his own soldiers but for the enemies as well. Walker was quite explicit about the importance of filibusters as agents of regeneration in Spanish America and described Anglo-Americans as an "element" necessary for the regeneration of Central America.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 25.

He depicted the white race as necessary to regulate the varied races in Nicaragua.<sup>488</sup>

Walker postulated that regeneration would come from the regulation of labor based on African slavery.

The American press responded to this publication as expected. Supporters of William Walker admired the book while highlighting its objectivity. In Louisiana, *The Bossier Banner* praised Walker for keeping his book “free from self-glorification.”<sup>489</sup> Walker’s critics, on the other hand, lambasted the new publication. *The New York Herald*, for example, contended that the memoir “would prove fatal to his reputation,” contending that “it shows that a man may occupy a large space in the eye of the world without having much in him.”<sup>490</sup> The *Alexandria Gazette* stated that “[t]he work reminds us. . . that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.”<sup>491</sup> Such reviews merely served as reminders more than as illuminating additions to the discourse on Nicaraguan regeneration.

Nevertheless, with his new book published, William Walker prepared for his final expedition in 1860. Following the release of his memoir, supporters of Walker revitalized their efforts to depict the grey-eyed man of destiny in a favorable light. The *Pomeroy Weekly Telegraph* compared Walker to George Washington, calling Washington the

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<sup>488</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 252.

<sup>489</sup> “Gen. Walker’s Book,” *The Bossier Banner* (Bellevue, Bossier Parish, LA.), April 13, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85034235/1860-04-13/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>490</sup> “Notices of New Publication,” *The New York Herald*, April 17, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1860-04-17/ed-1/seq-7/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>491</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, May 7, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025007/1860-05-07/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



“father of his country,” and calling Walker the “Father of Nicaragua.”<sup>492</sup> However, most Americans had, by this point, already crafted firm opinions about him, and such opinions likely did little to sway people to alter them.

Meanwhile, the United States government re-secured American transit through Nicaragua. Since the Allied forces first ousted General Walker, the United States had pursued avenues to secure the route away from both foreign governments and private entities. Finally, in the summer of 1860, Congress ratified a treaty that had been looming over Walker’s future prospects. American newspapers celebrated how the new treaty “placed on a secure footing,” the Transit Route that had, for several years, caused anxiety at a national level. The new treaty stipulated that the route would be protected by American soldiers under direct supervision of the United States government.<sup>493</sup> Such news not only relieved many American travelers and businessmen, but it also made the need for supporting Walker less important for those who considered stability of the route to be the top priority in the regeneration of Central America.

Despite the dwindling significance of Walker’s own regeneration message, in June 1860, Walker embarked from New Orleans for Central America. Almost immediately, news reports correctly circulated that Walker schemed to interfere in the political unrest in the Bay Islands, off of Honduras. Newspapers circulated reports from the *New Orleans Delta* that described the tension that developed from the treaty signed between Great Britain and Honduras that transferred control over the islands to

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<sup>492</sup> John Phoenix, “George Washington,” *Pomeroy Weekly Telegraph* (Pomeroy, Ohio), May 1, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038184/1860-05-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>493</sup> “Nicaragua,” *Yorkville Enquirer* (York, S.C.), July 5, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026925/1860-07-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Honduras. The *Delta* reported that General Walker and his soldiers planned on using the Bay Islands to open “a new route for re-establishing themselves in Nicaragua” as well as to overturn “a Government hostile to their views in Honduras” with “the substitution of a friendly one in the stead.” It further emphasized the presence of Americans on the islands to legitimize Walker’s interference. It once more connected the expedition to Walker’s “grand scheme of regenerating Central America, politically, socially and commercially.”<sup>494</sup>

The expansion of the scope of Walker’s regeneration mission created conflicting narratives about Walker’s pursuits. In New York, newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, insisted that Walker still pursued Nicaragua.<sup>495</sup> In an article from an Aspinwall correspondent describing disgruntled patrons of Vanderbilt, *The New York Herald* stated, “the only remedy left is for Walker to take Nicaragua and grant a transit route to some other company.” *The New York Herald* also published reports that stated that Walker had already left Honduras for Nicaragua and had “taken the city of Granada.”<sup>496</sup>

The conflated news reports created an atmosphere that encouraged high expectations for the final expedition. *The New York Times*’s Aspinwall correspondent informed readers that “the ultimate destiny of all of these Central American States will be nothing more than an application to the United States for protection or admission into their confederacy.” It further stated that “[t]his is the way the United States protect [sic]

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<sup>494</sup> “Gen. Walker and the Bay Islands,” *Nashville Union and American*, June 15, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1860-06-15/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>495</sup> “From New York,” *Nashville Union and American*, July 27, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1860-07-27/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>496</sup> “Our Aspinwall Correspondence,” *The New York Herald*, August 4, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1860-08-04/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

and encourage [sic] American enterprise.”<sup>497</sup> Newspapers, such as the *Weekly Standard*, anticipated that Walker would receive “considerable reinforcements” in Guatemala.<sup>498</sup>

The American press provided hopeful news of Walker’s progress. After several months of planning, Walker arrived at Ruatan on June 25, 1860. *The Western Democrat* reported that he arrived on board the schooner *John Taylor*. There, he met approximately one hundred men who had been gathering there in small numbers throughout the duration of his planning. They had been arriving on fruit vessels in small numbers to conceal their plans. On June 27, Walker boarded the entirety of his party onto the *John Taylor* and prepared for the initial assault.<sup>499</sup> By August, the *Alexandria Gazette* reported approximately an exaggerated number of five hundred men under his command.<sup>500</sup> The myth of Walker continued.

However, with such hopeful news reports came falsehoods that veiled Walker’s dire situation. Newspapers, relying on New Orleans correspondents, falsely reported that Walker had sailed from Ruatan to Nicaragua with this new and enlarged company of soldiers on July 20.<sup>501</sup> In Baltimore, *The Daily Exchange* erroneously reported that

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<sup>497</sup> “Our Aspinwall Correspondence,” *The New York Herald*, August 4, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1860-08-04/ed-1/seq-5/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>498</sup> “More Filibustering,” *Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, NC), August 8, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045706/1860-08-08/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>499</sup> “More Filibustering,” *The Western Democrat* (Charlotte, NC), August 6, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020712/1860-08-06/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). Despite the same name as the aforementioned article from the *Weekly Standard*, this article is an abbreviated version of the one published just two days later. It does not offer the same details about people’s expectations as the one noted in the above citation. However, much of this article was re-published in it.

<sup>500</sup> “Movements of Gen. Walker,” *Alexandria Gazette* (Washington, D.C.), August 8, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025007/1860-08-08/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>501</sup> “Gen. Walker Gone to Nicaragua,” *Wilmington Journal* (Wilmington, NC), August 9, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026536/1860-08-09/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Walker had sailed from the Yucatan with five hundred men after departing from Ruatan on June 26. It inflated his strength to suggest that he had five vessels under his command and suggested that in Yucatan, Walker “received large reinforcements of men.” However, it, too, suggested that Walker still planned to reach Nicaragua.<sup>502</sup> These manifestations largely represented the renewed hope that many Americans had for the regeneration of the entire region as they continued to attribute support where he did not receive any.

In fact, Walker’s situation only appeared hopeful. In reality, the myth could not save Walker and his crew from a series of disasters that reduced his chances for success. On June 22, 1860, approximately 125 men left New Orleans onboard the schooner *Clifton*. Walker remained behind to depart two days later. After passing Cape San Antonio, the *Clifton* made it as far as Balize before being captured by a British man-of-war.<sup>503</sup> Thus, much of Walker’s forces exited the battlefield before operations began. Nevertheless, Walker still had a considerable number of supplies and soldiers at his disposal, and the plan continued.

Walker failed to establish his hold in the Bay Islands. The British maintained firm control over the area and were already prepared for his landing. Thus, they, instead, chose to make a surprise landing at the Honduran port of Truxillo. With about 91 men, Walker landed there on August 6, 1860. At Truxillo, they captured a fort.<sup>504</sup> This became their base of operations as they attempted to re-adjust their plans to account for their losses.

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<sup>502</sup> “The Nicaraguan Expedition,” *The Daily Exchange* (Baltimore, MD), August 13, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83009573/1860-08-13/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>503</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 166.

<sup>504</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 167.

Despite the advantageous control over the fort, Walker failed to gain ground. While attending to the wounded and gathering information, Walker waited in the fort for more reinforcements from New Orleans. However, over a dozen British ships patrolled the area and deterred and repulsed all ships carrying reinforcements. Instead of reinforcements, two British men-of-wars approached the bay on August 12. They came ashore and offered Walker his terms of surrender. Meanwhile, the Hondurans sent two regiments of infantry to surround Truxillo.<sup>505</sup>

Walker and his soldiers endeavored to escape, but they failed. Walker engaged the enemy Hondurans in skirmishes as they attempted to break free from containment. However, the Hondurans dwindled the American forces to about one-third of its original numbers, and the remaining American soldiers also suffered from “coast fever,” including Walker. They eventually agreed to surrender to the British *Icarus*.<sup>506</sup> The British, in turn, handed Walker over to the Honduras who had him executed on September 12, 1860. Thus, Walker’s regeneration efforts came to a final end on the eve of Southern secession from the United States. He died an afterthought to what became a much bigger issue for his Gulf South supporters, a possible civil war. He is buried where he was executed, at Trujillo, Honduras.

### Conclusion

Throughout the duration of his final expedition, William Walker did, indeed, receive constant reinforcements and support. As late as September 10, 1860,

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<sup>505</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 170-171.

<sup>506</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 171-175.

reinforcement expeditions continued to form in New Orleans.<sup>507</sup> And, as Walker's personal correspondences demonstrate, he continued to receive financial support even in the North, especially from New York. Throughout the duration of Walker's tenure in Mexico and Central America, people continued to rally behind the message of regeneration that compelled Americans to intervene in neighboring Central American republics.

Even Walker's critics relied on this same message of regeneration while criticizing Walker. From *The New York Herald* to Deaderick's autobiographical account in *The Atlantic Monthly*, critics of Walker espoused the same missions of introducing the American element to Central America. They talked of the need for civilization and the benefits of Anglo-American intervention in the Greater Caribbean.

Even before the Allied coalition successfully removed Walker in May 1857, Walker's allies began their attempts to pinpoint his demise. Many contemporaries linked the downfall of Walker to his slavery decree. At a meeting in Houston in March 1857, Walker's allies decried that "the present condition of affairs in Nicaragua has been caused mainly by the decree of Gen. Walker reinstating slavery in that Republic."<sup>508</sup> Others identified Commodore Vanderbilt's interference as the catalyst to his dissent. Newspapers, such as the *Memphis Bulletin*, argued that a "powerful opposition has

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<sup>507</sup> "Markets by Telegraph," *Daily Nashville Patriot*, September 12, 1860. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025725/1860-09-12/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>508</sup> *Nashville Union and American*, March 21, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1857-03-21/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

arrayed itself in New York against” Walker because of “the person and influence of Cornelius Vanderbilt.”<sup>509</sup>

These factors certainly contributed to what *The New Orleans Daily Creole* decried as Northern cowardice, but these reasons are not enough to explain why William Walker failed. The watershed moment in the War in Nicaragua occurred with the destruction of Granada and cascaded into the loss of the Transit Route in December 1856. During that period, the quality of life for the average soldier under Walker dropped considerably. Walker failed as a steward of regeneration. Desertions began spiking after the destruction of Granada and continued to increase until his removal. Deserters brought back news to the United States of the denigrating conditions, which provided his detractors with fuel to attack Walker’s ability to regenerate the region. Such failures evinced Walker’s inability to maintain stability in the region, his inability to control the most advantageous route that Americans had to reach California, and his inability to steward those willing to risk their lives for the cause. Thus, the destruction of Granada commenced a series of events that questioned the sincerity of the mission.

As a response to these shortcomings, Walker lost press allies in the North and even began receiving criticism in the South. *The New York Herald’s* wavering stances against Walker since the initial feud between him and Vanderbilt hint that slavery, as an applied institution, was not enough to sever Walker’s alliances in the North. *The New York Herald* did not re-abandon their position of regeneration through Walker again until the stories of Walker’s failures as a leader emerged in early 1857. Then, they replaced the

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<sup>509</sup> “To the Friends of Nicaragua,” *Nashville Union and American*, May 9, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038518/1857-05-09/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Walker-driven regeneration narrative with one that placed Commodore Vanderbilt as the solution to Nicaraguan stability.

Nevertheless, the regeneration narrative survived until Walker's death. Stories about Vanderbilt's betrayal, about British interference, and about the United States' inactions and improper actions provided enough reasons to justify that Walker should not be faulted for his failures. Walker, when not enduring interferences from others, could be counted on to regenerate the region. Thus, Walker successfully gathered enough troops to organize three more times while American press allies continued to echo the message of regeneration to aid in his recruitment. All of this happened with the help of a sizable portion of the American press, whose shared ideals for a regenerated Nicaragua compelled them to find medical, political, and racial reasons for supporting the grey-eyed man of destiny.



## CHAPTER V THE GREY-EYED DOCTOR OF DESTINY

Frequent change of blood and of location seem to be essential to a continuous advance of mankind to higher characteristics. . .

The great cities of the East have mostly outlived the vigor of their existence, and must give place to others to be built up in less impure localities – distant from the reeking accumulations of filth, which render them intolerable to civilized people, and so work their extinction or expulsion – “Growth and Decay of Nations,” *De Bow’s Review*, January 1861<sup>510</sup>

### Introduction

On the eve of the American Civil War, *De Bow’s Review*, the leading journal on Southern and Western expansion, published an intricate argument explaining why civilizations perish. In it, the journal pressed a health message. It correlated the degradation of a society to the wastes and filth unique to a population. It concluded that the only way to preserve a civilization was to introduce new races to a region as a means to alter the makeup of the grime and debris produced within the city. It contended that the best races to be introduced to a decaying region are those with the best advancements and, as expected, concluded that the people of Western Europe provided the best elements to revitalize denigrated communities.

Perhaps ironically, in this same issue, *De Bow’s Review* criticized the military actions of the recently deceased William Walker, a former contributor to the journal who preached his own health message. In the previous article, one about Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton, and empire building, the journal referenced the grey-eyed man of destiny, stating “[w]e are no admirers of filibusterism and see nothing to regret in the

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<sup>510</sup> “Growth and Decay of Nations,” *De Bow’s Review* Volume 30, January, 1861: 19-30.

close of Walker's career."<sup>511</sup> Yet, the journal adopted a health message that the presence of Anglo-Americans in barbarous domains would regenerate the decaying lands through the introduction of health codes and land improvement.

In fact, *De Bow's Review* reaffirmed many aspects of Walker's health message. Walker contended that he would improve the healthiness of Central America through the introduction of the Anglo-American "element."<sup>512</sup> Likewise, the journal stated that "[t]he life of cities. . . may be prolonged by more perfect drainage; by enlarged parks and open grounds. . . and by their inhabitants coming under the influence of a better knowledge of the laws of health."<sup>513</sup> It then argued that "[t]he earth tires of the same races of men on the same spot," while stating that "[m]igration to other and distant lands, and intermixture with better races, may infuse new vigor, and prolong the existence of," the native inhabitants of a decaying spot. It then concluded "that the best breed of men of Europe is to prevail in all Eastern and Southern Asia, and throughout Africa and the Americas,"<sup>514</sup> Thus, it implied that Western Europeans, particularly Anglo-Saxons, would bring the very laws of health necessary to regenerate regions.

Building from its readers' predisposition to accept the miasma theory, *De Bow's Review* suggested a similar hypothesis concerning the relationship regarding people, soil, filth and the "growth and decay of nations."<sup>515</sup> It described how each population forms "an atmosphere peculiar to each city," that is "more or less injurious to human life." This

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<sup>511</sup> "Growth and Decay of Nations," *De Bow's Review* Volume 30, January, 1861: 19-30.

<sup>512</sup> William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile, AL: S. H. Goetzel & Co., 1860), 25. Walker insisted that *Democratico* leaders such as Maximo Jerez sought American aid against the *Legitimistas* as a way "of getting an element into the society of Nicaragua for the regeneration of that part of Central America."

<sup>513</sup> "Growth and Decay of Nations," *De Bow's Review*, 20.

<sup>514</sup> "Growth and Decay of Nations," *De Bow's Review*, 25.

<sup>515</sup> "Growth and Decay of Nations," *De Bow's Review*, 19.

atmosphere, it posited, created “malarial influences” from the “decay of profuse and neglected vegetation” nurtured in these unique environs.<sup>516</sup> It contended that Europeans, through the knowledge of drainage, had learned to prolong the existence of their own civilizations by allowing running water to flush injurious aspects of these localities away from the major cities. This argument served as the crux of why the journal felt Anglo-Saxons could reinvigorate the civilizations of lesser races. In doing so, *De Bow’s* provided a more refined version of William Walker’s own promises of regeneration. It demonstrated that, despite differences in opinions on how to carry out this mission of regeneration, the actual ideals that Walker correlated to his expeditions in Nicaragua reverberated throughout American, and particularly Southern, intellectual circles.

This chapter seeks to explain how William Walker and his allies utilized Walker’s medical background to comfort American readers that he could and would regenerate Nicaragua. The message of regeneration remained an ever-reoccurring aspect of the debate about his legitimacy. And, even when the media turned against him, they, as evinced by *De Bow’s Review*, often retained almost identical ideals about Anglo-American interference in Central America. The anxieties created by the raging presence of yellow fever in the Gulf South and along the Eastern Seaboard combined with the presence of cholera throughout the Transit Route made Americans, particularly Southerners, fearful of the Greater Caribbean.

William Walker knew that Americans would judge the success of all stabilization attempts in Nicaragua by the abilities of the regenerators to provide safe and stable access to the Transit Route. He relied on his medical expertise to provide a tangible path to

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<sup>516</sup> “Growth and Decay of Nations,” *De Bow’s Review*, 22.

secure Nicaragua's stability. While Walker had the support of elite native allies, he successfully implemented health care procedures that allowed him a distinct military edge against his enemies. He demonstrated that his strategies could be applied to natives and migrants, civilians and soldiers. By combating cholera and providing healthcare for even his enemies, Walker positioned himself as the one who could guarantee safe and healthy passage through Nicaragua. William Walker and his allies, in trying to garner support, continually attempted to re-direct readers to the medical merits that made the grey-eyed man of destiny the most logical choice for the regeneration of Nicaragua. Though at times American print media utilized health reports to illuminate his failures in Nicaragua, Walker and his literary supporters relied on the realm of public discourse to use those very same examples to evince why Nicaragua needed him.

Detractors of William Walker, on the other hand, often attacked those very points of discourse with their own counter-rhetoric. Their decisions to challenge the narrative instead of ignoring it illuminated how important both sides considered his ability to provide healthcare was for determining his overall success. His critics highlighted his inability to stamp out cholera along the Transit Route. They worried about the appearance of yellow fever and its effects on the American phalanx. Some also contended that the poor treatment and care provided by Walker to his own men suggested that he and his allies distorted the stewardship that they espoused as so central to understanding the grey-eyed doctor.

While Walker operated with the support of a native network of allies, the potency of this regeneration image allowed him to veil his many military deficiencies that ultimately cost him his life and the loss of Nicaragua. Newspapers supportive of Walker

gravitated towards the potential future of his rule and dismissed the actualities. Most, as demonstrated in previous chapters, were influenced heavily by Walker's own newspaper, *El Nicaraguense*, primarily and by his New Orleans press allies, such as *The Daily Crescent* and *New Orleans Daily Creole*, secondarily. Regardless of William Walker's shortcomings, however, he did, in fact, believe in the message. It drove him and several thousand followers to act in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras. It ultimately, as seen in *De Bow's Review*, outlasted him as an idea and strategy for Southern development.

### The Creation of a Grey-Eyed Doctor of Destiny

As stated in Chapter Two, William Walker was not the first regenerator that American media correlated to a message of healthcare. The American press had, after all, pontificated on the sanitary conditions of the new Vanderbilt line of steamers in an effort to convince the American public to look to Nicaragua for their travel needs. Yet, the media promoted these early sanitation narratives before a real health crisis reached Nicaragua. Before its civil war erupted in 1854, the media promoted the healthiness of the new transit line in relationship to the unhealthiness of the alternative routes available. Vanderbilt provided a solution to crises elsewhere, particularly in Brazil and Panama. However, by the time that William Walker landed in Nicaragua, the American media had stopped portraying Nicaragua as the ultimate solution but had, instead, already commenced a narrative that pushed Americans to look for ways to regenerate Nicaragua.

Doctor William Walker certainly understood that his medical background provided him a particular regeneration persona that other colonizers, such as Cornelius Vanderbilt and Henry Lawrence Kinney, could not achieve in the eyes of potential supporters. Unlike the other Anglo-American regenerators in Nicaragua as well as the

political and military elites engaged in the civil war, Walker could provide medical expertise to combat the spread of disease in Nicaragua. Walker understood the medical questions and concerns that drove people to intervene in Central America. He had knowledge of how to diminish the presence of cholera. And, most importantly, he utilized his knowledge to improve strategically American colonization efforts in Nicaragua while consolidating his own power. He particularly focused on American concerns that the civil war had made the Transit Route unhealthy for Americans. Thus, Walker almost immediately prioritized the well-being of his own soldiers to demonstrate the Christian stewardship that Americans came to expect from doctors.

Medically trained in both the United States and Europe, particularly in Paris, William Walker arrived in Nicaragua mentally equipped with an array of ideas about combatting disease. European medical schools deemphasized the more holistic approaches of combatting diseases and focused more on understanding the direct causes. Thus, while physicians trained in the United States often still correlated the symptoms of diseases to a whole host of interactions, including the climate, the region's immoral failings, and the individual's wrongdoings, European physicians had already begun stressing environmental factors that triggered diseases as well as providing more weight on the distinction of diseases. The exposure to both systems of thought provided Walker with the intellectual background necessary to create a medical argument capable of reaching out to a heterogeneous population.

Just as his European training provided him strategies to combat disease, his American training and upbringing informed him about how he would be judged. The heart of medical knowledge in antebellum American medicine rested upon the belief that

victims of the poorer classes caused, if not deserved, their own fates. In fact, most victims of epidemics came from the working and lower classes of society and often lived in dense neighborhoods that exposed them to new germs carried across by immigrants and sailors. Privileged members of society effectively correlated their unsanitary living conditions with diseases. Without an understanding of contagions and germ theory, physicians suspected that a collective accumulation of environmental factors manifested symptoms representative of greater non-specific ailments related to morality.<sup>517</sup> Physicians treated diseases as symptoms and not as causes, accepted notions of predisposition, and viewed the actions of the afflicted as the ultimate cause of the environmental denigration that allowed for them to become stricken.<sup>518</sup> Though physicians became better at identifying the specificity of disease in the 1840s, their treatments did not reflect this shift. Instead, physicians maintained a rationale that explained the disproportionate suffering that plagued the lower class by highlighting visibly apparent and understandable factors that separated the victims from the philanthropic caregivers who assisted them.

Equipped with his Medical Doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, Doctor Walker understood this aspect of American thought and, more importantly, comprehended the expectations that came with it. First and foremost, he knew that Americans would judge his success based on how well he shielded his colonizers from the ravages of cholera in Nicaragua. The *mestizo* leaders and peasants, as the logic followed, likely deserved their fate for allowing instability to occur in what was supposed to be a healthy place. However, Americans also believed that disease could be spread

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<sup>517</sup> Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6.

<sup>518</sup> Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years*, 15.

from one locale or population to another through the propagation of *materies morbi*, an ambiguous term referring to the presence of usually mysterious or unidentified vectors capable of transmitting the disease to new people and locations.<sup>519</sup>

William Walker's first test came in July 1855. The cholera outbreak in Realejo that killed his ally, Don Pedro Aguirre, jeopardized future recruitment efforts for the young colonel. He took great interest in the range of this strand and its potential danger to future American recruits. Though most Americans came through the Transit Route, Realejo served the *Democraticos* as a strategic center for transporting material and soldiers along the Pacific Coast. They found it more efficient to leave from Realejo to reach the Transit Route by boat than by land; the *Legitimistas* did not have much of a navy to stop them, and the British presence was mostly on the Caribbean Coast. Furthermore, Chinandega, which was approximately twenty miles northeast of Realejo, served as an important military center for the *Democraticos*. Thus, the presence of this disease threatened the future of the civil war.

Colonel Walker relied on his medical knowledge and military intelligence to diminish the disease's virulence against his own soldiers. Even if he could not initially protect the locals from the disease, if he could protect Americans there, he would, in turn, demonstrate the necessity of a stronger American military presence in that strategic region. In the initial months, Walker did precisely that. Though Americans had been

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<sup>519</sup> La Fayette Guild, "Report on Yellow Fever at Fort Columbus, N.Y.," *Statistical Report on the Sickness and Mortality in the United States, Compiled from the Records of the Surgeon General's Office; Embracing a Period of Five Years, From January 1855, to January 1860*. 13. Guild offers a good example of just how nebulous of a term *materies morbi* was for physicians. In his report, Guild demonstrated that experts looked for any possible piece of material, such as mattresses, to explain why yellow fever spread on only portions of the island.



present in Realejo during the outbreak, they had largely escaped it. Walker conjectured that differences in social customs best explained why cholera ravaged Nicaraguans while sparing Americans. In his memoir, Walker admitted that he could not figure out if a “more vigorous life” a “more generous meat diet,” or “greater care in sleep,” best explained the diverging results.<sup>520</sup> Similarly, Charles Doubleday blamed cholera on the “deficiency in sanitary regulations,” enacted by the native officers.<sup>521</sup> Walker relied on observations of aspects of the lives of his soldiers that he could control to diminish its presence in his camps and dismissed purely racial or moral hypotheses.

Doctor Walker took measures at once to diminish the chances of cholera affecting all Americans. Though he could not be certain if cholera was indeed contagious or if it only required the presence of *materies morbi*, Walker understood that he could better protect his soldiers by dividing them and dispersing them. He must have been quite explicit about the importance of this decision, for others observed the correlation between this decision with his greater strategy to combat disease. For example, when James Thomas, a freedman working as a barber, visited Nicaragua and delivered a letter to Walker from his father who was a client of his, he took note that “[t]he Generalissimo had his army located at different points for the preservation of their health.”<sup>522</sup> Thomas’s observation sheds light on just how aware everyone around Walker was that he took such active measures to combat disease.

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<sup>520</sup> William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 82.

<sup>521</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886), 71.

<sup>522</sup> James Thomas, *From Tennessee Slave to St. Louis Entrepreneur: The Autobiography of James Thomas*, edit. Loren Schweninger (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 137.

Doctor Walker also diligently kept track of the diets of his soldiers. Travel logs kept by the captain of his navy, Callender Irvine Fayssoux revealed that Walker maintained meticulous attention to dietary provisions.<sup>523</sup> Walker prioritized a high protein diet, which he felt provided soldiers with the vigor that protected them from cholera. Soldiers, such as Captain Samuel Laslie, were often publicly praised for their ability to procure beef.<sup>524</sup> Walker provided hearty breakfasts as often as possible.<sup>525</sup> Captain Doubleday later remarked that beef and chicken were plentiful.<sup>526</sup> Furthermore, as the war progressed and the quality of food provisions diminished to the point that his soldiers were reduced to the consumption of raw pork and mule meat, the presence of disease did increase, which only reinforced Walker's assessments. Thus, Walker believed that such management provided his soldiers the best resistant to combat cholera and made sure to emphasize these findings in his memoir in 1860.

In line with this strict discipline, William Walker also took great care in analyzing the health of his soldiers. Among the many pieces of information that Walker had his officers track in the company roster records, he had them note the signs of possible skin conditions. Walker, having been medically trained in Paris, would have been familiar with the French concept of *heredity*. Officers denoted a range of skin patterns that could give clues to what diseases lurked within their respective companies. In Paris, Walker would also have been exposed to the belief in *hérité des maladies* or *hérité*

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<sup>523</sup> Box 2, Folder 85, Callender I. Fayssoux Collection of William Walker Papers, 1856-1860 collection, Tulane Latin American Library. Henceforth, this collection will be referred to as the Fayssoux Collection.

<sup>524</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 15, 1856.

<sup>525</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 55.

<sup>526</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 117.

*pathologuie* that encouraged physicians to look for a specific cause for disease.<sup>527</sup> Thus, soldiers could be marked as having any of the following complexions: light, dark, red, sandy, ruddy, pale, yellow, grey, and sallow.<sup>528</sup> Many of these, such as light and dark, would have served only as identifying characteristics; however, conditions such as grey, yellow, and sallow would have certainly been seen as humoral imbalances. Thus, for Walker, many of these conditions served as both identifying characteristics and as clues as to the types of possible ailments harming his soldiers, even if he were unsure as to what they exactly were.

Doctor Walker also assessed the pattern of the cholera outbreak to do another thing that his rival officers and colonizers could not do- he provided an identity to the strand of cholera that attacked Realejo and Chinandega. Walker recognized the strand as being of a mild variety. He at least partially attributed this factor to explain why his rigorous regiment worked. He also tracked the spread of this particular outbreak as it moved northward from Granada and Managua to the Occidental Department.<sup>529</sup> Equally as important, Walker later in his memoir made sure to highlight this achievement to distinguish himself from his competition. By identifying the strand that seemed to leave his own soldiers unaffected as only mild, Walker juxtaposed it against “Asiatic cholera,” which both Europeans and Americans understood to be more threatening to their own health. Walker insisted this mild strand also attacked the *Democraticos* at San Juan del Sur in 1855 and led to the Costa Rican withdrawal after the Second Battle of Rivas in

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<sup>527</sup> Carlos López-Beltrán, “In the Cradle of Heredity; French Physicians and L’Hérédité Naturelle in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Journal of the History of Biology* Vol 37, Issue 1 Spring 2004, 42.

<sup>528</sup> Folder 120a, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

<sup>529</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 82.

April 1856.<sup>530</sup> Walker described how it inflicted less violent spasms than Asiatic cholera. He also insisted that its victims did not “sink so rapidly” as they did with Asiatic cholera.

Public discourse concerning contradictions to this assessment did not occur until decades later when Charles Doubleday wrote his own memoir about the War in Nicaragua. Doubleday wrote that Asiatic cholera did exist in Nicaragua. He claimed that it “came with a suddenness and violence that was in part due to the deficiency in sanitary regulations.” Doubleday suspected that its presence could be attributed to why his own health declined in Nicaragua. Nevertheless, the prolonged delay in this contradiction allowed Walker and his allies to perpetuate a narrative that depicted Walker as having actively and successfully utilized his medical education to manage the wellbeing of the American phalanx.

In regards to its reemergence in the Costa Rican camps, Walker, in his memoir, once again provided a more holistic understanding of the disease to his American readers. He knew that physicians and educated laymen still accepted variations of Hippocrates’s humor theory, which emphasized the balancing of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Though by the 1850s, public debates existed that examined the relationship between cholera and sanitation, much of the public and some physicians, still believed that different visible symptoms evinced different imbalances in the humors. Most privileged laymen and physicians perceived imbalances as God’s punishment for indecent behavior. The privileged associated the humoral symptoms of pestilence with acts against the laws of nature and those of cholera with intemperance and filth.<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 208.

<sup>531</sup> Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45.

With this understanding and likely with at least a partial acceptance of this belief, William Walker correlated the virulence of the disease against the Costa Ricans to their spiritual and moral failures, which many believed caused imbalances in the humors. Walker insisted that the Costa Ricans suffered from cholera because they lacked morale. He maintained that “[i]ts fatal effects were increased in the Costa Rican camp by the general depression of spirits which pervaded the officers as well as the men.” He asserted that American defenses in Nicaragua damaged Costa Rican confidence “after they saw the results of the first conflict,” against his American phalanx. As a result of American enterprise and resolve, the Costa Ricans lost faith in their assurance that they could “drive” the Americans out of Nicaragua with “easy marches. . . by the mere force of their numbers.”<sup>532</sup>

Buttressing this belief, William Walker carefully attributed his victories to “Providence,” which, in turn, juxtaposed Costa Rican movements and actions as ungodly. Walker contended that “Providence fits its agents for great designs by trials, and sufferings, and persecutions.”<sup>533</sup> In his inaugural address as president, which American newspapers throughout the United States published, Walker insisted that “Divine Providence. . . controls and directs the course of states and empires.”<sup>534</sup> Walker described the capture of Mariano Salazar as Providence.<sup>535</sup>

Likewise, his allies also relied on this same message that placed him as the divine answer to the instability that threatened Nicaragua. Through *El Nicaraguense*, Walker

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<sup>532</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 208.

<sup>533</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 430.

<sup>534</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, July 17, 1856.

<sup>535</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 234.

informed the public how “an especial providence held a guardianship over this favored land [Nicaragua].”<sup>536</sup> In another article, it contended that “Providence guides and directs the Americans in their efforts to restore peace and secure tranquility to the natives of this beautiful but unhappy country.” In that same issue, it further contended that the success of Walker evinced “a particular intervention of Providence in favor of the Americans,” while comparing it to “the pillar of fire by which the children of Israel were guided in their journeyings [sic] to the land of Promise.”<sup>537</sup> Owen Duffy, a colonizer who opened up a law firm in Granada with the editor-in-chief of *El Nicaraguense* John Tabor, described Walker as an agent of both “Democracy” and “Providence” for his work in “carrying out its great principles in this Country.”<sup>538</sup> William Vincent Wells also described how, under Walker, Nicaragua would be a “highway of nations” with a “future marked by Providence.”<sup>539</sup> Similarly, in a public speech held in New York, the Honorable George W. Peck, of Michigan, linked Anglo-American expansion, headed by Walker, to “[a] Providence which shapes the ends of nations as of men.”<sup>540</sup>

In fact, William Walker even contended that the locals felt this to be the case. He stated that “the common people, with their strong religious instinct, thought that Providence had sent cholera in order to drive the Costa Ricans from the soil.”<sup>541</sup> Cholera

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<sup>536</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 18, 1856.

<sup>537</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, August 9, 1856.

<sup>538</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, July 16, 1856; and *El Nicaraguense*, October 18, 1856. Duffy appears to have amalgamated Democracy and Providence into a united singular through the use of the word “its.” While it can certainly be argued that he meant one or the other, he probably did not distinguish the two. The quote comes from the July 16 publication. However, I have also chosen to include a citation from October, for it provides a little background information to exactly who he was. It states that Duffy and Tabor opened a firm that specialized in claims made against the government and resided in the same building as *El Nicaraguense*.

<sup>539</sup> William Vincent Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856), 124.

<sup>540</sup> George W. Peck, *Nicaragua and General Walker* (Washington, D.C.: Union Office, 1856), 9.

<sup>541</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 213.

served as retribution for their malicious attacks against Walker, which threatened the stability of Nicaragua. Such a belief paralleled a more prevalent notion explained by social-medical historian Charles Rosenberg- maladies existed as “punishment for spiritual transgression.” Americans noted that Central American officers on all sides of the war failed to allocate resources to soldier burials. Mounting losses on both sides of the civil war had left little resources available for officers to allocate for burial services and corpse removal. They especially did not waste resources burying the dead of their opposition. Americans thus saw these inactions as immoral shortcomings.

Americans expressed horror at these findings. Charles Doubleday, who had been participating in battles there before the arrival of William Walker, noted that both sides generally left corpses exposed to the elements. He described how officers left bodies to be eaten by the buzzards, which he stated hovered constantly “in the air in vast throngs.” He commented that the militaries found the “labor of interment” too “heavy a task to impose upon soldiers.” Thus, both armies kept shooting all of the prisoners, which left neither army the labor necessary to clear the battlefields. In turn, the buzzards served the Nicaraguans by clearing the fields, but even they, too, ultimately “were yet unable wholly to dispose of the harvest of food which war and pestilence combined cast out for them.”<sup>542</sup> As a result, cholera spread throughout the region.

The warring factions left civilians to deal with the aftermath of the diseases, especially the disposal of the dead. As the deaths from cholera became unbearable, the Nicaraguan civilians began a new custom, which brought the disease into the realm of their circadian rhythms. As inhabitants died at night from cholera, the survivors in the

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<sup>542</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 71.

dwellings would wait until morning before placing the corpses outside of their front doors. At sunrise, men would drive carts through town to collect the bodies. When possible, they would then dump the bodies over nearby cliffs. Doubleday described such sights as “a mass of putrefaction.” Doubleday reiterated the same concerns that Walker held, for he commented that the buildup of corpses released “the gasses from which tainted the air” that they breathed. He blamed the gasses for a failure in his health. He contended that his normally good health “which held good under conditions that had prostrated feeble and robust alike” gave way to a brain-fever.<sup>543</sup> Under such conditions, Walker and the transit company appeared to the general public, if not all of Nicaragua, as saviors for the efforts against the disease.

Though many reports concerning how *Legitimista* officers handled the dead conflicted with each other, American newspapers frequently attacked their officers for their failures as Christian stewards on the battlefield. *The Daily Organ* accused the *Legitimistas* of looting the bodies of those lost at the First Battle of Rivas.<sup>544</sup> The paper took special offense to the idea that the *Legitimistas* took a “handsome sword and gold watch. . . as a prize” from the corpse of Achilles L. Kewen, who was renowned for his participation in the Lopez expedition to Cuba. Both the *Organ* and *The Daily Nashville True Whig* accused the *Legitimistas* of burning the American dead.<sup>545</sup> *The Athens Post* went even further and accused the local priesthood of orchestrating the burning of six

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<sup>543</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 72.

<sup>544</sup> *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), July 27, 1855. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1855-07-27/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). Henceforth, this collection will be referred to as *Chronicling America*.

<sup>545</sup> *The Daily Nashville True Whig* (Nashville, TN.), August 2, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071224/1855-08-02/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



wounded Americans whom they executed at Rivas. The *Post* stated that the local priests were “the Government” of Nicaragua and treated Americans as “the Vandals of the North.” The paper contended that the priests did not consider burials “appropriate” for “heretics.”<sup>546</sup> Thus, according to the *Post*, they ordered the Americans burned. Such reports encouraged readers to correlate Walker’s enemies with spiritual corruption.

William Walker, in turn, positioned himself as a visible Christian Steward and took control over wartime burial practices in Nicaragua. He used both his military and resources provided by Vanderbilt’s Accessory Transit Company, to diminish the presence of cholera. The Transit Company, like Walker, needed to combat cholera, for it affected their profit margins. As a result of this mutual desire, Walker worked with one of the company’s agents, Colonel Cortland Cushing, to bury the enemy’s dead after the Battle of Virgin Bay on September 3, 1855. The *Legitimistas* lacked the strength and resources to recover from the battle, and neither Walker nor the Accessory Transit Company could afford to let the bodies remain as they were. Thus, through this early action, Walker distinguished himself from his native rivals. By burying the dead of both sides, Walker portrayed himself as a magnanimous Christian steward capable of transcending conflict to protect the interests of the civilians caught in the middle of a conflict that only benefitted the high-ranking officials who led both sides. The burial of the dead reduced the risk of *materies morbi*, which, in turn, he believed would reduce the presence of cholera. Since cholera mostly affected natives, this policy served as an outlet for him to evince that he took the lives of the locals into consideration while also displaying to

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<sup>546</sup> *The Athens Post*. (Athens, TN), August 10, 1855. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024443/1855-08-10/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Americans that he managed the epidemic in a manner that would protect American interests and regenerators.

Walker, as a physician and conqueror, however, also understood that, if he could convince both the Americans and Nicaraguans that he had proper control over the fallen, then he could utilize their trust to further gain control over funerary practices. For the Nicaraguans, Walker understood that this meant diminishing the amount of time that civilians spent disposing of corpses. By utilizing the military to care for the dead, he freed civilians from what became *de facto* conscription as towns became responsible for dealing with the dead. Such an idea went hand-in-hand with Walker's overall strategy of removing the natives from conscripted military service. Unlike the Central American officers, Walker abolished conscription and relied on a volunteer army. Thus, American and European soldiers serving under Walker acted as the primary stewards of the dead after battles.

This burial practice allowed Walker better control over combatting cholera. By placing Americans in charge of burials of both the enemies and allies, Walker could provide a more uniformed and consistent quality control to diminish the chances that the corpses could spread disease. During the early months, it appeared to have worked, for, as explained in Chapter Two, American newspapers began promoting the disappearance of cholera by November 1855. Its absence from Nicaragua became a default assumption until its reemergence could be proven otherwise, at least for the American media. As previously noted, when it reappeared in December 1855, many newspapers failed to account for it in their Central American updates.

Eventually, Doctor Walker became bolder in his approach on how to manage both the dead and the dying. In November 1856, President Walker attempted to, once again, alter funerary processes. In that month, he began a campaign to convince both natives and colonizers to abandon traditional burials and, instead, burn the dead. Only a year earlier, American newspapers lambasted priests for encouraging the very same technique, though his supporters certainly attacked the motives of the priests more so than the actual strategy. While the forthcoming destruction of Granada at the end of the month makes it difficult to judge the intended extent of this plan or its potential effectiveness, Walker clearly saw it as part of his strategy to combat disease, particularly cholera. Walker once more relied on *El Nicaraguense* to begin the process of changing the minds and cultural observations of his followers through public discourse. The newspaper argued that American expectations for traditional burials would not suffice in Nicaragua. It offered an argument that the dry season of Nicaragua made it too difficult to rely on burials, stating that “during the dry season in this country it is very difficult to dig a grave of sufficient depth to prevent the poisonous gasses from escaping into the atmosphere, and spreading malaria among the living.” The paper argued that the mere presence of corpses placed grave diggers in danger from “the poison of decomposing flesh” and “poisonous gasses. . . being wafted among the habitations of the living.”<sup>547</sup> Thus, it concluded that Americans should not expect the traditional burial, for it jeopardized the safety of the living.

*El Nicaraguense* also challenged Americans who desired alternative forms of burial. It criticized Americans who sought long-distance transportation of the dead. It

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<sup>547</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856.

stated that “in these days, the removal of a corpse creates a horror in all who travel with it not immediately interested, to say nothing of the danger of being in contact with so much rottenness and putrefaction.” Likewise, it also challenged Americans to come to terms with their desire to perform burials in church vaults. It claimed that such burials, “in the dampness and gloom of the subterranean chambers,” effectively “spread disease and death among those who honored them while living.”<sup>548</sup>

Ultimately, the paper argued that the traditional burials that Americans and Nicaraguans expected was not meant for “a Southern country.” It stated that the burial of the dead was a practice of “Northern nations,” but those of “the Southern countries,” traditionally burned their dead. Giving credence and a sense of tradition to this idea, the newspaper argued that it was a traditional “custom of Southern Asia and Southern Europe.” It particularly referenced the Greeks, stating that “the Greeks have always burned the bodies of their illustrious dead.” It then contended that such a custom was “much preferable to burying.”<sup>549</sup> The newspaper attempted to convince readers to put aside cultural prejudices and allow for necessary adaptations to ensure American survival in Nicaragua.

*El Nicaraguense* portrayed incineration as a sanitary alternative to burials. It stated that, through incineration, “the ashes might be carefully collected and placed in an ornamented urn.” It explicitly couched the idea of incineration as a strategy by describing how it provided the advantage of purifying the air by removing the decomposing matter from harm’s way. It then referenced that a great fire stopped “the great plague of

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<sup>548</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856.

<sup>549</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856.

London,” contending that the plague “ceased to exist almost immediately after the conflagration.” Furthermore, it linked the practice of burning to fumigation, stating that “[i]t is now common practice to fumigate a room in which a person has died of cholera, or any other contagious disease, to smoke a cigar, or pipe – so great a purifier is fire.” Fire, it argued, “conduces the preservation of the living.” In fact, the push for corpse burning served as a response to the Battle of Granada in early October 1856. After the battle, the newspaper claimed that people feared “that the great number of the enemy which was killed would produce the cholera before they could be interred.” It argued, instead, that if they would have relied on incineration, then “[b]urning them immediately would have prevented the possibility of such a painful circumstance, and would have purified the air of any poisonous gasses which might already existed in it.”<sup>550</sup>

Thus, the newspaper admitted to the sanitary limitations of even Walker’s current burial strategies. While doing so, it offered the general public an idea that their collective opinion on the subject mattered. By first introducing the idea through a newspaper article and not by decree, Walker offered a comforting idea that he did, indeed, represent democratic values. The paper even stated that “[o]ur object in suggesting this [use of fire to dispose of bodies], is more to call attention to the public, as well as the medical profession, to subject than to attempt at this time, to discuss the matter.” It continued: “[w]e are, however, under the impression that if the custom of burning the dead, instead of burying them, were once fairly introduced, it would, in this latitude, prove highly beneficial to the general health.” The newspaper, through this tactic, attempted to

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<sup>550</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856.

convince readers that the Walker regime, even when certain of being right, would employ the democratic process of public discourse to advance Nicaragua.

Nevertheless, in light of the subsequent destruction of Granada that occurred later that month, this curious article likely illuminated the logic behind Walker's decision to abandon the city and burn it to the ground. In *The War in Nicaragua*, Walker admitted that his soldiers did, in fact, burn the city down.<sup>551</sup> Newspapers friendly to Walker responded to its destruction by offering medical explanations for its demise. As demonstrated in previous chapters, throughout his tenure in Nicaragua, newspapers had consistently depicted Granada as a diseased city. When news reached the United States that the city had been burned, American newspapers did, indeed, praise Walker for evacuating the sick. After landing in New York in early December 1856, the steamer *Tennessee* brought news to the United States that Walker "was compelled . . . by the prevailing sickness at Granada, to burn the city and remove the sick and wounded to Ometepe, which some Southern cities reported as fact."<sup>552</sup> Walker, almost certainly deranged from obsession and failure by this time, saw the destruction of Granada as a strategy to purify the region of one of its least healthy towns, which ironically was one of the last towns in his control.

The earlier article released in *El Nicaraguense* offers, even more, hints about how Walker and his regenerators understood the health plight in Nicaragua. The paper published that "[w]e know, also, that epidemics break out into parts of cities where

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<sup>551</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 313.

<sup>552</sup> "Reports of Walker's Defeat Contradicted," *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), December 16, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1856-12-16/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

garbage is allowed to collect and emit an effluvia.” While doing so, it portrayed Nicaragua as a new nation still in the process of development. Through this portrayal, *El Nicaraguense* argued that previous colonizers had wrongly prescribed Northern customs to a Southern nation, which increased the health risks of America’s transit jewel. The paper, while describing the effects of “gasses of decomposing vegetable matter in swamps,” described how “all new countries are less healthy than where labor has affected good drainage.” Thus, it inserted a second accusation that European colonizers never properly applied labor in Nicaragua, which prevented the country from developing out of its unhealthy state. The cure, according to the newspaper, required the burning of bodies, at least until Nicaragua could achieve the development that the Spaniards inhibited it from achieving. Thus, when William Walker ordered the burning of Granada, he had already established a written precedent that the destruction of his capital offered tangible benefits to those attuned to the regeneration message.

The burning of Granada may have also served as either a form of biological warfare or as a protection against it. In fact, in his 1860 memoir, Walker explicitly correlated the presence of disease in camps and towns with warfare and went as far as to posit that cholera could, in fact, be used as a form of biological warfare. While discussing the presence of cholera at Managua, Walker asserted that “an adventurous captain” could have pressed the attack during an outbreak as a way to both “escape the dreadful scourge,” and, “if pursued by the plague, to scatter it also among the hostile force, and at least to bring on an action before his own strength was destroyed by the ravages of disease.”<sup>553</sup> In this light, the destruction of Granada can be seen as both an offensive and

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<sup>553</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 70.

defense strategy. Offensively, if Granada was “the pest house Granada” that the *New York Herald* claimed it to be in September of that year, then the announcements by Walker of the city’s eminent destruction possibly served as a way to lure the enemy into the presence of the plague.<sup>554</sup> The burning of the city, in turn, served as a way to both scatter his enemies back out of the city after they contracted the disease as well as a way to purify the location of disease after its abandonment by the Allied Coalition.

Ultimately, William Walker veiled his motives as to why he desired its destruction, only admitting that he did, in fact, express his wish to both abandon the town and destroy it.<sup>555</sup> He regretted that he destroyed the city. He lamented that his soldiers did not act with the discipline that he prescribed to them as he found too many of them drunk, disobedient, and destructive. Walker knew that its destruction served as one of the most pivotal actions in determining the loss of media support in the United States. Newspapers critical to Walker, such as the *Anti-slavery Bugle* in Ohio, attacked the credentials of Walker while highlighting his decision to burn the town down.<sup>556</sup> Such criticisms likely compelled Walker to obscure his truest motives.

Americans considered the newspapers excusing the destruction of Granada as reinforcing the Walker vision of a cleansed Nicaraguan society. They understood that newspapers, such as *The Nashville Patriot*, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, and the

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<sup>554</sup> “Our Virgin Bay Correspondence,” *The New York Herald*, September 1, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-09-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>555</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 313.

<sup>556</sup> *Anti-slavery Bugle* (New-Lisbon, OH), April 11, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1857-04-11/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). The *Bugle* questioned how much of a “general” Walker could claim to be while highlighting the bravery of one of his soldiers, General Charles Frederick Henningsen, to fight during its destruction. It explicitly put the word general in quotes.



*Houma Ceres*, aligned themselves with Walker and actively promoted his presence there.<sup>557</sup> Thus, the general population viewed them as outlets to understand the vision that Walker promoted. These papers promoted the burning of Granada as the embodiment of Walker's vision to replace *mestizo* society from Nicaragua as a means to remove all obstacles in the way of creating a healthy Nicaragua, which they hoped would make it safe for American passage.

However, Doctor Walker also relied on another strategy for promoting his colonization effort as one guided by a health message. Walker depicted himself as a modernizing agent through the promotion of a new military hospital system and its attached medical department. He staffed these hospitals with dozens of physicians and utilized it as his primary means for combatting disease. Walker deployed his large staff to serve civilians and soldiers, allies and enemies. When the hospital operated properly, it effectively reified the image of Nicaraguan regeneration by placing Anglo-Americans as hierarchical Christian stewards governing the well-being of all within the state.

In the end, though, the successes and failures of the hospital reflected those of the regime. As the regime faltered and its territorial extent waned, so did the hospital. Its eventual inability to provide care for the sick and wounded encouraged both the media and participants to criticize Walker for failing to provide the healthcare that he promised. This, in turn, became one of the primary points of contention in discourse concerning support for his three return missions.

Walker staffed his hospitals with well-known and influential physicians, many of whom held great influence within their communities through the prominent social and

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<sup>557</sup> Examples of this support can be found in Chapter Four.

political positions that they held. For example, two of the physicians, Doctors A. Callahan and Sanders, were likely the Sanders and Callahan whom helped found American chapters of the Society of the Seven Wise Men.<sup>558</sup> The Society of Seven Wise Men dedicated itself to colonizing and filibustering missions in Cuba and Mexico. The organization survived the Civil War, and by 1875, it claimed a membership of about 20,000 men.<sup>559</sup> Sanders served Walker as a surgeon in the medical department. Likewise, Walker appointed Callahan as an assistant surgeon of the army with the rank of Captain.<sup>560</sup> Such connections provided Walker with credibility in key financial circles whom were willing to back the privately-operated American colonization missions. Similarly, Doctor Alexander Jones, who acted as a surgeon general under Walker, already had a reputation as an adventurer from his previous expeditions searching for treasure in the Cocos Islands.

Walker also relied on physicians with connections in Nicaragua to establish the hospital system's credibility among the locals and gain him entrance into the elite, native circles of Nicaragua. Doctor John Dawson had lived in Nicaragua for many years. Dawson served as a surgeon and dedicated his services to the care of the native troops.<sup>561</sup> By November 1856, he held the position of surgeon general with the rank of major. Likewise, Doctor J. L. Cole, an American physician, had married into a Rivas family. Though Cole had originally supported the *Democraticos*, he was the brother-in-law of

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<sup>558</sup> Though Sanders is referenced a few times in the primary sources, his first name is unclear. There are other, more prominent, people sharing that last name in the records and memoirs.

<sup>559</sup> "Revival of S.W.M.," *New Orleans Republican*, November 27, 1875. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016555/1875-11-27/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>560</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), May 31, 1856.

<sup>561</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 96.

Francisco Ugarte, a man who marched with Costa Rica against President Rivas.<sup>562</sup> Cole, however, remained loyal to Walker and provided Walker with an air of respectability. Cole remained an important ally to Walker throughout the campaigns. In June 1858, he attempted to utilize his connections between the two countries to convince Minister Heiss to seek treaties between the two countries that would put Nicaragua under American protection as a way to deter foreign powers from gaining control over the Transit Route and its future canal. Cole claimed that the Martinez regime, which replaced Walker, served the people “with its European tendencies.”<sup>563</sup> Cole was such a threat to Walker’s opposition that they attempted to arrest him after Walker’s original retreat.

Walker also made sure to highlight the accomplishments and celebrity status of several of his physicians. Among his staff included Doctor James A. Nott, the brother of the famed Josiah Nott of Mobile. Nott had worked in San Francisco for several years and possibly met Walker during this tenure.<sup>564</sup> Walker insisted that Nott was “the most efficient” physician in his department at combatting cholera in Granada. Reminding his readers of the stewardship roles that his staff performed for the locals, Walker insisted that “many a Nicaraguan” owed their lives to the promising physician. Regrettably, James Nott died at sea while on board the steamer *Prometheus* on his way to New Orleans on December 7, 1855, from “bilious diarrhea” after finding himself in a “very

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<sup>562</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 212.

<sup>563</sup> “Documents. I. With Walker in Nicaragua. The Reminiscences of Elleanore (Callaghan) Ratterman. II. Walker-Heiss papers. Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Walker regime in Nicaragua,” ed. William Oscar Scroggs (Nashville: 1916, reprinted from the *Tennessee Historical Magazine* by Nabu Public Domains), 343.

<sup>564</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge and London: LSU Press, 1987), 65.

debilitated state.”<sup>565</sup> Though his death was certainly detrimental to the healthcare mission underway in Nicaragua, his short tenure under Walker provided him contacts and credibility in Mobile, which later served as one of his primary destinations for embarking on his later expeditions.

Walker also promoted the presence of Doctor Israel Moses. Walker had appointed Moses as the surgeon general on March 1, 1856, after he had arrived that February. Walker depicted Moses as the solution for replacing the void caused by the loss of Doctor Nott. Dr. Moses had previously established his reputation while serving in the Medical Department of the United States Army. President James Polk had appointed him as assistant surgeon general in January 1847.<sup>566</sup> Thus, Moses brought with him an aura of legitimacy as a military physician. Walker understood this and made sure to highlight his accomplishments achieved in Nicaragua. Walker claimed that “[i]t was only after the arrival of Dr. Israel Moses . . . that the surgical staff was well organized and its duties well performed. He continued, stating that “[h]e gave such order and system to this department of the army that the good effects of his administration were felt long after he ceased to act as surgeon-general.” He concluded by contending that “few military hospitals were better administered than the hospitals at Granada and Rivas.”<sup>567</sup>

Similarly, Walker highlighted the courage of his physicians. He praised Doctor Dolman for demonstrating bravery while “defending the sick” while resisting enemy

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<sup>565</sup> “Later from the Isthmus,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, January 11, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-01-11/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>566</sup> “Appointments by the President,” *The Daily Union* (Washington, D.C.), January 23, 1847. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1847-01-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>567</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 158-159.

combatants.<sup>568</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, which often led the way in establishing the participation of soldiers and their gallantries, remarked on the participation of Doctor R. T. Royston during the Battle of San Jacinto.<sup>569</sup> It also celebrated the presence of Doctor Alexander Jones during the September 3, 1855, fight at Virgin Bay.<sup>570</sup> Walker, in his memoir, also noted that Dr. Jones cared for the wounded during a conflict against Colonel Bosque at the Battle of Rivas.<sup>571</sup> Furthermore, news of physician promotions usually made it into *El Nicaraguense*, as was the case for the promotion of Dr. C. S. Coleman to Major after the Second Battle of Rivas, as a way to re-inject their presence into the narratives as often as possible.<sup>572</sup>

In fact, the medical staff's participation in battles periodically became a focal point for *El Nicaraguense*. In particular, on April 19, 1856, it highlighted their participation during the Second Battle of Rivas. Primarily, Walker's literary organ insisted that the "Superintendence of Dr. Moses is spoken of very highly."<sup>573</sup> It emphasized that the staff, under his leadership, busily spent "day and night" attending to the wounded. The newspaper insisted that the staff spent the entire time on the field of battle caring for the wounded and dying. It then praised them for conveying the wounded to the city "with all the comfort possible under the circumstances" while providing them "with everything the country affords." The paper concluded by assuring readers that "in the hospital, the wounded are all in improving circumstances," and referenced three

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<sup>568</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 399. The first name of Dolman is unknown.

<sup>569</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), September 20, 1856.

<sup>570</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), September 6, 1856.

<sup>571</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 48.

<sup>572</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), May 31, 1856.

<sup>573</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), April 19, 1856.

amputations performed that each resulted in “the stumps of those amputated” looking “healthy.” Likewise, during the October 1856 defense of Granada, *El Nicaraguense* also highlighted the bravery of the medical staff, referencing how the physicians distinguished themselves through their actions. It particularly noted how Doctor George H. Scott was wounded in action during the battle, which only reinforced the heroism demonstrated by the Medical Department as its members performed their roles as Christian stewards.<sup>574</sup> Such news reports allowed Walker to broadcast the professionalization of the medical industry in Nicaragua, which he hoped would alleviate potential colonizers of any healthcare anxieties that they had about moving there.

Allies of Walker even highlighted the participation of women as health care stewards. In particular, newspapers friendly to Walker, even as his demise became increasingly certain, highlighted the medical care of a Mrs. Bingham, the wife of a notable actor named Charles Edward Bingham. Describing her as the “Nightingale among the Filibusters,” newspapers noted how she had “occupied herself with attending to the sick and the wounded of Gen. Walker’s army.” They mentioned how she braved “all the perils of camp disease,” while “everywhere bestowing on the invalid soldiers such kind attentions and careful treatment as to elicit the deepest gratitude and most friendly regard.” Giving further credibility to the healthcare mission that Walker led, newspapers portrayed her as a veteran of wartime nursing, referencing her duties during the Mexican-American War. Ultimately, she was portrayed as a martyr to the cause, for

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<sup>574</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 18, 1856.

“her brave devotion in the hospitals proved fatal to herself,” for news reached the United States that “she had sickened from the prevalent fever and died.”<sup>575</sup>

While Walker certainly understood the legitimacy that the promotion of his medical staff provided him, he also believed that they were, in fact, some of the best people to both represent the republic as well as lead it. After the October peace treaty, Walker began seeking prominent political positions for his American medical staff. As already discussed, he consistently appointed American physicians to the position of surgeon general, even during his tenure as commanding general under President Patricio Rivas. However, he also sought non-medical positions of power for some of his staff, which he hoped would legitimize the new government by demonstrating the professionalization underway in Nicaragua. In particular, Walker deployed Doctor W. E. Rust to Washington in late-December. On December 30, 1855, Doctor Rust left Granada to serve as a bearer of dispatches for the Rivas regime under Colonel Wheeler. Walker hoped that a physician would be well-received in Washington and give the Rivas administration an aura of respectability.

Other people must have understood the importance of medical physicians to Walker, for at least one physician attempted to falsely present himself as the reification of the Walker regeneration message. A man going by the name of Doctor J. H. Sigur, whose probable real name was Desmond, attempted to present himself as a political representative of the Walker regime.<sup>576</sup> Sigur was likely either an American or

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<sup>575</sup> “A Nightingale Among Filibusters,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, March 5, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045160/1857-03-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>576</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 16; *El Nicaraguense*, May 31, 1856. Sigur may have also been known as Segur.

Englishman who had at least previously resided in the United States as a practicing physician. However, Sigur wrongly represented himself as the secretary of legation for Nicaragua to the United States, a position held by Father Vijil. Walker feared that Sigur was either inspired by or working with the *Legitimista* government and Don José de Marcoleta to either cause confusion within Washington or to sabotage the Rivas regime. Either way, his presence illuminated the understood importance that healthcare and medical professionals had as images of professionalization and legitimacy in the eyes of the American government.

William Walker also successfully attracted many civilian practitioners to colonize Nicaragua, which further reinforced the totality of the regeneration campaign as a professionalizing mission. Many entered Nicaragua utilizing passage through the Nicaraguan Emigration Company in New Orleans. Most were practicing in Southern states, and many of them signed up for the colonization missions after news reached the United States about the conflicts arising between Patricio Rivas and William Walker. For example, H. C. Rice, with one trunk, a valise, and his physician's bag, departed New Orleans after leaving his home in Columbus, Mississippi to help colonize the new jewel of Central America. Several people involved in the medical industry could be found on board the steamer *Texas* as it departed from New Orleans on June 28, 1856. A doctor by the name of Buckius left his home in New Orleans to help colonize Nicaragua. Those with the financial means, such as physician J. W. William of Louisiana, acquired second cabin passage, which provided them a level of luxury that the vast majority of passengers could not attain. At least three other medical students shared the voyage with Dr. William. Two of them, W. A. Lindeker, and John H. Flowers were from South Carolina.



The other, N. H. Buring, was from Georgia. Others, through their travel arrangements, demonstrated either great fervor for the colonization mission or great desperation. Gustav Seibert, a druggist from New Orleans, acquired passage in the steerage, which certainly placed him in very cramped quarters for the approximately two-week voyage to Nicaragua.

William Walker and his allies also ensured Americans that professionalized health care coverage extended beyond the military medical department. Many privately practicing physicians relied on *El Nicaraguense* to promote their services. In turn, the newspaper did its part by establishing itself as a prominent outlet for readers to discover the breadth of options available to them, for subscribers knew to expect such advertisements in each issue. Through the newspaper, readers learned that Doctor Augustus Post provided healthcare in Granada and promised services in medicine, surgery, and midwifery. He established a drugstore there and assured patrons that “particular attention will be paid to putting up prescriptions.”<sup>577</sup> Similarly, colonizers learned that they could expect American dental services provided by Dr. J. Lehue, a dental surgeon, who could be found in the hospital in Granada.<sup>578</sup> These advertisements helped highlight the success that Walker had at recruiting civilizing and modernizing agents into his colonies.

However, not all medical and healthcare practitioners who embarked for Nicaragua participated in their fields of study and interest. Many, in fact, enlisted as combatants, which in turn provided their respective companies medical expertise when

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<sup>577</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, June 7, 1856.

<sup>578</sup> *El Nicaraguense* (Granada, Nicaragua), November 1, 1856.

needed. H. H. Carter, a surgeon born in New York City, departed from Mobile, Alabama, on November 26, 1856, to fight with Walker. There, he rose to the rank of Third Corporal of Company E of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Rifles. Several soldiers claimed previous professions as druggists before taking combative roles. For example, at the age of twenty-two, Henry Tallmadge of Louisville, Kentucky, abandoned his career as a druggist and signed up with Colonel J. Allen in Kentucky. Upon arrival, the light-haired, blue-eyed Tallmadge became a private in Company B of the First Rifles. Another Kentucky-born druggist, G. Daniels, left New Orleans on August 7, 1856, to fight as a private in Company A of the Rangers. Like Tallmadge, he, too, was born in Louisville. Likewise, Richard Byrnes, of Alleghany, Pennsylvania, worked as a druggist before leaving New Orleans on November 27, 1856, to serve as a private in Company C of the Second Rifles. At least one foreigner with a medical and healthcare background also joined Walker. The German-born S. G. Langeman, at the age of twenty-five, served as a private in Company B of the First Infantry. The surgeon embarked from New Orleans on October 28, 1856, with Colonel J. A. Jacquess to serve one year in the American phalanx. Langeman, however, was transferred to the Hospital in December of that year, more than likely because of his medical background.

Many of the soldiers with medical backgrounds were born in Louisiana. O. E. Mason, for instance, was a twenty-one-year-old medical student fighting as a private in Company A of the Rangers. R. S. Poole, also a member of Company A of the Rangers, was born in Shreveport. After departing New Orleans to serve for one year in the American phalanx, the thirty-two-year-old Doctor Poole found himself fighting as a private in a losing war against an overwhelming enemy and eventually deserted the

company on February 25, 1857. Born in East Feliciana, J. F. McKneely served as a private at the age of twenty-one for Company D of the Rangers. Their presence reinforced that Gulf Coast residents valued the medical mission that Walker led.

The participation of Nicaraguan regeneration could also extend to those willing to fund him. Many educated and esteemed civilians helped provide supplies and funds for Walker. Walker received support from many doctors throughout Louisiana. In many parishes, Walker had at least one prominent doctor providing such connections and support to him. In Iberville Parish, Walker received help from Dr. H. Doyle of Eureka Plantation. In Rapides Parish, he could anticipate the aid of Dr. John Casson of Experiment Plantation.<sup>579</sup> In St. John the Baptist Parish, Dr. J. H. Loughborough supported him. Such allies likely accepted at least parts of the medical aspects of the Walker regeneration message.

Even after his return to the United States, Walker continued to receive support from the highly educated, especially those in the medical industry. While preparing for what became his final excursion in 1860, Walker met with a Doctor Rivas in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>580</sup> Likewise, physicians still continued to participate in the colonization efforts. E. H. Newton, a physician from New York, embarked on the Honduras campaign with Walker.<sup>581</sup> Such extended participation hints that the message

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<sup>579</sup> *The Louisiana Democrat* (Alexandria, LA.), August 19, 1885. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003389/1885-08-19/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; *The Louisiana Democrat*. (Alexandria, LA.), October 14, 1874. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003389/1874-10-14/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).. This is likely the same John Casson of Rapides Parish who married Adelia Elizabeth Thomas. It is also likely, then, that this is the same Dr. Casson whom worked on the Grand Lottery in Louisiana as a drawing supervisor during the 1870s.

<sup>580</sup> Box 2, Folder 65, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane Latin American Library.

<sup>581</sup> Folder 85, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane Latin American Library.

of regeneration continued to resonate among those who could appreciate the concept of stewardship that Walker proclaimed possible under his command.

The presence of so many people with medical backgrounds illuminates just how many people saw themselves as participating in the medical narrative attached to the regeneration message. Cholera provided an easily recognizable diagnosis that Americans would have understood to be a threat to their wellbeing. Walker, unlike his rivals, provided a strategy to combat it. American and European adventurers with medical backgrounds responded by joining Walker to fulfill roles as both stewards of the natives and guardians of American progress. Newspapers, in turn, responded to the message and its early results by highlighting the diminishing presence of cholera under the Walker regime, often at the cost of accurate reports.

Writers responded to these messages and strategies by emphasizing Walker's education, particularly his medical training. In fact, Walker's medical background had been highlighted as early as February 1854, while he still lingered in his flailing Mexican republic. On February 2, 1854, *The Washington Sentinel* stated that he "was originally intended for the medical profession, and studied in Paris."<sup>582</sup> It insisted that Walker had in Europe, "improved and disciplined an intellect naturally strong." Similarly, other newspapers, such as the *Grand River Times* in Michigan, reported abbreviated versions of Walker biographies that almost always included his medical background.<sup>583</sup> Newspapers utilized these stories to ensure readers of his rationale, genius, and abilities.

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<sup>582</sup> "Biographical Sketch of Col. Walker," *Washington Sentinel*, February 2, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020104/1854-02-02/ed-1/seq-3/>>.

<sup>583</sup> "Who is President Walker of Sonora?," *Grand River Times* (Grand Haven, MI.), April 12, 1854. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026466/1854-04-12/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

Such narratives returned once Walker acquired the October 1855 peace treaty. For example, in early January, the *Democrat and Sentinel* of Pennsylvania and the *Washington Star* emphasized that Walker finished school in Nashville “with much credit and honor,” before commencing “the study of medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated.” From there, the newspaper stated he then went to Europe and received a diploma from the medical school in Paris before returning to Nashville to study and practice law. It then re-emphasized that Walker was “both a lawyer and physician.”<sup>584</sup> This sketch biography likewise reappeared throughout the United States in the early months of 1856. Newspapers throughout the South took particular interest in this biography as it appeared often without any alteration in newspapers such as *The Western Democrat* in North Carolina, the *Yorkville Enquirer* in South Carolina, and the *Southern Sentinel* in Louisiana.<sup>585</sup>

Similarly, politicians, even when not directly referring to William Walker’s medical background, often mentioned his intelligence to garner support for his regime. In May 1856, the Honorable John B. Weller, a United States Senator from California, lauded General Walker for his intellect in an effort to encourage support and recognition for the Rivas regime, referring to him as an “intelligent gentleman of uncommon energy

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<sup>584</sup> “Who Gen. Walker Is,” *Democrat and Sentinel* (Ebensburg, PA.), January 16, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86071378/1856-01-16/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). The *Democrat and Sentinel* republished an article that is credited to the *Washington Star*.

<sup>585</sup> *Southern Sentinel* (Plaquemine, LA), February 2, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064476/1856-02-02/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); *The Western Democrat* (Charlotte, NC), January 22, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020712/1856-01-22/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and *Yorkville Enquirer* (Yorkville, SC), January 31, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026925/1856-01-31/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

and decided character.”<sup>586</sup> Likewise, in December 1856, Percy Walker, a representative in the House for Alabama, dismissed notions of Walker being a “vulgar adventurer,” claiming that he was “a profound observer, an earnest, scholarly man, above all mercenary considerations.”<sup>587</sup> Thus, his political allies entrenched his legitimacy around his intellect in an effort to insist that such a scholar harbored lofty ideals worth pursuing and protecting.

Even memoirs written decades after William Walker’s death illuminated the significance of Walker’s medical background to those who knew him. Charles William Doubleday, an American officer serving in Nicaragua under the *Democraticos*, mentioned that Walker finished his schooling in Paris while studying French, Latin, medicine, and law.<sup>588</sup> Likewise, James Carson Jamison, who became one of Walker’s key conspirators in planning his return expeditions to Nicaragua, followed a similar narrative in his own memoir. Carson emphasized that Walker “graduated with honors in both law and medicine, and attended medical lectures in Paris.” He described Walker as being “[o]f the highest intellectuality.”<sup>589</sup> And Jane Henry Thomas, a childhood friend of William Walker, provided an even more detailed summary of Walker’s medical upbringing. While providing the usual background knowledge of his studies in the United States and Europe, she also stated that Walker studied medicine in Nashville with a Dr.

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<sup>586</sup> John B. Weller, *Remarks of Hon. John B. Weller of California on Nicaraguan Affairs, Delivered in the United States Senate, May 1 and 15, 1856* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Global Office, 1856), 4.

<sup>587</sup> Percy Walker, *Hon. Percy Walker, of Alabama, on Central American Affairs; Delivered in the House of Representatives, December 15, 1856* (Washington: Office of the Congressional Globe, 1856), 7.

<sup>588</sup> *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 106.

<sup>589</sup> James Carson Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua or Reminiscences of an Officer of the American Phalanx* (Columbia, MO: E. W. Stephens Publishing Company, 1909), 20.

Jennings and befriended a Dr. Farquarheison and a Dr. Lindsley.<sup>590</sup> Thus, these memoirs demonstrated the lasting importance that Walker's education played in how his associates wished to depict him to the public.

### The Shattering of the Healthcare Image

However, just as Walker's medical message served as a means to garner support, his failures to live up to the message served as one of the primary points of attack against his character and leadership. The presence of disease in Nicaragua became the primary means in which Americans could gauge the success of Walker. Americans seemingly understood that Walker could not be held accountable for the presence of an enemy force in Nicaragua. After all, the opposing forces appeared to be enemies to progress and regeneration, which placed Walker as the vanguard to American development and access to California. However, what could be used to judge Walker was his ability to keep healthy and stable what he controlled. Many Americans likely did not even care who controlled Nicaragua, as long as the controller allowed the continued safe access through the Transit Route that they came to expect. Americans perceived Anglo-American colonization as a prescription to a regional malady and not as a goal.

Criticisms concerning Walker's health care message came in many forms. As revealed in previous chapters, newspapers served as the primary outlet to display the failures of Walker. The presence of negative coverage about disease almost always coincided with American anxieties about Walker's progress during wartime. Newspapers tended to ignore the presence of cholera or yellow fever during times of peace. However,

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<sup>590</sup> Jane Henry Thomas, *Old Days in Nashville, Tenn: Reminiscences* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Barbee and Smith, 1897), 78.

after Costa Rica declared war on William Walker and marched 3,000 soldiers to Nicaragua, American newspapers suddenly discussed how cholera and yellow fever ravaged “the natives and Walkers [sic] Army.”<sup>591</sup> Highlighting Southern anxieties about Nicaragua’s future, Southern newspapers were the first to publish about the threat of cholera and yellow fever in Nicaragua during the initial invasion by Costa Rica, especially the *Daily American Organ*, the *Nashville Daily Patriot*, and the *Richmond Enquirer*.<sup>592</sup> Shortly after, Northern newspapers picked up the same story as they gained access to it, including *The Spirit of Democracy* in Ohio, the *Plymouth Weekly Banner*, and the *Orleans Independent Standard*.<sup>593</sup> This narrative informed readers that both cholera and yellow fever attacked Americans in Nicaragua while also notifying them that, as a result of the presence of both diseases, American soldiers deserted Walker and fled to Costa Rica through Greytown. Thus, the presence of disease became a metaphor for the feared disintegration of the Walker-led colonization effort as much as it became a reality for those fighting and settling there. Nevertheless, this despairing narrative soon

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<sup>591</sup> “Arrival of the George Law,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* (Wheeling, VA [WV]), April 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1856-04-17/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>592</sup> “Arrival of the Baltic,” *Nashville Daily Patriot*, April 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86053516/1856-04-18/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017); “Important from Central America,” *Richmond Enquirer*, April 18, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024735/1856-04-18/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and “Later from California – Arrival of the Geo. Law,” *Daily American Organ* (Washington, D.C.), April 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042002/1856-04-17/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>593</sup> “Arrival of the George Law,” *Plymouth Weekly Banner* (Plymouth, IN), April 24, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87056242/1856-04-24/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; “Arrival of the George Law,” *The Spirit of Democracy* (Woodsfield, OH), April 23, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038115/1856-04-23/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).; and “War in Central America,” *Orleans Independent Standard* (Irasburgh, VT), April 25, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84022548/1856-04-25/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



diminished as Americans ironically celebrated how both Walker and cholera defeated the Costa Ricans.

After the dissolution of the Walker-Rivas regime, American newspapers, even those otherwise supportive of Walker, re-focused on the presence of disease. They returned to an almost identical narrative about its presence in Nicaragua that was reported during the original Costa Rican invasion of April 1856. In August, *The New York Herald* described how “[r]eliable accounts from Costa Rica state that reports about the contemplated invasion of Nicaragua are purely imaginary.” It then exclaimed how “[t]he cholera and dysentery were making fearful ravages in some of the districts,” which abated any attempts made by the Costa Rican-led Allied Coalition. However, the *Herald* remained, overall, very supportive of Walker and claimed that “[t]he health of the country was excellent” while stating that “the condition of affairs [was] generally very encouraging.”<sup>594</sup> Thus, the *Herald* demonstrated early inklings of its potential to return to a condition of wavering support of Walker while still publishing a positive narrative about his prospects.

News reports about the health woes of Nicaragua cascaded as military defeats mounted. After news reached the United States about Walker’s impending loss of Granada, the discussion about disease in Nicaragua increased until it became a central point for displaying his failures. The arrival in Key West of the steamer *Tennessee* especially served to remind readers that Walker’s failures could and did affect Americans at home and abroad. When the *Tennessee* arrived in the United States, as previously

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<sup>594</sup> “The News,” *The New York Herald*, August 31, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-08-31/ed-1/seq-4/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

stated in Chapter Four, it had arrived carrying cholera back from Nicaragua. Thirteen of its passengers had died. With the ship came news that Walker had lost control over most of Nicaragua.<sup>595</sup> The presence of cholera showcased the effects of Walker's losses as it threatened the wellbeing of those living in all of the port cities that received ships from the Transit Route. Many newspapers reporting upon this outbreak did not depict the destruction of Granada as an ingenious military maneuver meant to counter disease but, instead, as simply one more example of Walker's mounting defeats.

As news reached the United States about the virulence of disease in Nicaragua, Southern newspapers returned to expressing anxieties about the prospects of William Walker in Nicaragua. Even in his home state of Tennessee, newspapers began focusing on his medical failures after receiving news about the cholera outbreak onboard what was once one of Walker's most reliable transportation vessels, the *Tennessee*. *The Athens Post* augmented the initial stories about cholera and depicted Walker as having, at least temporarily, abandoned his duty as a healthcare steward. It stated that Walker "was on board a steamer on the lake without communication with his army," which effectively depicted him as having abandoned them. It then lamented that "his men were suffering from want of provision and clothing, and were dying from disease."<sup>596</sup> Other newspapers, likewise, continued the bombardment against Walker by highlighting the virulence of disease in Nicaragua, particularly cholera. The *Wilmington Journal*, for example, explained how men deserted General Walker for Panama as they fled from the cholera

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<sup>595</sup> "From Nicaragua," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* (Wheeling, VA [WV]), December 15, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1856-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>596</sup> *Athens Post* (Athens, TN), December 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024443/1856-12-19/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

that daily killed his men.<sup>597</sup> These newspapers had not yet abandoned Walker, but they did exhibit anxieties that Nicaragua was no longer the stable and safe jewel of Central America that they had previously depicted.

In March 1857, almost as a death blow to the credibility of William Walker, American newspapers throughout the country published a report that attacked the health of Walker. A correspondent from the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* mentioned how he was “much struck, however, with the changes that three years of exposure to the tropical sun of Sonora and Nicaragua, their chills and fevers, and anxiety . . . have produced in his face.”<sup>598</sup> Newspapers, especially allies, did not previously connect any disease to the health of the grey-eyed man of destiny. Now, even his allies could not help but comment on the toll that the war had taken on his health. This one sentence made allusions about his health that implied great humoral imbalances due to stress, the climate, and disease. It made Nicaragua appear less suitable for American men by exposing the variety of imbalances that the land had taken on its most prepared colonizer.

Following the published concerns about Walker’s health came some of the most scathing criticisms against Walker that focused on the prevalence of disease. Critical newspapers took a quantitative approach to analyze Walker’s failures and stated that 5,400 Americans had died in Nicaragua “since Walker’s usurpation.”<sup>599</sup> Newspapers,

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<sup>597</sup> “Arrival of the George Law,” *Wilmington Journal* (Wilmington, NC), December 19, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026536/1856-12-19/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>598</sup> “Further from Walker,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* (Wheeling, VA [WV], March 3, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1857-03-03/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>599</sup> “The Advantages of Filibustering,” *The Spirit of Democracy* (Woodsfield, OH), April 1, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038115/1857-04-01/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

including Southern papers such as the *Richmond Dispatch*, attributed these deaths to both battle and fever. More importantly, the *Dispatch* contended that Walker and his recruiters “seduced” men “better than their leaders” with “romantic notions of extending the area of freedom among a people enjoying as much liberty as themselves.”<sup>600</sup> Such pronouncements highlighted the sense of betrayal that Americans felt while witnessing their loved ones die in Nicaragua from diseases and circumstances that they considered within Walker’s realm of responsibility.

Bolder criticisms attacking Walker’s health care escalated as his problems continued to compound. The *Lewisburg Chronicle* of Pennsylvania, for example, released a scathing attack against Walker that directly challenged his ability to care for his own men. It stated that the men burned “with fever in close, filthy hospitals.” Though it blamed the climate for prostrating them, it lamented that those who survived had to suffer by living “on putrid mule meat and the chance pickings by wayside.” It also accused Walker of providing ghastly healthcare, stating that the wounded were “nursed by beastly inebriates and attended by blaspheming surgeons, while their wounds festered and became alive with maggots,” which created “agony to the sufferer and horror to the beholder.” Ultimately, the *Chronicle* linked all of these findings to the character of the “leader whom a large portion of our people praise.”<sup>601</sup> This report came from a newspaper once supportive of Walker in a state where hundreds of his men were born

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<sup>600</sup> “The Advantages of Filibustering,” *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 20, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024738/1857-03-20/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). This is an extended version of the publication referenced in the above citation.

<sup>601</sup> “National Morality,” *Lewisburg Chronicle* (Lewisburg, PA), May 1, 1857. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85055197/1857-05-01/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

and came only days before Walker's retreat back to New Orleans. It marked the end of hope that most placed in his ability to retain control over Nicaragua.

However, newspapers were not the only form of criticism that Walker faced. Personal testimonies surely played a role in affecting how people perceived Walker, especially after his return to the United States. In particular, two colonizers who joined Walker, through their personal writings and delayed publications, offered at least some idea of what type of health criticisms entered public discourse via direct participants of the colonization effort. The first of which, Elleanore Callaghan, arrived with her family to settle Nicaragua. The second, James Thomas, a Black man born into slavery who has been discussed earlier, arrived there looking for, as he described, an unsure opportunity that was compelled by a strong imagination for a prospective future. These post-war writings reflected the type of discourse that colonizers had about their adventures.

The later-recorded writings of Elleanore Callaghan offer a glimpse into how civilian colonizers experienced the Walker-led Nicaragua. Callaghan, like thousands of other migrants, moved to Nicaragua to colonize the newly stabilized republic as regenerators for the region. Callaghan highlighted the prevalence of death as a circadian experience for the colonizers. She described how “[d]eath had become so familiar, to me, that I could have no pleasure then to assist the dying, and to help bury the Dead.” However, Callaghan mitigated the power of this statement by claiming a sense of Christian stewardship through her actions, stating “[i]t is so pleasant to know you have cheered or been of assistance to some poor unfortunate, it has paid me often for my lon[e]liness [sic] and misery, to think I have done someone good.”<sup>602</sup> Callaghan

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<sup>602</sup> Callaghan, *The Reminiscences of Elleanore (Callaghan) Ratterman*, 320.

witnessed her family suffer from the fever “of that country.” One-by-one, her niece, her sister, and her brother-in-law all perished from fevers.<sup>603</sup> Her writings also reinforce some of the criticisms that haunted Walker in the American newspapers. Despite his boasting about a proper diet being provided for his men, Callaghan noted that the Americans were by the time of her arrival at least relying on mule meat for sustenance.<sup>604</sup> She also insisted that aguardiente, a local alcoholic beverage, was the “cause of so many of Walker’s men dying.” Thus, her brief summary reveals that dietary issues and the prevalence of disease served as primary points of concern for would-be regenerators.

Similarly, health concerns also seeped into the writings of another colonizer, the aforementioned freedman named James Thomas. Thomas, born a slave, became a freedman and worked as a barber. Upon arrival in Nicaragua, Thomas and his nephew attempted to procure positions of employment that would allow them to participate as regenerators. Thomas described how, after his arrival, a man informed him that he stood “a good chance of staying here,” implying that he would likely die. The man then informed him that they lost eight out of one hundred men in a single day. Thomas then realized that “when a man was taken sick and sent to the hospital you might expect to hear the dead march next.”<sup>605</sup> He also contended that fevers, and not the enemy, served as the “worst Enemy” for Walker’s soldiers.<sup>606</sup> Thus, Thomas expressed the lack of hope that many of Walker’s men shared about their own futures, a despair that they only

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<sup>603</sup> Callaghan, *The Reminiscences of Elleanor* (Callaghan) Ratterman, 317.

<sup>604</sup> Callaghan, *The Reminiscences of Elleanor* (Callaghan) Ratterman, 320.

<sup>605</sup> Thomas, *From Tennessee Slave to St. Louis Entrepreneur*, 136.

<sup>606</sup> Thomas, *From Tennessee Slave to St. Louis Entrepreneur*, 138.

realized after arriving there and one particularly connected to their prospective health concerns.

The choices that both Elleanore Callaghan and James Thomas made in deciding what to discuss about their journeys in Nicaragua act as a microcosm for understanding what other colonizers surely discussed upon their returns to the United States. They reveal that colonizers brought back with them tales of desperation and diminishing constitution. Their tales certainly reinforced the rumors that appeared in the newspapers, which only would have given credence to concerns that Walker failed to fortify the health conditions in Nicaragua for potential settlers. They reinforced notions that he failed to protect the Transit Route by revealing stories that evinced the totality of catastrophic medical conditions that awaited Americans in a Walker-led Nicaragua. Even if Walker could be excused for the presence of cholera and fever, he could not be forgiven for the condition of the hospitals and its fundamental inability to improve the chances of those sent to it.

In fact, a third would-be regenerator, named David Deaderick III, did express these concerns in his personal writings published in *The Atlantic Monthly* between Walker's third and fourth expeditions to Central America. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Deaderick, who wrote under the alias of Samuel Absalom, described himself as a regenerator who fully believed in the message that Walker professed and hoped to take part in a mission of improving Nicaragua. If perhaps the writings of Elleanore Callaghan and James Thomas represent the uncertain anxieties about Nicaragua and are not to be read as reflective of conscious attacks against the grey-eyed general, there is no mistaking that Deaderick's published critique illuminates the bitterness of the disillusioned

colonizers who returned angry and disheartened with the entirety of the affair. High desertion rates after the fall of Granada suggest that many soldiers eventually shared the opinions of Deaderick and would have espoused such feelings upon their returns. In 1859, while Walker recruited for his final expedition to Central America, Deaderick wrote this memoir to deter potential recruits from joining Walker. His memoirs stated how his soldiers despised him as a leader and how Walker failed to live up to the ideals of liberation and civility that he proclaimed in his fundraising campaigns.

David Deaderick understood the centrality of health to regeneration. He emphasized Walker's inability to maintain a healthy Nicaragua while stressing his own support for regeneration. He even stated that it was his intention to go to Nicaragua and help Walker "regenerate the God-forsaken Spanish-Americans."<sup>607</sup> Though he did not shy away from calling himself and others filibusters, he also deliberately reasserted the concept of regeneration by calling Walker's army "Central American regenerators."<sup>608</sup> Instead, Deaderick claimed that Walker and his officers failed to adhere to the ideal of regeneration. Deaderick stated that many of the filibusters had lost hope in "regenerating Central America."<sup>609</sup> He contended that most simply were happy if they could "fill their bellies."<sup>610</sup> His writing hints at how poor living conditions encouraged soldiers to abandon the regeneration ideals that brought them to Nicaragua.

Deaderick also provided more subtle allusions triangulating race, health, and regeneration that most readers would have understood. He described their Central

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<sup>607</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 3.

<sup>608</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 4.

<sup>609</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 15.

<sup>610</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 15.



American enemies as “yellow-skinned invaders.”<sup>611</sup> However, he also argued that Walker’s poor leadership prevented the “flag of Regeneration” from waving “over the hills and valleys of Nicaragua.”<sup>612</sup> He insisted that if the filibusters would have been allowed to choose their own officers and had been properly furnished, then the desire for regeneration that so many of his targeted readers aspired to achieve would have occurred. Thus, Deaderick framed his narrative as one in agreement with Wells’ ideas about Manifest Destiny and race while still providing a plausible explanation for their failure to acquire Nicaragua.

In fact, Deaderick paid close attention to the severity of disease in Nicaragua while illuminating Walker’s failures to combat it. He focused on how fevers and disease diminished the health of the recruits. While describing the health of the veteran filibusters, Deaderick called them “fevereaten.”<sup>613</sup> He also explained how prolonged presence in Nicaragua diminished the health of soldiers until they were no longer effective combatants. Realizing how diverse Walker’s pool of support was, especially in New Orleans, he further emphasized that Americans, Germans, Irish, French, and English were all affected by these fevers.<sup>614</sup> Thus, Walker could save no man from what Wells considered to be a gross exaggeration of Nicaragua’s state of health.

Deaderick also acutely honed in on New Orleanians’ understanding of seasoning while describing fevers. In the antebellum South, seasoning became a prominent theory

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<sup>611</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 147.

<sup>612</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 147.

<sup>613</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 10.

<sup>614</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 15.

to explain immigrant deaths.<sup>615</sup> Newspapers throughout New Orleans adopted this idea when writing about epidemics. During the 1853 yellow fever outbreak, local newspapers attempted to veil its danger to the local population by insisting that it was only a problem for the newly arrived and not for the true locals. However, as previously mentioned, Southerners, especially their physicians, had been gravitating towards a theory that placed the South, especially the Gulf Coast, along the same disease gradient as Central America and the Caribbean. For those tempted to travel to Nicaragua, it was not a great intellectual jump to believe that one “seasoned” in New Orleans would already be “seasoned” for Nicaragua. Deaderick, knowing that many of the filibusters came from the Gulf Coast, warned his readers that “a great majority of the filibusters” were “turning yellow, shaken by daily chills and fever.”<sup>616</sup> He described Walker as leading a “crowd of yellow men.”<sup>617</sup> He further emphasized that foreigners were the most affected by the diseases to dispel any notion of already being “seasoned” for the job.

Responding to the fears and concerns of potential Gulf South supporters, Deaderick constantly alluded to the threat of yellow fever when discussing the health of filibusters. He paid close attention to the jaundiced look of the filibusters. He described one of the first filibusters whom he met as having skin “as yellow and glazed as parchment.”<sup>618</sup> In another passage, he once again reinforced the image of yellow fever by stating how the filibusters suffered from “a morbid, yellowish glaze, almost universal, on

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<sup>615</sup> James H. Cassedy, “Medical Men and the Ecology of the Old South.” In *Science and Medicine in the Old South*, 168.

<sup>616</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 15-6.

<sup>617</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 15-6.

<sup>618</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 4-5.

their faces, and an unnatural listlessness and utter lack of animation.”<sup>619</sup> Others he described as having “unalterably yellow” skin.<sup>620</sup> Deaderick hoped that such allusions would demonstrate Walker’s failure to regenerate the region.

Deaderick also contrasted the health of the filibusters to those back home. Newcomers were described as healthy. The older soldiers were the ones described as having daily chills and perpetual diarrhea.<sup>621</sup> He contrasted the “boisterous hilarity and rugged healthiness of our late Californian fellow-travelers” to the “spirit of careless, disease-worn, doomed men” who traveled with Walker.<sup>622</sup> He depicted the veterans as “mere skeletons.”<sup>623</sup> He described the veterans as the least combat effective men in the army. Thus, Deaderick insinuated that time spent in Nicaragua had an inverse effect on health. It was simply better to not go.

Deaderick often depicted the existence of diseases and ailments as something that attacked entire regiments to emphasize the miasmatic atmosphere. In the aforementioned description of “feverateen filibusters,” he stressed the universality of the fevers. He emphasized the common experiences of regiments experiencing chills, of having yellow skin, and of melancholy. Entire regiments, such as one under the command of Colonel Waters, succumbed to disease.<sup>624</sup>

For those who did not hone in on his subtler assertions, Deaderick outright challenged the grey-eyed doctor’s ability to provide adequate healthcare for his sick and

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<sup>619</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 10.

<sup>620</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 31.

<sup>621</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 19.

<sup>622</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 10.

<sup>623</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 15.

<sup>624</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 51.

wounded. Deaderick described Walker's hospital as a "wretched hole."<sup>625</sup> He stated that the wounded did not receive proper care and were only giving the appearance of being treated to maintain the moral of the healthy troops. Deaderick's attack on Walker's hospital highlighted the practice of Christian stewardship. Physicians, during this era, focused on the act of treating a patient more than the results.<sup>626</sup> Physicians associated the humoral symptoms of pestilence with acts against the laws of nature and those of cholera with intemperance and filth.<sup>627</sup> Cholera was the primary killer in Nicaragua during the war and also possibly took the life of Walker's fiancée. Because disease was God's punishment for a victim's spiritual transgressions, a victim's fate was already determined by God, but the fate of the physician's soul could still be secured through the motions of caring. In highlighting Walker's failure to care for the sick, Deaderick contended that Walker cared more about the presentation than the results. He insinuated that Walker knew that he could always get more recruits, but he needed to keep the healthy ones happy for as long as possible.

Deaderick did not challenge the rationality of Christian stewardship but, instead, argued that Walker's actions were a mere performance. He insisted that Walker's surgeons did not actually provide care for their patients. He stated that the surgeons at Rivas did not even so much as wash their patients or provide them with the means to wash themselves.<sup>628</sup> And reiterating the potential of miasmas, he described the climate of

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<sup>625</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 26.

<sup>626</sup> Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America's Hospital System* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987), 48-58.

<sup>627</sup> Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers*, 45.

<sup>628</sup> Deaderick III, "The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster," 46.

the hospital as “malignant to strangers.”<sup>629</sup> He said this lack of care meant that the “smallest cut” healed only after “long hesitation.”<sup>630</sup> Deaderick wanted it to be clear that Walker, a proud Protestant, treated Christian stewardship as a façade to deter further recruits from dying for Walker.

Walker responded to Deaderick in his own publication, which was released as a means to gather more funds and support for what became his final expedition to Central America in 1860. It is clear through Walker’s memoir, titled *The War in Nicaragua*, that Walker knew that he had to address Deaderick’s message of health. It is also clear that he knew that he could not deny the presence of cholera, unlike Wells. In this memoir, Walker addressed the concept of regeneration, the presence of yellow fever, cholera, and miasmas as well as his ability to provide health care for not just his own soldiers but for the enemies as well.

Walker also discussed the existence of fevers in Nicaragua to justify his presence. Walker specifically mentioned the presence of fever in Granada, which was the old capital of the *Legitimistas*.<sup>631</sup> There, he argued that it exacerbated the health conditions of those already suffering from cholera. That particular fever affected American soldiers, residents as well as those employed along the Transit Route, the key route to reach California.

Walker emphasized that the Central American allies also suffered from fevers. In Leon, Guatemalans, whom Walker considered more alien to Nicaragua than the

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<sup>629</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 46.

<sup>630</sup> Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” 46.

<sup>631</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 213.

naturalized Americans under his command, suffered heavily from fevers.<sup>632</sup> He further stated that Costa Ricans were sick from fever, which severely reduced their garrisons in San Juan.<sup>633</sup> However, unlike Deaderick, Walker never provided descriptors to convey the presence of any specific fevers and left them as rather generalized, miasmatic creations.

In fact, Walker evoked strong images of miasmas in this memoir, as well as his belief in them. Relying on both metaphoric and literal interpretations, Walker stated that “every one [sic] inhales to some extent the vapors and miasms floating in the air he hourly breathes.”<sup>634</sup> Maintaining the atmospheric imagery of miasmas, he also mentioned the climate of Nicaragua as having “balmy effects of the soft, mild air,” which he described as “different from the atmosphere of northern climates.”<sup>635</sup> Thus, Walker alluded to Deaderick’s message on seasoning without explicitly accepting or rejecting Deaderick’s warning.

However, Walker’s primary focus on disease concerned cholera, the disease that took his fiancée from him in New Orleans. He described cholera as “a more fearful enemy to the Americans than any by which they were surrounded.”<sup>636</sup> Walker stated how cholera depleted the numbers on one of his brigs stationed at Point Ycaco, which compelled others to desert.<sup>637</sup> He also stated that once back at sea, the potency of cholera diminished.<sup>638</sup> When cholera struck in Granada, Walker implied that his enemies may

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<sup>632</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 242.

<sup>633</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 359.

<sup>634</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, preface.

<sup>635</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 46.

<sup>636</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 328.

<sup>637</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 84.

<sup>638</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 86.

have known the cause.<sup>639</sup> Walker also admitted that cholera struck them at Virgin Bay, though he insisted it did not deter American spirits there.<sup>640</sup>

Most importantly, it was in this memoir that Walker outlined his strategy for combatting cholera. Walker contended that cholera was even more damaging to his Central American enemies than to his own army. When describing how his own incoming recruits replaced those already succumbed to disease and battle, he insisted that his forces were increasing while the Costa Ricans were suffering from the “double cancers of cholera and desertion.”<sup>641</sup> He mentioned how Central American troops stationed in Leon succumbed to both cholera and fever.<sup>642</sup> It was also in this memoir that Walker revealed that he had contemplated the concept of biological warfare.

Walker also refuted Deaderick’s claims concerning his ability to provide healthcare by offering his own account of his hospital. Despite realizing their defeat at Rivas, Walker emphasized that his army delayed the full retreat until the surgeons were capable of securing transportation for all non-mortally wounded soldiers.<sup>643</sup> Walker stated that, under the leadership of his acting surgeon general, his hospital was kept clean and patient-care was good. He specified that they maintained a healthy diet for their patients and had ample supplies and surgical instruments. He then continued by asserting that “the fictions which have been published concerning the want of medical and surgical attention to the inmates of the hospital were created for the purpose of pandering to a

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<sup>639</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 158.

<sup>640</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 213.

<sup>641</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 207.

<sup>642</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 242.

<sup>643</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 202.

morbid public opinion to excuse “the faults and crimes of those who deserted” the war.<sup>644</sup> Thus, Walker attacked the credibility of Deaderick, whose pseudonym may have kept his identity hidden from Walker.<sup>645</sup>

### Conclusion

Even if he did not go to Nicaragua with a healthcare message, the presence of cholera allowed Walker an avenue to portray himself as a savior that other regenerators simply could not match. Though Walker lacked battlefield stratagem, he made up for it with his understanding of how to manage soldiers and win a battle of attrition over the course of extended campaigns. He utilized his medical knowledge to not only protect his own soldiers from cholera but to also outlast his enemies in areas where cholera appeared. Proper hygiene allowed his soldiers to occupy land abandoned by enemies. Support from native officers and politicians allowed him to focus solely on his own soldiers and in limited areas. Walker understood that Americans would comprehend Nicaragua’s safety in terms of how the region affected Americans. While he worked with native officers, he successfully maintained the safety of the Transit Route, which made him appear as a savior and regenerator. Such alliances with native elites also allowed Walker to devote his attention to the development of well-run hospitals operated by an extended professional staff. In turn, American media and his allies portrayed his success by discussing the region’s healthiness and stability. While Nicaragua appeared stable, the American media took little interest in reporting about disease, even when it appeared and, instead, highlighted Walker’s education and success.

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<sup>644</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 367-8.

<sup>645</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 367-8.



However, William Walker's ability to maintain a healthy Nicaragua lasted only as long as he had support from native elites. He won the war against the *Legitimistas* by being able to focus only on his own soldiers and take advantage of their healthiness at the expense of enemies. The stability of the Walker-Rivas regime during its initial months allowed for conditions that made cholera less prevalent, though it never totally disappeared. Without warfare, the unsanitary military camp conditions and battlefields disappeared, which made diseases less prevalent. Thus, months of stability provided an illusion that Walker could and should lead Nicaragua, which ultimately led to a fissure between President Patricio Rivas and the eager commander.

The eruption of the Walker-Rivas regime alongside the continued presence of an international coalition designed to oust the American regenerator proved too much for the young commander to manage. Disease swept through the countryside while his hospitals failed to maintain even an image that they brought comfort and care to the patients, sick or wounded. Such conditions encouraged high rates of desertion. After Granada's destruction, Walker lost *El Nicaraguense*, his only literary tool for combatting these stories while present in Nicaragua. Ultimately, the American media exhibited great apprehension for his and the country's future as displayed by the re-occurring narratives that emphasized disease. Such narratives came from ships carrying cholera and from deserters returning to the United States.

After his return to the United States, the debate about Walker as a regenerator continued. American newspapers followed his movements while detractors wrote scathing critiques against him. Walker, in turn, took part in the debate through lectures, tours, and his own memoir. Enough hope for his success remained or at least enough

ambiguity over whom to blame for Nicaragua's turmoil existed to compel, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, hundreds of men to take part in three more regeneration expeditions before Walker finally met his death in September 1860.

However, as demonstrated by *De Bow's Review* only months after his passing, the idea of Anglo-Saxon intervention in less-developed regions as a health mission outlived Walker. *De Bow's Review* took up the mantle while simultaneously divorcing itself of its former contributor by crafting an extended essay that provided a far more detailed medical argument as to why the world needed Anglo-Saxons colonizing other lands. Thus, it demonstrated that the debate existed beyond the realm of one man but proliferated throughout the South.

CHAPTER VI REGENERATION THROUGH RACIAL REORDERING  
OF NICARAGUAN SOCIETY

“Slavery! Shall I look upon that fearful system in a more favorable light but this visit to the South? No! God forbid! My heart recoils from it, as from a deadly poison – Becoming an eye witness, tends, but to strengthen my aversion to this institution in all its forms.”- The journal of Amy Morris Bradley<sup>646</sup>

“From yesterday’s paper learned that it is really true that Walker is elected President of Nicaragua. How I admire the Spirit of that man who holds such a reckless set – of men as it is said he has – in such good condition or rather that he governs them as he does – what a power there must be in him. It is scarcely strange that he thinks himself invincible! Wonder if I shall ever see him!” – The journal of Amy Morris Bradley<sup>647</sup>

Introduction

Today, most people who are familiar with Amy Morris Bradley remember her as a nurse for the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. Others recall her work organizing free schools for white children during Reconstruction in North Carolina. Some scholars even highlight her time abroad in Costa Rica, where she worked as a governess, seamstress, and school teacher. Generally, scholars have utilized her as an example of an archetypal steward of middle-class progressivism. When they have examined her writings from Costa Rica, they have either focused on how her ideas reified Manifest Destiny or have portrayed her accounts as part of a greater trend of travel-writing that economically and socially privileged nineteenth-century women crafted.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> Letterbook of Amy Morris Bradley, Box 2, Folder 5, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Henceforth, this collection will simply be referred to as the Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

<sup>647</sup> August 23, 1856, Diary and Letterbook of Amy Morris Bradley, Box 2, Folder 6, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

<sup>648</sup> Examples of such scholarly approaches include “Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women’s History” by Robert E. May and *Traveling Economies* by Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman. May depicts Bradley as an atypical, in that most supporters were men, embodiment of filibustering fervor. Steadman portrays Bradley as representing middle-class white mobility in the nineteenth century. Jennifer Bernhardt

To an extent, such interpretations are accurate. She did come from a respectable New England family. But Bradley lived on the margins of this white, middle-class culture.<sup>649</sup> Financial shortcomings had, up until this point of her life, prevented her from performing her proper role as an embodiment of the cult of domesticity that defined middle-class women. Instead, economic inadequacies necessitated that she procure an income, which she did as an educator and as a housekeeper before finally accepting a position as a governess and tutor for the children of a wealthy Costa Rican family. However, Bradley's pride ultimately left her stranded in Costa Rica. Her Anglo-American middle-class sensibilities clashed with the treatment that she believed she received from her Spanish American patron. She could not accept her position as a white servant to a person of color with paternalist notions. She quit her job with the family, which left her in a financial debt to them and prevented her return to the United States. On her own, she worked as a seamstress until she opened her own school in Costa Rica.

Amy Morris Bradley arrived in Costa Rica shortly before the May 1854 *coup d'état* that sparked the civil war in Nicaragua. She found herself living in a foreign country on the outer edge of her idea of where civilization ended. She inhabited the periphery of the Central American prize of the United States, Nicaragua. When war erupted between Costa Rica and William Walker in March 1856, she discovered herself

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Steadman, *Traveling Economies: American Women's Travel Writing* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2007); and Robert E. May, "Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women's History: Gender, Filibustering, and America's Quest for Empire," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (Dec. 2005), 1155-1188.

<sup>649</sup> On the other hand, one can also read Dianne Cashman's *Headstrong: The Biography of Amy Morris Bradley*, for a more focused examination of where Bradley stood in life, for her biography highlights the ebb and flow of hardships that challenged Bradley's birth-status. Dianne Cashman, *Headstrong: The Biography of Amy Morris Bradley* (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Pub. Co., 1990).

on the fringes of a war zone that threatened her safety in this socio-political environ of perceived backwardness and savagery.

Amy Morris Bradley's outlier status is precisely what makes her writings about slavery, race, and William Walker so compelling. Bradley attempted to participate in a greater American discourse about the prospects of a Walker-led Nicaragua. Her geographic and financial situations limited her access to this discourse. Nevertheless, her journal entries offer glimpses into why an anti-slavery New Englander could find Walker's message so compelling while standing against the crux of its message - Nicaragua required African slavery managed by Anglo-American planters to complete its regeneration. Bradley desperately wanted a transformation in Central America that would reaffirm her lost position of importance as a white, middle-class participant of Western civilization and remove her from the stigma of servility that stranded her in Costa Rica. For despite such differing attitudes, Bradley remained a loyal supporter of Walker throughout his tenure in Nicaragua.

In fact, Amy Morris Bradley shared many of the racial and religious prejudices that William Walker and his allies held, which helped her justify both his presence in Nicaragua and hers in Costa Rica. Bradley certainly distinguished the potential for civility in her native neighbors by their racial appearances, discerning the differences between "a real Spaniard" from her "half American amigo."<sup>650</sup> She associated Catholicism with the less-pure white races, which compelled her to see it as an anathema to civilization and modernity. She noted her enigmatic shock at the discovery that her

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<sup>650</sup> December 1853, Diary of Amy Morris Bradley (Vol. III), Box 2, Folder 4, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

friend Doctor Young was a Roman Catholic, for she found his manners, education, and success to be contradictory to the intellectual limitations that she assumed about Catholics.<sup>651</sup> Such beliefs showed that white Americans, especially regenerators, laid claims about their own value by contrasting themselves to the lack of value perceived in the non-white, non-Protestant races that they encountered.

Her observations paralleled those of William Walker, at least enough that both would have agreed that Anglo-American teachings benefitted the “lesser-civilized” Spanish Americans. Walker espoused a rhetoric-laden in scientific racism, much of which he drew from the scholarship of the famed Mobile physician Doctor Josiah Nott. Scholars, such as George M. Frederickson and Reginald Horsman, demonstrate that the rhetoric of scientific racism matured in the 1840s, and, by the 1850s, many of America’s top intellectuals espoused ideas grounded in scientific racism.<sup>652</sup> The plantocracy had greatly benefited from the implications associated with Nott’s ideas and had successfully steered the public towards a conversation premised on biological determinism: the belief that biological differences and not social circumstances best explained the perceived inferiority of Black populations. Nott and Walker both posited that God had placed Providential limitations on mulattoes, Africans, and Indians, their justification for African slavery. And as Horsman contends, decades of American interests in Anglo and Teutonic heritage fermented into a belief that such people rested on top of a Godly-ordained racial

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<sup>651</sup> Amy Morris Bradley did not mention his full name.

<sup>652</sup> George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Hanover, NH, 1987, originally published by Harper Row Publishers in 1971), 43-96; and Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist*, 170-200. Both scholars highlight the rise of scientific racism in a series of chapters that cover the 1840s and 1850s.

hierarchy that complemented the polygenesis theory of Nott.<sup>653</sup> The regenerators, in turn, enthusiastically sought to replace all Spanish-American administrators with white civilizing agents, who would then replicate Southern society in Central America.

Though Bradley, like many of the hundreds of Northerners who joined Walker, opposed the institution of slavery, her opposition to it did not mean that she, nor they, opposed the idea that an Anglo-American civilization, no matter how flawed, would still be an improvement in Nicaragua. Bradley certainly accepted the notion that Anglo-American civilizing missions could work. She saw the political battles of Central America being between “Serviles and Liberals.”<sup>654</sup> Such a distinction suggests that Bradley recognized that Central Americans could participate in Western civilization but that many remained backwards due to social conditioning, a belief that should appear paradoxical to the hard-lined scientific racism of the regenerators. Yet, in her mind, Catholicism and Spanish culture ultimately diminished progress for Central America, which resulted in degenerate serviles, a word used quite frequently by the regenerators. This supposedly held back the region from its potential glory. Thus, even if she could not agree as to why the Spanish Americans were backwards, she agreed that they were, which was enough to support intervention. Such views would have been highly reflective of those shared by many of the New York- and Pennsylvanian-born regenerators who went with Walker.

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<sup>653</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981). Throughout this book, Horsman demonstrates a several-decade process in the United States that ultimately blurred how Americans thought about differences in whiteness, which led to a greater vision of Anglo-Saxonism consuming the identities of the Teutonic peoples.

<sup>654</sup> October 12, 1857, Diary and Letterbook of Amy Morris Bradley, Box 2, Folder 6, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

More importantly, Walker also allowed a diverse array of immigrants and Americans, even those that would not be deemed white in the United States, to participate as stewards of regeneration. This effectively improved their potential social status by making them protectors of Western civilization. The diversity of the regeneration army showed that Walker's call to arms reached a variety of people. While a complete breakdown of who colonized Nicaragua with Walker remains elusive, Dr. Alejandro Bolaños Geyer offers a demographic analysis of the regeneration army, as it was recorded in 1857. It contextualizes the presence of 1027 combatants. Of those, only 674 were born in the United States. Others came from over twenty international regions, including Ireland, Germany, Prussia, England, France, Scotland, Canada, and even one from Bengal. Within the United States, regenerators came from at least 29 different states, territories, and districts. The five most frequent places of birth were New York with 174 births, Louisiana with 77, Pennsylvania with 51, Tennessee with 42, and Kentucky with 40. Ten other states had at least 10 soldiers represented in the regeneration army.<sup>655</sup> All of these men, as well as the hundreds of civilian male and female colonizers of similar backgrounds, responded to the same call for civilizing Nicaragua, a region which they perceived to be dilapidated.

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<sup>655</sup> Box 4, Folder 120a, Callender I. Fayssoux Collection of William Walker Papers, 1855-1860, The Latin American Library, Tulane, New Orleans, LA. (Henceforth, this collection will be labeled as the Fayssoux Collection at Tulane.) Geyer offered a summary of his demographic findings for use in the collection.





Figure 15. Walker's soldiers after a battle, in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper<sup>656</sup>

This chapter seeks to contextualize the racial ordering that Walker sought and its subsequent discourse in the public sphere to understand why people such as Amy Morris Bradley found it necessary to support Walker, despite differences in political goals and ideals. It seeks to understand why, even as late as 1860, hundreds of men, mostly those along the Gulf Coast, still found cause to support Walker. His fate rested on his ability to convince others that he could offer a solution to Nicaragua's instability. Those who continued to support him either supposed that he could or, like Bradley, desperately hoped that he would. They did not have to believe or pursue every aspect of the regeneration message to follow Walker. Walker and his literary allies took great efforts to

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<sup>656</sup> *Nicaragua - Fillibusters sic Reposing After the Battle in Their Quarters at the Convent*. 1856, in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 3, 1856, p. 336. The Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/93508536/>.

make his racial message as attractive as possible to as many Americans as possible. The regenerators offered a message that allowed for elites and outliers to participate in the recreation of Southern society in the tropics by allowing immigrants and Americans, rich and poor, whites and non-whites to act as a collective against a savage and servile set of others in need of American help. In the process, this participation provided a path for all regenerators to whiten their own social status, or at least distance themselves from their previous less-white statuses, by contrasting themselves against those in Nicaragua whom they paternalistically would guide through the process of developing a proper civilization.

#### Walker and the Perceived Inferiorities of Spanish Americans

William Walker and the regenerators pushed for a top-down racial reordering of society. They sought to establish Anglo-Americans as the heads of a grand civilizing mission designed to stabilize the war-torn nation. They pursued a restructuring of Nicaraguan society designed to displace the remnants of the *criollo* leadership, engender *mestizos*, *landinos* and *mulattoes* out of existence in Nicaragua, and replace Indian peasant labor with fresh, African slaves.

To do so, they had to convince others that Spanish Americans were inferior leaders and ultimately a lingering impediment to Nicaragua's regeneration. They challenged Spanish American legitimacy through a language that supported the type of biological determinism spouted by Southern intellectual leaders while remaining just ambivalent enough about the causes of Spanish American shortcomings to remain attractive to those who, like Amy Morris Bradley, espoused feelings that environmental impediments best explained cultural shortcomings in people. To do so, the regenerators

relied on a language that specifically juxtaposed the Spanish-American world against a civilized world, to highlight their absence from civility.

Driving this message was the scientific research of a Mobile, Alabama scientist and physician named Doctor Josiah Nott, whose conclusions about the biological distinctions of races influenced the Nicaraguan regeneration message, with but a few nuanced exceptions that will be discussed later. Other scholars, particularly Reginald Horsman and George Frederickson, have previously highlighted the popularity of Josiah Nott and his ideas during the late antebellum period.<sup>657</sup> These scholars have shown that Nott's writings were highly regarded throughout the Western world and particularly in the American South. Nott combined his research on yellow fever with his inquiries into human origins to posit a polygenesis theory that categorized humans into over twenty races that he distinguished based on perceived and real biological differences, such as resistances to diseases.

Doctor William Walker was well-aware of Doctor Josiah Nott's writings and adopted most of his ideas into his regeneration message. As previously mentioned, during the early months of the Rivas Regime, Walker employed James Nott, the brother of Josiah, as one of his primary physicians. Walker, himself a physician and editor of the *New Orleans Crescent*, likely read some of Nott's writings, including his publication in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* in March 1848.<sup>658</sup> That same year, Nott also released his most-esteemed study of yellow fever, titled *The Cause of Yellow Fever*,

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<sup>657</sup> Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 75-82; Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile*, 170-200.

<sup>658</sup> Josiah Nott, "Yellow Fever Contrasted with Bilious Fever- Reasons for Believing It a Disease Sui Generis – Its Mode of Propagation – Remote Cause – Probable Insect or Animalcular Origin, &c," *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* vol. iv (March 1848), 563-601.

which he also published in New Orleans. In 1855, during the same year that Walker arrived in Nicaragua, Nott released the seventh edition of *Types of Mankind*, which Nott used to challenge the monogenesis theory of mankind and, instead, assert his own polygenesis theory.<sup>659</sup> Furthermore, *DeBow's Review*, a journal to which Walker had previously contributed, often mentioned the research of Josiah Nott. In fact, in Walker's 1860 memoir, Walker even referenced Nott's conclusions about African survivability in the Caribbean.

Nott's conclusions about inherent intellectual limitations served as the crux of the plantocracy's arguments for slavery in the 1850s. Nott determined that, like health distinctions, innate rational restrictions existed within certain races, the limits of each race representing which rung of a racial hierarchy they belonged. Nott, and others like him, argued that the combined health and intellectual distinctions exhibited God's plan for what type of labor different people were destined to perform, as well as where they would perform their labors. They used these findings to reinforce slavery, for it allowed slavers to bypass arguments about the morality of slavery and replace them with arguments that contended that Blacks had no other option than to participate productively in a civilization only as slaves. God wanted them there, according to Nott. Walker understood the active interests that planters had in Nott's writings and acted as the first Southerner to try to colonize new territories successfully using Nott's writings as a blueprint.

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<sup>659</sup> Josiah C. Nott and George R. Gliddon, *Types of Mankind: Or Or Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon Their Natural, Geographical, Philological, and Biblical History*, Seventh edition (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1855).

These supposed findings allowed Anglo-Americans to take pride in their own perceived natural superiorities. Though Nott noted nuances between the white races, he ultimately argued against any important differences that warranted hierarchal distinctions in their social rankings. However, his categorizing allowed for ambiguities in how to determine who qualified as white and who constituted impure races. Southern Mediterraneans, such as the Spanish, could be, and ultimately were, perceived as less white than the Anglo-Saxons and Teutonic peoples that Nott clearly meant. Such beliefs pervaded throughout much of the Western world and could be found in the writings of many biological geographers. Writers of popular geographic studies such as M. Vuillet, the author of *The Geography of Nature; Or, The World as It Is*, relied on explicit observational deconstructions of different people's ethnic makeups to draw conclusions about their habits and customs and reinforced the notion that degrees of civilization existed that paralleled Nott's hierarchy.<sup>660</sup> Few of such works, if any, challenged the basic notion that Anglo-Saxons and Teutonic peoples rested at the top of the world's social hierarchy.

Similarly, William Walker espoused an almost identical rhetoric in *The War in Nicaragua*. As will be examined in this chapter, Walker and Nott shared similar views that Black Africans proliferated in the tropics. Both accepted a racial hierarchy and had esteemed views about Anglo-Saxons and Teutonic peoples. Both believed in the inferiority of mixed-race peoples. And, ultimately, both supported Anglo-American controlled-slave institutions, which they saw as the only solution for ensuring stability in

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<sup>660</sup> M. Vuillet, *The Geography of Nature, Or, the World as It IS* (Boston: Hickling, Swan, and Brown, 1856). Throughout this work, Vuillet relies on tropes about racial distinctions and how they affect behavior.

regions with Black populations. Using Nott's writings as a blueprint, William Walker, and his supporters continuously attached a civilizing message to their colonization campaign, one laden with racial overtones that attracted a diverse set of regenerators from all over the Western world.

At the forefront of arguments made by the regenerators rested the claim that the Spanish Americans were only, at best, partially civilized, a charge which they placed against both the region and its inhabitants. These accusations usually resulted from the regenerators juxtaposing American civilization against the so-called barbaric Central Americans. Walker, for instance, argued that the colonization of Nicaragua resulted from an inevitable, if not Providential, necessity that pitted barbarism against civilization. Though his memoir appeared in 1860, earlier variants of this narrative seeped into public discourse from the regenerators and their supporters, all of which challenged Spanish American civility and progress.

*El Nicaraguense* served as the premiere media outlet for promoting this concept. In an article titled "What We are Striving For," the organ of regeneration described the region as "savage." It further described the area as one of "barbarism." It reiterated that "barbarism and savage despotism" impeded "one of the loveliest lands" from redemption.<sup>661</sup> Likewise, in another article, while discussing "the regeneration of Central America," the newspaper contended that the Spanish American enemies of William Walker waged a war of "imbecility and barbarism" against "democracy and civilization."<sup>662</sup> Such articles routinely filled *El Nicaraguense*, which the regenerators

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<sup>661</sup> "What We are Striving for," *El Nicaraguense*, October 11, 1856.

<sup>662</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November. 15, 1856.

used precisely because they understood that it served as the primary source that other newspapers throughout the United States relied on for transmitting information about Nicaragua, often resulting in direct duplications of the original articles.

Other American regenerators made similar comments that marked their understanding of Nicaragua's perceived backwardness. Charles Doubleday, a regenerator who arrived to serve the *Democraticos* before Walker and independent of him, provided a similar narrative. In his own memoir, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, which was published in 1886, Doubleday spent considerable time reflecting on the wild state of much of Nicaragua's countryside. Doubleday described, through his subchapter headings, the "animated forest life" of Nicaragua and his "adventure with monkeys" while also marveling over the unexploited "[g]reat natural resources" of the nation.<sup>663</sup> In doing so, Doubleday implied that the hundreds of years of Spanish settlement failed to culminate in a mature civilization. In fact, Doubleday ultimately described his travels in Nicaragua as occurring within the "domains of savage nature," while offering little discourse about the civility of Nicaraguan communities to balance such a narrative.<sup>664</sup> In another passage, Doubleday once again drew parallels between nature and its native inhabitants while describing the "baying" of howler monkeys, stating, "I was awakened by a combination of howls and screechings which would have done honor to a tribe of wild Indians."<sup>665</sup> Though Doubleday did not release his memoir until decades later, his writings' similarities with those of Walker and of *El Nicaraguense*

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<sup>663</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1886), vii, and 223.

<sup>664</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 87.

<sup>665</sup> Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the "Filibuster" War in Nicaragua*, 18-19.

showed that his words were representative of the ideas that regenerators espoused when they returned to the United States.<sup>666</sup>

Proponents of either biological or environmental determinism would have found much of this language appealing. Either philosophy could be utilized to justify the need for intervention in Nicaragua. These stories informed readers to correlate savagery with the native populations. Biological determinists and other proponents of scientific racism would have seen the depictions of savagery that came with such explanations as evincing the natural potential of Spanish-American peoples. Environmental determinists, such as Amy Morris Bradley, viewed the hegemony of Spanish culture atop primitive Indian cultures as the primary cause for Central American stagnation. For most Americans, the acceptance of the savage Spanish American native would have required little to no convincing. These messages served more as reminders than as teaching tools.

American recipients of the barbaric Spanish American narratives found parallels between these warnings and those offered in the traditional captive narratives of their childhood.<sup>667</sup> Though captive narratives had more popularity during the colonial period, their collective legacy still filtered into how Americans understood Indians. Captive narratives portrayed Indians as savage menaces lurking in the wild. They taught readers to understand that the dangers of the wild did not end with fauna but included the human

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<sup>666</sup> However, Doubleday certainly differed in how liberal he was about his usage of the word savagery. He described the very act of warfare, in which he and the other regenerators participated, as one that historians make “appear attractive” while hiding its “unmitigated savagery,” Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 52.

<sup>667</sup> Tom Englehardt, in *The End of Victory Culture*, correctly demonstrates that the use of captive narratives as a form of coming to terms with perceived white victimization at home and abroad remained a reoccurring theme until the Vietnam War. Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 22-25, 215.



populations that existed within it. For several generations, Anglo-American inhabitants produced first-hand accounts of Indians scalping men and kidnapping women and children. These stories informed readers that through capture, Indians could revert the civilized to more primitive, and sometimes helpless, states of existence.<sup>668</sup> Biological determinist theories only guaranteed the potential limits of races, they did not guarantee a protection against reversion. Comanche and Apache raids in the early decades of the nineteenth century continued to remind Americans of the real savage threat held for them in frontier environments, such as Nicaragua.

Walker, through his filibustering mission in Mexico, positioned himself as the champion of frontier families. Walker described the region of Mexico that he wished to colonize as “one of the most inhospitable regions of the Americas.”<sup>669</sup> He described how “the condition of the upper part of Sonora was,” due to the Apache, “a disgrace to the civilization of the continent.” Walker referred to the colonization problems of that region as the “Apache problem.” He described the frequency of Apache murders, which alluded back to the captive narratives as well as the overall threat that the Apache placed on the

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<sup>668</sup> In particular, two scholars, Lorraine Carroll and Teresa Toulouse, have provided detailed understandings of the importance of captive narratives in the development of colonial-era imperialist ambitions. Carroll, in *Rhetorical Drag*, demonstrates how hidden male authors used literary ventriloquism to explore the ability of captives to retain their proper social customs and roles during captivity and after. She shows how men sought stories that demonstrated the ability of their women to remain civilized, for it gave them a sense of justified order. Similarly, and perhaps ironic when juxtaposed to how regenerators in the 1850s relied on captive narratives, Teresa A. Toulouse demonstrates in *The Captive's Position* how men used captive narratives to understand their own political legitimacy as well as that of the British authorities whom they assumed would save their women from captivity. The failures of the British to understand the importance of this fear, Toulouse demonstrates, served as one of the rifts between the colonists and their royal authorities. Lorraine Carroll, *Rhetorical Drag: Gender, Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2007); and Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and the Royal Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007).

<sup>669</sup> William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile and New York: S.H. Goetzel & Co., 1860), 18.

inhabitants of Guaymas. He described how they murdered children and enslaved women in a “captivity worse than death.” Ultimately, he portrayed the region as lost to civilization, stating that northern Sonora was more under the control of the savage Apaches than it was under the Mexican government. Walker described his own presence there as an “act of humanity” meant to relieve “the frontier from the cruelties of savage war.” James Carson Jamison corroborated this narrative, stating that Walker went to Mexico to “establish himself with an armed following under the patronage of the state of Sonora for the protection of Sonora settlements against the forays of Apache Indians.”<sup>670</sup> Thus, the regenerators positioned the failed Sonora expedition as a credential for their mission in Nicaragua.

Likewise, the regenerators relied on specific examples of Indians acting savagely to press their point. Walker portrayed the “pure Indian” Mariano Mendez as one suffering from “violent passions” and “uncontrolled desires.” Though he admitted that Mendez had courage and experience and was useful to his leaders, he described him as “unfit for civil life,” and “incapable of being subjected to the rigid rules of the military life.” He recounted “daily offenses” that necessitated his eventual removal from service while describing him as a cruel and often disobedient human.<sup>671</sup> Charles Doubleday believed this “son of a cavalier and an Indian mother,” to be “remorseless and cruel.” He contended that Mendez, in warfare, “was savage rather than civilized.” He also stated that “his name was a terror to the enemy,” suggesting that this Indian’s reputation certainly preceded him. Doubleday even stated that Mendez tried to stab him in the breast after he

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<sup>670</sup> James Carson Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua: Or, Reminiscences of an Officer of the American Phalanx* (Columbia, MO: E. W. Stephens Pub. Co., 1909), 21.

<sup>671</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 43.

and his American companions tried to intervene as Mendez attempted to hang prisoners while reiterating the presence of his “savage expression.”<sup>672</sup> Even Mendez’s diet served as a point of grotesque fascination for Doubleday, as he described how the Indian loved eating jaguar.<sup>673</sup> Stories of Mendez and others like them filtered throughout the regeneration camps and settlements and eventually reached other, more public, arenas.

The regenerators often made sure to detail the victims of those slain by Indians to further stress the native savagery present in Spanish America. *El Nicaraguense* reported a death notice in September 1856 about the assassination of Senator José Maria Estrada, a man who had previously taken the place of the late-President Chamorro as head of the *Legitimistas*. Despite being an enemy to Walker, the death of Estrada still served to remind readers of the chaotic nature of Spanish American Indian savagery. It described how Indians in the Department of New Segovia killed him in a town called Samoto Grande. The regeneration organ stated how a man whom Estrada formerly imprisoned, named Antonio Chavis, killed the “pretended President of Nicaragua” after being released by General Walker. He had collected a party of 45 men near Leon and proceeded to incite “the native population against Estrada to such a pitch that they rose upon him.”<sup>674</sup> Though his demise certainly benefitted Walker, the death notice still reminded readers of the looming anarchy that could befall Nicaragua if Americans allowed it to be controlled by the unrestrained passions of Indians such as Chavis.

Likewise, newspapers and regenerators commented on the deaths of several civilian Americans, which they attributed to Indians. Accounts of an Allied siege of

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<sup>672</sup> Doubleday, *The Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 49.

<sup>673</sup> Doubleday, *The Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua*, 99.

<sup>674</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, September 13, 1856.

Granada served as explicit reminders of the savagery that Americans faced in Nicaragua. Walker described how his enemies “vented their savage passions in stabbing [“with their bayonets”] the lifeless body” of John B. Lawless, an Irish-American with strong *Legitimist* sympathies. Walker, exploited the death of Lawless to demonstrate how indiscriminate his enemies were about killing friends and foes to show their need for conquering. He reinforced this notion by reconstructing the similar deaths of D. H. Wheeler, a reverend of the American Bible Society, and William J. Ferguson, a Methodist preacher who was “torn from the arms of his wife and daughter and killed” in the same fashion as Lawless and Ferguson. Walker then continued, describing how the Allied forces committed such crimes to “persons claiming the protection of the American flag; but that flag itself was the scoff and scorn of the soldiers an unlettered savage had let loose on the plains of Nicaragua.”<sup>675</sup> Stories of these deaths filtered throughout the United States.

By portraying Indians as perpetually savage, the regenerators could also depict their Guatemalan enemies as being exactly that. Walker insisted that the soldiers of the Guatemalan army “were almost all Indians.”<sup>676</sup> He represented them as fierce and perpetually feuding with the citizens of Leone, whom one could presume were *mestizos* and Castilians. *El Nicaraguense*, almost immediately after the Allied attack on Granada, blamed the Guatemalans for the death of John B. Lawless, stating that he was a “victim to bloodthirsty savages of Guatemala.”<sup>677</sup> In another issue, the newspaper, once again, brought up the Granada assault, describing it as the “murder of American citizens” at the

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<sup>675</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 297-298.

<sup>676</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 242.

<sup>677</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 18, 1856.

hands of Guatemalan and San Salvadoran forces. It described the murder as “one of the most infamous transactions that must for ever [sic] disgrace the character of the people by whom it was committed.” It further stated that the murder was an “action so far beyond the pale of all civilized customs as to render it impossible to justification.”<sup>678</sup> Walker also accused the Guatemalans as being the “principal betrayers” in the execution of John B. Lawless while describing the entire attack on Granada as an “act of vandalism.”<sup>679</sup> Likewise, William Vincent Wells described the Guatemalan soldiers, as well as those of the Hondurans and Costa Ricans, as “barbarous and savage.”<sup>680</sup> Wells also paralleled the histories of Nicaragua and Guatemala together, claiming that both regions “have been the principle theaters of political strife with a history of massacres and frantic wars.”<sup>681</sup> James Carson Jamison, referencing that same battle, accused a Guatemalan soldier of shooting a six-year-old boy at a dinner table.<sup>682</sup> For the regenerators, the Guatemalans served as proof that outside forces constantly sought to setback their attempts to civilize the region.

The regenerators utilized the savagery of the Indian Guatemalans to petition Western allies to observe the importance of the regeneration mission. In an article describing the inhumane treatment of Americans by the Allied forces, *El Nicaraguense*, once again, reiterated the severity of the Granada murders, which they had already established as being committed by the Guatemalans. The newspaper “called upon the

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<sup>678</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 25, 1856.

<sup>679</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 296, 340.

<sup>680</sup> William Vincent Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War* (New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856) 171.

<sup>681</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 46.

<sup>682</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 129.

civilized nations that are spectators of our struggle to note the difference” between the humane treatment of soldiers by the regenerators, who prided themselves on the medical care awarded to prisoners, to the savagery of the Nicaraguans. It noted, “[i]t will probably astonish some of the barbarous wretches who murdered American citizens and Missionaries here without provocation, and in cold blood, when they learn that the wounded they left among us are cared for and attended to with as much regularity and attention as the wounded of our own army.” It further reinforced this point, stating, “Gen. Walker had them [the prisoners] removed to an hospital set apart for themselves, and native women have been employed to attend to their necessities.” It contrasted this treatment to how the Guatemalans and other Allied forces treated Americans, stating, “[t]his forms a strong contrast with the manner in which the Americans have fallen into the hands of the enemy.”<sup>683</sup> They effectively portrayed the Guatemalans as an invasive savage force capable of threatening all Americans traveling there, either as colonists or as those seeking the Transit Route.

As the prospects of the Walker Administration diminished, the frequency to which the regenerators made appeals for aid and support through the savage Guatemalan narrative increased. On November 1, 1856, just weeks before the destruction of Granada by, ironically, Walker’s regenerators, *El Nicaraguense* continued to broadcast to the Spanish- and English-speaking worlds about the Guatemalan atrocities. It reiterated that the massacre included “helpless children and holy ministers of Christianity.” Lamenting the loss of the Cuban regenerator Lieutenant Colonel Laine, whom the Allies captured as a prisoner of war, the newspaper described his execution as one in which “our savage

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<sup>683</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 25, 156.

foes have added another crime to the long list recorded against them. It accused the Guatemalan commander-in-chief of having an “innate yearning for treachery,” as he used “smooth words” to cover his “act of murder.” It noted that the Guatemalans had “nothing but the love of blood and the cowardly instincts of the savages” in them and concluded that the regenerators “suffer and struggle to redeem one of the loveliest of lands from barbarism and savage despotism,” as seen in the acts of Walker’s Indian enemies.<sup>684</sup> Guatemala’s barbarism represented the reversion of Nicaragua that the regenerators feared, one which would feel familiar to those raised on captive narratives.

On November 15, 1856, *El Nicaraguense* continued to chastise Guatemalan actions, and to a lesser extent, those of San Salvador, also. It reported that Nicaragua suffered from a “new tale of horror,” as well as “the development of some new phase in the actions of the barbarous hordes who now infest this country from adjoining States.” It contended that “they disgrace human nature and reduce those who are concerned in the transactions described [their crimes] to be the level of the lowest grade of savages.” Alluding to captive narratives, the newspaper even contended that “we hear of instances where native women have been forced into their barrack to cook, and perform other drudgeries.” It continued, detailing that “when a word of complaint is uttered, the unfortunate female is stripped naked and whipped in the public square in the presence of her terrified relations.” It concluded that “some of the natives of Nicaragua dread the presence of the San Salvadorians and Guatemalans.”<sup>685</sup> This story provided tangible evidence that the regenerators protected a real population from savage captors.

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<sup>684</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856.

<sup>685</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 15, 1856

William Walker also paradoxically emphasized the unnatural state of Spanish-Indian savagery by depicting it as a creation of failed Spanish policies and European neglect. He wrote about the “docility of the native Nicaraguans, especially of the Indians.”<sup>686</sup> He asserted that “the Pure Indian” did “not aim for political power” but, instead, “only asks to be protected in the fruits of his industry.”<sup>687</sup> These Indians were not the naturally aggressive Apache that he portrayed as having fought in Sonora. However, manipulating elites could easily turn them into fierce savages. He argued that they could be “led in almost any direction.”<sup>688</sup> Walker described how one of the primary issues that the Rivas Administration faced was that renegade *Legitimistas* successfully created disturbances among the Indian communities.<sup>689</sup> Likewise, Walker argued that the “pure Spanish race” rules the Indian Guatemalan military with the help of Carrera.<sup>690</sup> Such an explanation placed the blame for all of the Indian murders squarely on the Spanish-American inhabitants of Central America.

Accepting this potential paradox, regenerators professed their belief that they could, in fact, maintain Indian docility. *El Nicaraguense*, while discussing the June election that granted Walker the presidency, stated that “the Indians remembered him as the wisest and most providential ruler they ever had,” suggesting that their support gave Walker his victory.<sup>691</sup> He did not go there to eradicate them but to eliminate them as a threat. Similarly, Walker argued that the only officer who could control the “savage”

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<sup>686</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 239.

<sup>687</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 261.

<sup>688</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 239.

<sup>689</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 178.

<sup>690</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 243.

<sup>691</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, July 12, 1856.



Mendez was himself.<sup>692</sup> Likewise, James Carson Jamison referred to a Cherokee fighting for Walker named Samuel Leslie, who otherwise went by Cherokee Sam, as being one of Walker's bravest soldiers.<sup>693</sup> Walker also credited Pierre Soulé withholding influence over the Indians. He claimed that Soulé specially held sway over the Indians through his elegant words and persona. Walker said that the Indians called him "His Excellency," a "title they give to persons they consider of rank," while further stating how they hoped for the return of Soulé to Nicaragua.<sup>694</sup> Such professed beliefs demonstrated that they could correct the imperialist mistakes of their European counterparts.

The regenerators tied these accusations of savagery to the mixed-races of Spanish America. These attacks allowed the regenerators to challenge every aspect of Central American society as needing change. They challenged the prospects of all combinations those with any combination of either Indian or African blood, or both, for they attributed all proof of savagery to these lineages. In fact, Walker and his allies focused the general anxieties about the savage and barbarian towards the *mestizo* and *landino* leadership of Spanish America. Just as Nott explained how a touch of African blood could increase a child's resistance to malaria and yellow fever, the regenerators understood that a trace of Indian blood jeopardized the civility of each individual tainted with any. Thus, Walker and the regenerators could easily contrast the civility of Anglo-American customs to those of the *mestizo* Central American leadership, for he could portray them as collectively inheriting savage customs that could be seen in their political and military actions.

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<sup>692</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 43.

<sup>693</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 140.

<sup>694</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 239.

For the regenerators, the *mestizo* population represented a reversion to savagery. Walker placed much of the blame for this deterioration on the Spanish, themselves. Walker, for example, described Spanish America as, overall, more Indian than Spanish in many regions. Walker accused the Spanish of failing to form their own societies, which he juxtaposed to the successful colonizing habits of the English. He wrote that “Roman law did not inform the new society” in the regions with strong Indian concentrations. He explicitly blamed them for failing to maintain purity of their own race.<sup>695</sup> Such an explanation complemented the racial theories already in existence that challenged Spanish whiteness.<sup>696</sup>

Americans and other Westerners held onto remnants of this idea well into the nineteenth century. In turn, Western scholars portrayed the Spanish as lacking any genuine path for civility in the Americas and blamed them for the behaviors of the Indians of their former domain. The Austrian explorer and scientist Karl von Scherzer, in his 1857 publication *Travels in the Free States of Central America*, accused the Spanish and Spanish-descendant inhabitants of instigating Indian violence. Scherzer even claimed that “[a]ll foreigners settled here, and persons acquainted with the country, -in particular the British Consul, Manning, . . . agree in the opinion that the Indians of the plain of Leon are the best part of population; the most peaceful, industrious, and honest.”<sup>697</sup> He further

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<sup>695</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 256-7.

<sup>696</sup> The regenerators did not invent the strategy of blaming the Spanish for Indian savagery. They tapped into a narrative that could be found in the works of even non-American Western scholars. Since the early-colonial era, imperialist Europeans, especially the British, invoked the “black legend,” a myth that highlighted Spain’s failure to act in a civilized manner in the Americas, which Europeans used to justify their respective encroachments in the Americas. Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795-1831*, (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 57-60.

<sup>697</sup> Karl von Scherzer, *Travels in the Free States of Central America: Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador*, Vol. 1, (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1857), 91.

contended that the “Indians mostly remain passive in the civil wars, and take no part in the strife unless they are compelled by the military chiefs, or excited by agitation from the pulpit.” Similarly, Ephraim George Squier, in his 1855 *Notes on Central America*, for example, compared the civilization of the United States to what he perceived to be a lack of civilization present in Spanish American republics. While doing so, Squier described the Indians of the Americas as “savage men.”<sup>698</sup> He described them as “the inferior and subordinate races of man.” Such writers only reaffirmed what most Americans wanted to know as truth -Catholic Spain failed to cultivate a civilized society in Spanish America.

Building off this foundation of literature, William Vincent Wells helped place the savage *mestizo* narrative into the Walker historiography before Walker ever reached the presidency. Wells ensured that American readers would associate acts of savagery cultivated by the Spanish with not only the Indian peasants but also the *mestizo* and Castilian leadership. At the time of his book’s publication, the Costa Ricans appeared to be Walker’s biggest threat. Wells described Costa Rican President Juan Rafael Mora’s decision to execute captured American soldiers as a “barbarous proclamation.”<sup>699</sup> And like how he portrayed the Guatemalans, Wells described Costa Rica’s troops as having savage and barbarous conduct.<sup>700</sup> He described the very invasion by Costa Ricans as a piratical usurpation of Nicaragua’s sovereignty.<sup>701</sup> Wells thus cemented into the early

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<sup>698</sup> Ephraim George Squire, *Notes on Central America; Particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador: Their Geography, Topography, Climate, Population, Resources, Productions, etc., etc., and the Proposed Interoceanic Railway* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1855), 58.

<sup>699</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 188.

<sup>700</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 171.

<sup>701</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 264-265.

historiography the idea that savages awaited on Nicaragua's borders for opportunities to undo all the progress the regenerators attempted.

Acts of Costa Rican savagery, like those of the Guatemalans, served as a common trope for regenerators to utilize while justifying their own presence in Nicaragua. What differed here was the focus on a people whom they perceived to be *mestizo* and Spanish as opposed to "pure Indian." *El Nicaraguense* often reported Costa Rican crimes that the regenerators felt were not proper acts of war. For example, on May 10, 1856, the newspaper reported that the regenerators executed a Costa Rican "for being concerned in the murder of our wounded" after the Second Battle of Rivas.<sup>702</sup> Regenerators reported upon the deaths of many civilians executed along the Transit Route by Costa Ricans. One report receiving international attention, based on the testimony of a survivor named Charles Mahoney, depicted the Costa Ricans as savages while describing their attack on a wharf at Virgin Bay. In describing the incident there, it further stated that the Costa Ricans had declared themselves determined to exterminate every American in Nicaragua while noting that they killed women, children, and Transit employees.<sup>703</sup> This story, in effect, demonstrated that even the whiter Spanish Americans could be compared to the antagonists of captive narratives by depicting them as equally senseless and callous in their crimes against innocent frontiersmen.

The regenerators and their supporters backed these narratives with generalizations about Costa Rican character attributes meant to highlight their removal from true civility. Walker described them as being "as careless and indifferent as if they were in their own

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<sup>702</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, May 10, 1856.

<sup>703</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, April 19, 1856.

country,” while describing their behavior in Nicaragua.<sup>704</sup> He, too, emphasized that Costa Ricans ordered the execution of prisoners, particularly after the Battle of Santa Rosa.<sup>705</sup> He described them as murderers of innocent Americans during their invasion. He insisted that they killed and pillaged to satisfy their “brutal passions.”<sup>706</sup> David Deaderick called them cowards and believed that they would spit on him if they had the chance.<sup>707</sup> Amy Morris Bradley, though not a regenerator, saw herself as a civilizing agent, none the less. She scoffed at Costa Ricans, stating that one seldom “sees a decently dressed lady in the Streets.”<sup>708</sup> *El Nicaraguense* also offered criticisms against perceived Costa Rican traits. It described them as “simple-minded” people.<sup>709</sup> Such characterizations thus helped remove the Costa Ricans from the white realm of civilization and placed them, instead, as also in need of regeneration.

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<sup>704</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 198.

<sup>705</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 184.

<sup>706</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 193.

<sup>707</sup> David Deaderick III, “The Experience of Samuel Absalom, Filibuster,” originally published in *Atlantic Monthly*, no. 4, December 1859 (reprinted Pikeville, KY: Twin Commonwealth Publishers, LLC 2005), 70.

<sup>708</sup> August 20, 1856, Diary of Amy Morris Bradley, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

<sup>709</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 11, 1856.

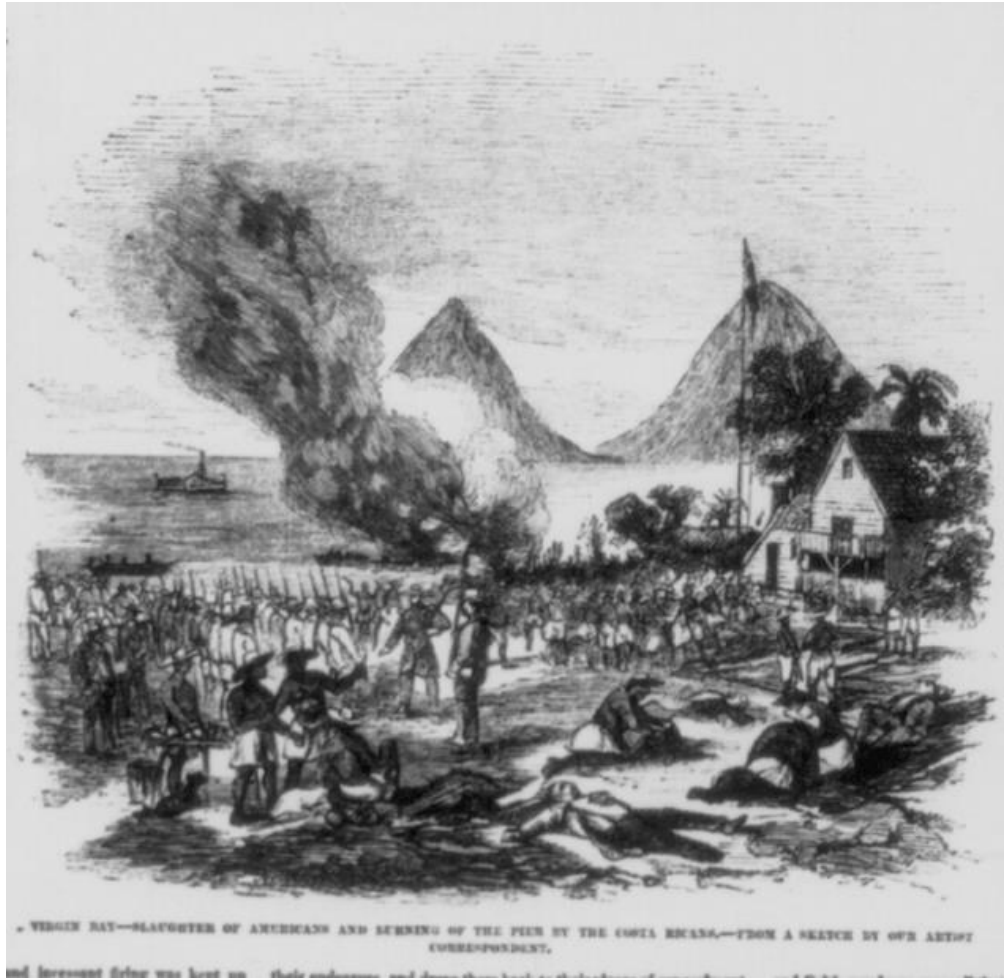


Figure 16. Depiction of the Costa Rican attack on Virgin Bay, in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper<sup>710</sup>

Regenerators also further distanced Spanish Americans, particularly those in Nicaragua, from whiteness by highlighting their *Landino* or *pardo* ancestry. Those with both Indian and African blood became common targets in the regeneration rhetoric. William Vincent Wells, for example, described both Nicaragua and Guatemala as locations “where the Indian and Negro elements [were] brought into collision with the

<sup>710</sup> 2 illus.: 1. *Virgin Bay - slaughter of Americans and burning of the pier by the Costa Ricans*; 2. *Virgin Bay, Nicaragua, from the lake - Walker and his army on board the steamer*. 1856, in: *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, vol. 1, no. 23 (1856 May 17), p. 361. Image. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99614037/>.

descendants of the old Spaniards.” Thus, he posited that this racial mixture “produced scenes of carnage almost too savage and cruel in their details for relation.”<sup>711</sup> Walker described the inhabitants of “Balize” [sic] as “Zambos Indians” and “squatter sovereigns.”<sup>712</sup> Elleanor Callaghan, a colonizer who joined Walker with several members of her family as settlers, for example, lamented that she could “seldom find a pure Castilian, as they [the Nicaraguans] are a people mixed with Spanish, the Indian, and the negro.” As a result, the regenerators tended to emphasize the backwardness of the Indian and African heritage over the advancements associated with their Castilian heritage. Callaghan contended that, as a result of their miscegenation, their “costumes and habits” dated “back to the flood [presumably the flood of Noah’s Ark].” While comparing them to the people of the biblical age, Callaghan noted that the Spanish Americans failed to take advantage of the “garden of the world” awarded to them by God, noting that “only in the hands of an enlightened race, or a race who could and would appreciate the advantages of their country,” could Nicaragua be properly developed.<sup>713</sup>

Ultimately, these views gave regenerators a collective understanding that the inhabitants of Nicaragua, and much of Central America, could either be described as inherently “servile” or be depicted as being at risk of becoming so. The regenerators saw this condition as a threat to the future of Nicaragua. Though the term “servile” could

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<sup>711</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 46.

<sup>712</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 169.

<sup>713</sup> “Documents. I. With Walker in Nicaragua. The Reminiscences of Elleanor (Callaghan) Ratterman. II. Walker-Heiss papers. Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Walker regime in Nicaragua,” ed. William Oscar Scroggs (Nashville: 1916, reprinted from the *Tennessee Historical Magazine* by Nabu Public Domains), 329.

mean many things to many people, regenerators employed the word to distinguish those whom they felt absconded from absorbing enlightenment ideas about individual sovereignty and willingly subjected themselves to a condition of perpetual subservience. Ian F. Haney López contends in his own research about Mexican-American discrimination that Americans, even in the twentieth century, “attributed the menial or servile position of their acquaintances not to social status but to Mexican-American ‘nature.’”<sup>714</sup> It is likely that most regenerators shared similar beliefs in the 1850s. The regenerators simply applied those same notions to explain why so many Central Americans appeared so adamantly against their presence as regenerators in Nicaragua. Thus, regenerators perceived them to be the ultimate anathema to progress, development, civilization, and regeneration.

The regenerators liberally employed this word throughout their writings as a reminder that Walker combatted enemies to republicanism. They interchanged the word with the term *Legitimist* (or *Legitimista*) and contrasted it with the Democrats fighting with Walker as a way to highlight the backwardness of the members of the opposing political party. While describing the Battle of Virgin Bay, Wells explained how “fifty-eight Americans, and one hundred and twenty natives with muskets” combatted “five hundred and forty men well armed [sic], and who had the advantage of a cannon and the protection of the timber,” on the “Servile or Aristocratic side.”<sup>715</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, while describing the Second Battle of Rivas, described Walker’s enemies as “allied to

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<sup>714</sup> Ian F. Haney López, “Institutional Racism: Judicial Conduct and a New Theory of Racial Discrimination,” *The Yale Law Journal* 109, No. 8 (June, 2000), 1815.

<sup>715</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition in Nicaragua*, 57.



servilism”<sup>716</sup> Even Peter Stout described them as “Serviles” while discussing their lack of real interest in the building of a canal in Nicaragua.<sup>717</sup> Such rhetoric depicted Walker’s enemies as deliberate opponents of progress.

With these accusations of servilism came characteristics applied to the serviles. On May 17, 1856, responding to the Costa Rican invasion, *El Nicaraguense* contended that “the Servile party will find out by and by that treason, conspiracy, of murder, and rebellion will not pay.”<sup>718</sup> One Walker enthusiast wrote to the *New York Herald* about the “[a]ffairs of Central America.” While describing the importance of Walker and the colonization of Nicaragua, this anonymous author associated “serviles” with a “despicable ancestry,” implying it as being somewhat biologically determined, or at least that serviles suffered a biological predisposition to their state. The author attributed certain characteristics to the serviles, including an inherent support for “an insolent aristocracy of wealth,” which they “sustained by the memory of vice-regal splendor.” However, it was how he defined whom they oppressed which better revealed how Americans characterized serviles, for he associated “the more enlightened of Spanish blood” with desiring “the great principal of natural right.”<sup>719</sup> Such descriptions allowed regenerators a way for explaining the necessity of their missions by giving them evidence of innate cultural setbacks related to the national and racial makeup of their enemies. They defined their enemies using all the characteristics that their readers knew as

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<sup>716</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, November 15, 1856.

<sup>717</sup> Peter F. Stout, *Nicaragua: Past, Present, and Future: A Description of Its Inhabitants, Customs, Mines, Minerals, Early History, Modern Filibusterism, Proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal and Manifest Destiny* (Philadelphia: John E. Potter, 1859), 272.

<sup>718</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, May 17, 1856.

<sup>719</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 10, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-10/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017). Henceforth, this collection will be referred to as *Chronicling America*.

repugnant and relied on labels that further beckoned even more illicit ideas about what makes serviles servile. They understood that serviles existed as anathemas to progress and development.

However, the utilization of the word servile was not restricted to biological determinists. Amy Morris Bradley, for example, certainly did not support biological determinism. When discussing the institution of slavery, Bradley claimed that the institution was to blame for why Blacks remained in an “ignorant, -servile state.” Yet, she described the Central America independence movements as a “severe struggle between the Serviles and Liberals.”<sup>720</sup> For people like Bradley, serviles represented a rotten culture that perpetuated within the customs of the Spanish Americans and simply required Anglo-American intervention as a solution to the problem of its existence.

*El Nicaraguense* successfully promoted the servile narratives to American audiences as American newspapers adopted and republished its stories of the war. On February 22, 1856, the *Plymouth Weekly Banner*, of Indiana, republished an article from *El Nicaraguense*, titled “Diplomatic Relations Between Nicaragua and the United States Suspended. Official Notice of Colonel Wheeler.” In it, *El Nicaraguense* sarcastically charged Secretary of State William Marcy with having “never heard of the two years war which has lately prevailed between the Kerals and serviles of Nicaragua,” as a way to explain his lack of assistance for Walker.<sup>721</sup> The regenerators utilized Marcy as an

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<sup>720</sup> Letterbook of Amy Morris Bradley, Box 2, Folder 5, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

<sup>721</sup> *Plymouth Weekly Banner* (Plymouth, IN), February 28, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87056242/1856-02-28/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

example of what happens when the civilized neglect their duties abroad by portraying him as an impediment to their own progress.

American newspapers supportive to Walker also published and circulated their own stories about Central American servilism. On April 5, 1856, The *Nashville Daily Patriot* republished an article from the *New Orleans Delta* that announced Walker's formal declaration of war against Costa Rica. In it, the *Delta* announced that General Walker "issued a circular announcing hastily the hostility of the Americans in Nicaragua to the Servile parties and Servile Governments of Central America."<sup>722</sup> In this instance, the *Delta* and *Daily Patriot* re-published Walker's declaration, which also described his enemies as being servile, and members of servile parties and governments of Central America. On May 17, 1856, the *Washington Sentinel* published an article credited to the *New York Irish News* that praised Walker's efforts in Nicaragua. While stating that "Walker has staked his life" in a "just, generous, and glorious" cause, it depicted him as battling "the Serviles of Nicaragua." It even claimed that "[n]o one ventures a breathe in defense of the Serviles of Granada" while chastising those who insisted that Walker "had no right to interfere."<sup>723</sup> On May 24, 1856, *The New York Herald* published a letter written by T. F. Meagher, a devotee of the Walker colonization effort. In it, Meagher professed his hope that Nicaragua would be "free forever from the serviles and the

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<sup>722</sup> "From Central America," *Nashville Daily Patriot*, April 05, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86053516/1856-04-05/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>723</sup> "General Walker," *Washington Sentinel* (Washington [D.C.]), May 17, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1856-05-17/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

foreign butchers in their pay.”<sup>724</sup> Major cities around the United States published these and similar stories.

General Walker’s former newspaper, the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* encouraged readers to correlate servilism with barbarity. On June 9, 1856, The *Crescent* described the Nicaraguans as “serviles” while accusing them of “acts of barbarism and cruelty.” The newspaper focused on the Costa Rican retaliation at Virgin Bay, where, the newspaper noted, they burned the wharf and killed the American workers. It stated that their officers were disgraced even by their own ally, Costa Rica’s President Mora. It concluded this article by asserting that General Walker refused “to receive propositions of peace from Costa Rica,” which highlighted Walker’s refusal to negotiate with barbarians.<sup>725</sup>

Ultimately, the regenerators informed audiences to perceive Walker’s prominent political enemies as the symbols of a blended savage-servile narrative. General Santos Guardiola served as the epitome of how servilism and savagery mingled to create barbaric enemies to republicanism. Wells, while discussing the Battle of Virgin Bay, described how the “Servile forces” were under the command of General Guardiola.<sup>726</sup> The regenerators constantly depicted Guardiola as the “Butcher of Central America.” Walker described him as having a “thirst for war,” that luckily “did not manifest” after Guardiola returned to power in Honduras.<sup>727</sup> Walker described him as having a “reputed rapacity” for victimizing peasants.<sup>728</sup> *El Nicaraguense* explicitly called Guardiola a

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<sup>724</sup> “Letter of T. F. Meagher,” *The New York Herald*, May 24, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-05-24/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>725</sup> *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, June 09, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015753/1856-06-09/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>726</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 57.

<sup>727</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 164.

<sup>728</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 78.

“savage” wielding “incompetent authority.” Thus, it feared what would befall the inhabitants of the Bay Islands if Americans allowed the British to hand them over to the Hondurans.<sup>729</sup> Though James Carson Jamison described him as “one of their [the enemy’s] ablest generals, he portrayed him as “a terror to the people . . . [who] because of his brutality was called the ‘Central American Butcher.’”<sup>730</sup> Guardiola became a reification of savage reversion at the hands of foreign leaders as his presence became a focus for regenerator criticism.

Other leaders similarly served as targets for this narrative. General Fruto Chamorro, the president of the *Legitimist* party, also served as a target for servile rhetoric. An aforementioned anonymous author to *The New York Herald*, for example, described General Chamorro as “the tyrant of Nicaragua and the leader of the ‘serviles,’” who attempted to “crush out any remnant of freedom, and to usurp the dictatorship, as Carrera had usurped that of Guatemala.”<sup>731</sup> Similarly, General Boscha served as an example of servilism for the regenerators. Laurence Oliphant, the author of *Patriots and Filibusters* who joined an expedition that failed in its designs to reinforce Walker’s military, described General Boscha as leading “the aristocratic or servile troops.”<sup>732</sup> Wells lambasted Boscha for showing a pride in his involvement in the killing of *Democraticos*, stating that he “owned to 180 killed and wounded in the battle of Rivas, a number appalling to the natives, whose previous bloodless fights . . . had made Central

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<sup>729</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 11, 1856.

<sup>730</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 26.

<sup>731</sup> *The New York Herald*, January 10, 1856. *Chronicling America*  
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1856-01-10/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>732</sup> Laurence Oliphant, *Patriots and Filibusters: Or, Incidents of Political Exploratory Travel* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1860), 197.

American battles, like those of the revolutions of Mexico, a by-word and a laughingstock among military men.”<sup>733</sup> Even Peter Stout, the late-United States consul, described Walker’s enemies as “Serviles” while explaining how they marched on him with 400 men to Rivas upon learning of his arrival.<sup>734</sup> Each individual associated with servilism strengthened the argument that the old leadership was a threat to progress.

Thus, the regenerators created an intellectual barrier between themselves and their opponents. They successfully portrayed their enemies as the embodiments of key racial stereotypes found throughout the United States that positioned Blacks and Indians as both inherently inferior to whites and potentially dangerous to progress and republicanism. This they used to justify their continued intervention in Nicaragua.

#### Regeneration and Slavery

Justifying the need for Anglo-American intervention was one thing; Walker’s attempt to recreate Southern society through the reinstatement of slavery required a whole different set of logic that proved more divisive than the call for Anglo-American intervention. At the heart of the regeneration message sat William Walker’s slave decree of September 1856. Walker wished to restructure Nicaraguan society by reorganizing Nicaraguan labor and government along a racial hierarchy. Walker hoped to emulate Southern hierarchy and replicate its patriarchal emphasis on white male leadership. He envisioned the placement of Anglo-Saxons and other Teutonic peoples at the top of government and African slaves at the bottom of society. He utilized the writings of Josiah

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<sup>733</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition in Nicaragua*, 53-54. It is worth noting that, even in this seemingly docile description of the Nicaraguan “natives” (which could mean Indians, *mestizos*, or *Landinos*, Wells qualified it by stating that they did participate in “the cowardly and cruel executions following them [their bloodless battles] on the part of the victors.

<sup>734</sup> Stout, *Nicaragua*, 195.

Nott, with some key adjustments, as a blueprint for this reordering of labor along racial lines.

To carry out this reordering of society, Walker, on September 22, 1856, released a labor decree that indirectly, though deliberately, relegalized the institution of African slavery in Nicaragua. The decree explicitly voided all acts and decrees associated with the Federal Constituent Assembly of 1838. However, as Walker explained in his memoir, he deliberately targeted one of the acts which abolished slavery in Central America, writing that “[t]he spirit and intention of the decree was apparent; nor did its author [William Walker] affect to conceal his object in its publication.” He went as far as to contend that “[b]y this act must the Walker administration be judged; for it is the key to its whole policy.”<sup>735</sup> In fact, most Americans saw the decree as part of a larger regeneration message, one of race and health, and did not treat it as the singular key that Walker hoped.

Underlying this message rested the scientific research of Dr. Josiah Nott. Nott’s research justified the use of Black slave labor on plantations. In *Types of Mankind*, Nott and George Gliddon, his coauthor and former United States consul in Cairo, argued that Blacks were more resistant to “the deadly influence of climates which the pure white man cannot endure.” Nott contended that Africans were inherently immune to yellow fever and other tropic diseases, such as malaria. Nott noted diverging patterns of yellow fever cases along the Gulf South. He posited that “if the population of New England, Germany, France, England, or other northern climates, come to Mobile, or to New Orleans, a large proportion dies of yellow fever. . . probably half would fall victim.” However, Nott

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<sup>735</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 256.

contrasted these findings to his observations about Black resistance to yellow fever noting that “negroes, under all circumstances, enjoy an almost perfect exemption from this disease, even though [they were] brought in from our Northern States.” At the time of his writing *Types of Mankind*, Nott claimed that out of the hundreds of yellow fever cases that he witnessed only “three or four cases of mulattoes” suffering from the fever, despite “hundreds” being “exposed to this epidemic in Mobile.”<sup>736</sup> The theories of Nott served as the foundation for linking health and race together into one regeneration campaign.

Nott ultimately argued that races best belonged in climates where “the Creator” positioned them. In *Types of Mankind*, Nott and Gliddon supported a “love of primitive locality” hypothesis. They stated that “[t]he Africans of the Tropic, the Aborigines of America, the Mongols of Asia, the inhabitants of Polynesia, have remained for thousands of years where history found them; and nothing but absolute want, or self-preservation, can drive them from the countries where the Creator placed them.” They even went as far as to question if “the strictly white races of Europe” could retain their constitution in the Americas. He lamented that “[w]e do not generally find in the United States a population constitutionally equal to that of Great Britain or Germany.” Though they stayed clear of endorsing the belief that “the Anglo-Saxon race would become extinct in America, if cut off from immigration,” they did take note that “[m]any ancient nations were colonies from distant climes, and may have wasted away under the operation of laws that have

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<sup>736</sup> Nott and Gliddon, *Types of Mankind*, 66-69.



acted slowly but surely.”<sup>737</sup> Ultimately, Nott did suspect that his fears about primitive locality did not apply to whites like it did to minorities.

Many Southerners used Nott’s writings to justify the racialized labor system.<sup>738</sup> Slave owners fully implemented such beliefs into every aspect of their lives, from the planning of plantations to labor patterns.<sup>739</sup> White Southerners, accepting the notion of different human species, argued that Blacks were medically different from whites and needed special treatment. Slave owners were quite happy to observe the resistances to miasmas that they saw in their slaves and acted upon such observations. In turn, William Walker espoused an almost identical rhetoric in *The War in Nicaragua*, his 1860 memoir. Walker and Nott shared almost identical views that Blacks proliferated in the tropics. However, where they differed, in Walker’s mind, concerned how much emphasis they placed on the concept of “primitive locality.”<sup>740</sup> Walker asserted that Nott had incorrectly accepted the findings of a British officer who concluded that Africans did not fare well in the American tropics. The findings in question concerned a study that compared the “vitality of the European and negro regiments in Jamaica.” Walker asserted that Nott and the British officer had confused the catalyst for the results obtained, claiming that “[i]t is not the climate, but the profession of soldier, which destroys so rapidly the negro regiments of Jamaica.” He further argued that “[n]o one, who has seen the negro in

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<sup>737</sup> Nott and Gliddon, *Types of Mankind*, 68-69.

<sup>738</sup> Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile*, 83.

<sup>739</sup> Jo Ann Carrigan, “Yellow Fever: Scourge of the South,” in *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, ed. Todd L. Savitt and James Harvey Young (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 59-63.

<sup>740</sup> Nott and Gliddon, *Types of Mankind*, 69.

tropical America, will, for a moment, allow the accuracy of the deduction, hastily drawn from the regimental returns of Jamaica.”<sup>741</sup>

Doctor Walker offered a different conclusion as to how the evidence pertaining to this discrepancy should be interpreted. Walker contended that, instead, readers should note that the profession of a soldier required “so much intelligence, so much knowledge of the laws of life, and so much resolution and self-denial in adhering to them,” that Blacks could not function as soldiers.<sup>742</sup> Thus, Walker asserted that their incompatibility with the profession caused them to die in disproportionate numbers.

Assuming that the British officers’ findings did not represent the results expected when Africans performed their God-given roles as agricultural laborers, Doctor Walker asserted that such results actually reinforced the need for slave labor. Walker asserted that “[t]he introduction of negro slavery into Nicaragua would finish a supply of constant and reliable labor requisite for the cultivation of tropical products.” Walker compared the potential of Nicaragua to that of Cuba, writing that “Negro-Slavery is, without doubt, the cause of the present prosperity of the island [Cuba].” He contrasted Cuba’s wealth and perceived prosperity to those of Jamaica and Saint Domingo, where he insisted that abolition, which he described as “the false humanity of France and England,” had ruined the productivity of those previously dominant agricultural islands.<sup>743</sup> Walker challenged the notions that the institution of slavery served as the primary cause for the lack of African progress, both in the Americas and in Africa. He stated, “[i]f we look at Africa in the light of universal history, we see her for more than five thousand years a mere waif on

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<sup>741</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 261-262.

<sup>742</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 261.

<sup>743</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 257, 261.

the waters of the world, fulfilling no part in its destinies, and aiding in no manner the progress of general civilization.” Walker relied on Nott’s contention that Africans had already naturally reached the limits of their potential and depicted them as timeless savages, arguing that “[s]unk in the depravities of fetichism [sic], and reeking with the blood of human sacrifices, she [sub-Saharan Africa] seemed a satire on man, fit only to provoke the sneer of devils at the wisdom, and justice, and benevolence of the Creator.”<sup>744</sup> Ultimately, Walker contended that “[t]he white man took the negro from his native wastes,” and taught “him the arts of life, bestowed on him the ineffable blessings of a true religion.” As a result, Walker concluded, “[t]hen only do the wisdom and excellence of the divine economy in creation of the black race begin to appear with their full lustre [sic].” Thus, God, Walker believed, required the “[s]trong haughty race [Europeans],” who were “bred to liberty” to bring Africans into civilization via their participation as slave labor.<sup>745</sup> His plan would prove that primitive locality was not a concern for either race when both races perform their proper duties in Nicaragua.

Regenerators routinely relied on the specter of Haiti to disavow Black civility. Even those who did not accept the biological arguments of Nott and Walker, that placed Blacks as intellectually incapable of participating in civilization as anything more than slaves, likely agreed that even emancipated Blacks required white paternalist oversight in order to progress. The Haitian Republic, as it limped through the nineteenth century, became the embodiment of this belief. Most Americans understood that Haiti’s sovereignty proved neither progress nor civilization. Even as late as the American Civil

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<sup>744</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 271.

<sup>745</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 271-272.

War, scholars such as Michael Clavin, have demonstrated that Haiti existed as a political specter or omen that highlighted what would become of any land that lost the idealized social order of Anglo-Teutonic supremacy.

One anonymous author of an 1850 extended essay compared progress in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Haiti. Though he described Haiti as “one of the richest in tropical products,” he argued that “the sad state of Hayti [sic] after having been independent for fifty years, is also a stumbling block,” to American emancipation efforts. For him, as with most Americans, Haiti could not be understood as a successful nation, much less a civilization. Most waited for its eventual reversion to African barbarism.<sup>746</sup>

Regenerators shared these same views while usually blaming European powers for encouraging the descent. General William L. Cazneau, a supporter of Walker, wrote a letter of approval in May 1856. In it, Cazneau charged England with being guilty of “disgraceful facts” associated with what he called “dictatorial interference” in the Dominican Republic as well as with “the barbarous negro government of Hayti.” In that letter, Cazneau contrasted the woes of the Caribbean to the future offered by the “lion of regeneration,” William Walker.<sup>747</sup> Likewise, Walker described the very state of the sovereign Black nation as the “horrors of Hayti,” and connected them to the “misereries of Jamaica.”<sup>748</sup> In both cases, Walker blamed the French and English powers, respectively, for abusing their influences on the regions. These ideas often skirted environmental

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<sup>746</sup> However, this author did argue that, through public schooling, Blacks could “rise from the abject state in which slavery had placed them.” A Traveler, *A Geographical Sketch of St. Domingo, Cuba, and Nicaragua, with Remarks on the Past and Present Policy of Great Britain, Affecting those Countries* (Boston: Eastburn’s Press, 1850), 5, 32-33.

<sup>747</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 325-236.

<sup>748</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 258.

determinism, for they implied that the Europeans should have offered a path; however, the regenerators had a circular logic that only slavery could provide a route for Black participation.<sup>749</sup>

Indeed, the specter of a second Haiti occurring in Nicaragua fueled regenerators to take action in the region. The Mosquito Coast served as a point of direct proof of both Black failure in Nicaragua as well as the European manipulation that it allowed, which regenerators saw as an ever-expanding threat. As a result, regenerators and other imperialists spent considerable time pondering about the nature of the Mosquito Coast, its leadership, and its future prospects in the Nicaraguan republic that they wished to create. It provided them an outlet to prove that liberated Blacks could not and would not participate in a Nicaraguan civilization.

Fears about the Mosquito Coast percolated in the words of imperialist American political figures who set their eyes on Central America. George Ephraim Squier, in *Notes on Central America*, described the Mosquito Shore as “the haunt of savages, whom three

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<sup>749</sup> Likewise, the aforementioned anonymous author offered a parallel description that highlighted that such a message spoke to a broader American audience. He, too, blamed European powers for the failures of Haiti. The author argued that the British “hastened to help the Blacks, with no other motive than that of taking possession of French territory.” For him, they abused “the most beautiful spot of creation” to “effect as much destruction as possible,” against the French. They did not intend to offer genuine assistance to the Black population but agitated revolt under a false premise. He further stated that “the Blacks did not at first observe that this intrusion was preparing a new struggle for them.” He argued that the “British concealed from the Blacks the real motive of their interference, and induced a belief in their minds that England was their friend and wished to assist them.” He compared this situation to the potential downfall of Cuba, arguing that “they may war amongst themselves as they are doing [now] in Hayti, or destroy the whites and mulattoes and place the whole island under the Black Emperor Soulouque.” Connecting all of this to the future of Nicaragua, the author feared that the Black population in Nicaragua would take to fighting Indians while Emperor Soulouque continued “the destruction of the colored in Hayti,” all of which the author implied resulted from English interference, particularly their abolition policies. A Traveler, *A Geographic Sketch of St. Domingo, Cuba, and Nicaragua*, 6-8. 23. 28-29.

hundred years of contact with civilization have failed to improve.”<sup>750</sup> Squier described the inhabitants of the area as “miserable savages.” He contended that they had “never had establishments of any kind.” He further wrote that “these savages. . . have not . . . a pretense of sovereignty over the fractional part of the wide expanse of territory” assigned to them. Squier accused the British of setting up a false sovereign state “for sinister purposes.” Thus, he describes the Mosquito Shore as a “fictitious Mosquito nationality.”<sup>751</sup> Squier also offered a racialized explanation for Mosquito savagery. Elsewhere, Squier relied on the Sambo stereotype to describe the inhabitants of the Mosquito Shore. Though Squier had originally described the Mosquitos as Indians, he conflated the two terms, Sambo and Mosquito, while describing them as “mixed race of negroes and Indians,” which he considered to be two savage races.<sup>752</sup> Squier contended that the resulting miscegenation from slaves escaping from a slave ship in the seventeenth century. He described the inhabitants as “in no respect equal” to the Indians of the interior.<sup>753</sup> Squier then posited that buccaneers “bequeathed to them a code of morality” after utilizing their region for their own haunts; thus, insisting that any semblance of civility came from the perceived dregs of Western civilization.

The late-United States Vice Consul Peter F. Stout offered similar views about the Mosquitos. Another supporter of Manifest Destiny, Stout offered a menacing description about the inhabitants of the Mosquito Shore in his 1859 publication, *Nicaragua: Past,*

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<sup>750</sup> George Ephraim Squier, *Notes on Central America: Particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador: Their Geography, Topography, Climate, Population, Resources, Productions, Etc., Etc., and the Proposed Honduras Interoceanic Railway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855), 23.

<sup>751</sup> Squier, *Notes on Central America*, xi-xii

<sup>752</sup> Squier, *Notes on Central America*, 208.

<sup>753</sup> Squier, *Notes on Central America*, 385.

*Present, and Future*. Stout described them as Caribs mixed with negro blood. He portrayed them as “wretched,” as “savages” and as apathetic people.<sup>754</sup> Stout concluded that their savagery meant that they lacked the right to “actual sovereignty,” for, as he explained “this is vested in the State or nation which directly exercises or derives to itself the title acquired by discovery.”<sup>755</sup> Such writings implied Stout’s implicit belief that the United States, though not necessarily Walker, had a right to govern that region, if not a need.

Likewise, for the American media, the Mosquito Coast served as the primary target of early-savage narratives about Nicaragua. In fact, before the arrival of Walker, American newspapers rarely discussed savagery in Nicaragua. However, when a newspaper did present a savage Nicaraguan narrative, it usually relied on discussions about the Mosquito Shore. *The Republic*, for example, described the King of the Mosquitos as a “band of savages within Nicaragua.” In fact, it described this piece of knowledge as a “fact.”<sup>756</sup> Similarly, newspapers reiterated this savage Mosquito Coast narrative by re-publishing Secretary Marcy’s comments concerning the “savage tribe” of the Mosquito Coast.<sup>757</sup> Thus, for the American media and politicians, as well as for the regenerators, the Mosquito Coast represented a potential second Haiti as they perceived it to be inhabited by descendants of freedmen who had proven incapable of creating any semblance of order within their claimed domain.

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<sup>754</sup> Stout, *Nicaragua*, 113.

<sup>755</sup> Stout, *Nicaragua*, 269.

<sup>756</sup> *The Republic* (Washington, [D.C.]), August 13, 1849. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014434/1849-08-13/ed-1/seq-3/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>757</sup> *The Daily Union* (Washington, [D.C.]), January 03, 1856. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003410/1856-01-03/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

After Walker arrived in Nicaragua, the Mosquito Coast savage narrative increased. The *Washington Sentinel* described the inhabitants of the Mosquito Coast as “debauched savage inhabitants.”<sup>758</sup> Walker’s old newspaper, *The Daily Crescent*, offered a more descriptive approach for explaining what made them savage. While describing them as “a tribe of savages,” the *Crescent* posited that they were “incapable of appropriating the soil,” thus implying that they had reached their intellectual and productive limits. It contended that such a failure on their part required “a superior and laborious race” to take “possession of the country.” It then asserted that “no people, whether savage or civilized, have a right to play the part of the dog in the manger, and deprive the human race of the benefits that may accrue from the cultivation of the soil.”<sup>759</sup> The message provided by the regenerators pursued a path that they believed would alter all of these shortcomings brought upon Nicaragua by the failed Mosquito Coast.

Regenerators shared many of these views, especially those concerning the relationship between British imperialism and Mosquito savagery. James Carson Jamison, for example, described how the British assigned a “King of the Mosquito Kingdom” using two basic qualifications: “general stupidity” and “subserviency [sic] to the English government.” Jamison described the ironically named King Walker as “the blackest negro I ever saw in my life.” He portrayed him as a perpetual drunk, claiming that “the thirst of King Walker for brandy was exceeded only by his capacity for stowing it away.”

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<sup>758</sup> *Washington Sentinel*, April 29, 1856. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014835/1856-04-29/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>759</sup> *The Daily Crescent* (New Orleans, LA), August 18, 1849. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82015378/1849-08-18/ed-1/seq-2/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



Ultimately, Jamison portrayed these shortcomings as having allowed the British to establish trading forts at San Juan and Bluefields. Aside from British economic encroachment, Jamison portrayed the land under their care as not just virgin but primordial. He described it as a “region of swamps, mosquitos, and malaria.”<sup>760</sup> Thus, Jamison, and other regenerators could charge the Mosquitos with being uncivilized and for allowing the expansion of the British sphere of influence in Central America, which, in turn, allowed for the presence of Colonel Henry Lawrence Kinney and his own colonization campaign.

Effectively, the regenerators contrasted the threat of freed Blacks under a British model of civilization, which threatened Nicaragua through their ties to the Mosquitos, against their proof of the benefits of slavery, which they hoped to employ in Nicaragua. Walker described how the slaves of Haiti, “suddenly loosed from the restraints of the law. . . goes forth to murder and destroy.” In Jamaica, he likewise contended that their freedom meant that “the island goes to waste.” He contended that both the “Haytian massacres” and the “Jamaican impoverishment” evinced that the British went against “the plan of creation and of Providence.”<sup>761</sup> Though none would argue about British whiteness, the regenerators could still attack their imperial ambitions as being not in alignment with progress and use the Mosquito Coast, Jamaica, and other Caribbean locales as proof.

In its place, Walker offered a model of civilization that would provide Blacks an opportunity to participate in what he ensured would be a productive civilization founded

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<sup>760</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 126.

<sup>761</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 272.

on the successful model of the United States South and in Cuba. Walker argued that “it is only of late years that the really beneficial and conservative character of negro slavery has begun to be appreciated in the United States.” Likewise, for Cuba, Walker credited slavery as the “cause of [its] present prosperity.”<sup>762</sup> Similarly, *El Nicaraguense* offered a supporting thesis that antiquated the success of slaving civilizations. On August 9, 1856, before Walker released the slave decree, the regeneration organ stated that “some of the most celebrated states of antiquity were of the opinion that the profession of arms, only, was worthy the attention of free men, and left everything else to the care of the slaves.”<sup>763</sup>

The regenerators were confident that the introduction of African slave labor would provide them a model for developing what they saw as land wasted by the Spanish, whose reliance on Indian labor they felt to be contrary to Providence. Walker argued that “negro-slavery would furnish a supply of constant and reliable labor requisite for the cultivation of tropical products.” He contended that Blacks, despite the findings by the British officer and the wavering Josiah Nott were “in their natural climate in Nicaragua,” and should not be viewed as unsuited for the land. He even referenced the presence of Jamaican labor performing similar tasks under white leadership for the Accessory Transit Company as proof that they could, in fact, prosper as laborers there, stating that “the blacks from Jamaica are healthy, strong, and capable of severe labor.”<sup>764</sup> Walker challenged the concerns about the primitive locality theory that Nott and the British officer noted by, once more, contesting British and other European practices as the true culprits for the otherwise seemingly accurate results.

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<sup>762</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 257.

<sup>763</sup> “Profession of Arms,” *El Nicaraguense*, August 9, 1856.

<sup>764</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 261.

Walker even argued that the slave decree was necessary for the American regenerators to effect any change in Central America. He stated: “[w]ithout such labor as the new decree gave the Americans could have played no other part in Central America than that of the pretorian [sic] guard at Rome or of the Janizaries [sic] of the East.”<sup>765</sup> Thus, Walker ultimately implied that all efforts of the regenerators would end in a reversion back to the same deterioration that Central America suffered once before due to Spanish and British failures to understand the importance of slave labor for the development of the region. Anything else could be seen as an attack on Providence.

Walker insisted that such a model was the only way that Africans could participate in civilization, which meant that the regenerators were effectively providing them with a form of paternal stewardship. Walker stated: “[i]f we look at Africa in the light of universal history, we see her for more than five thousand years a mere waif on the waters of the world, fulfilling no part in destinies, and aiding in no manner the progress of general civilization.” Walker described Africans as a “satire on man.” He invoked images of their use of “depravities of fetishism” and stated that they reeked “with the blood of human sacrifices.” Walker described that the lack of Anglo paternalism in Africa meant that the whole continent was “permitted to lie idle until America” was discovered. Only the introduction of Africans as slave laborers provided Blacks a chance to participate in civilization, the regenerators insisted.

To replicate Southern society also meant that Walker had to remove non-Southern elements from Nicaragua as part of this regeneration policy. In effect, Walker offered an early form of eugenics for the benefit of Americans and European immigrants alike, as

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<sup>765</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 256.

long as they assisted in the implementation of a replicated Southern society. Walker sought the complete removal of Indians as the primary agricultural laborers and he sought the elimination of mixed-race inhabitants. For him, the answer to both problems rested in the total emulation of the Southern slaving society. Walker insisted that “negro blood seems to assert its superiority over the indigenous Indians of Nicaragua.” Walker argued that “[w]ith the negro-slave as his companion, the white man would become fixed to the soil; and they together would destroy the power of the mixed race which is the bane of the country.” He insisted that the presence of a strong black laboring population would “separate the races and destroy the half-castes who cause disorder” in Nicaragua. He described their disorder as a “prevailing problem since Independence.”<sup>766</sup> Thus, Black slave labor would allow for the removal of the corrupted *mestizo* and *landino* elements, elements that, in Walker’s mind, included the Mosquitos, the *Legitimists*, and even some of his *Democratico* allies.

Walker hoped that by replicating Southern society in Nicaragua, he could make a new ally for the American South in the Greater Caribbean. Walker and the regenerators emphasized British interference in the region precisely because they witnessed such actions alienate the U.S. South from its Caribbean neighbors. Walker hoped that his slave decree would “bind the South to the Walker regime.” However, he did not wish for Nicaragua to be annexed. Instead, as Charles Doubleday claimed and as Amy Morris Bradley wished, Walker hoped to establish a Central American empire that would serve as an alternative outlet for slavers. In keeping with his logic that the reinstatement of slave labor was necessary for the regeneration of Nicaragua, Walker espoused his pursuit of the

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<sup>766</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 261-263.

reinstitution of the Atlantic slave trade, which would, in turn, regenerate the Greater Caribbean, including the United States Gulf South. Walker did not wish to purchase slaves from the South, which he felt could not afford to deplete its own sources.<sup>767</sup> Instead, he hoped that, combined with the alliance of Southern planters, his regenerators could eventually force the British to abandon their abolitionist pursuits in the Caribbean.

### The Call to Participate in Anglo-Saxon Paternalism

Walker's message successfully reached the hearts and minds of men from over twenty countries around the world and from almost every state, district, and territory of the United States precisely because his message offered so many people a chance to perform as white paternalist stewards of a waxing Southern Anglo-American civilization.

For many of the Americans, participation offered a chance to perform as civilizing agents, reformers, and other paternalist roles that they associated with American whiteness.<sup>768</sup> In fact, regenerators constantly correlated their actions with Providence, arguing that they served as a correcting force to undo the damage caused by Spain. William Vincent Wells, for instance, described their mission as a "future marked by Providence" to establish a "Highway of Nations."<sup>769</sup> In his inaugural address, President Walker described how "Divine Providence" controlled "the course of states and empires." Owen Duffy, a regenerator who opened a law firm in Granada, described

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<sup>767</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 267.

<sup>768</sup> Jackson Lears, in *Rebirth of a Nation*, describes how Americans perceived regeneration as the "molten core" of American Protestantism. However, he focuses on how this form of "personal reform" compelled early progressives to act in the decades after Reconstruction. Yet, the deep-rooted American-Protestant traditions that compelled progressives to perform what he describes as an attempt to conduct a world crusade can be seen decades earlier in how regenerators described their own presence in Nicaragua. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 5.

<sup>769</sup> Wells, *Walker's Expedition to Nicaragua*, 124.

Democracy as “the Agent in carrying out” Providence, implying that those who spread American values into Nicaragua spread a Godly desire.<sup>770</sup> On August 9, 1856, *El Nicaraguense* described how “Providence guides and directs the Americans in their efforts to restore peace, and secure tranquility to the natives of their beautiful but unhappy country.”<sup>771</sup> And, back home, George Peck, one of Walker’s main supporters, described how God “shapes the ends of nations” and provided a “destiny for every people” while discussing the Anglo-American expansion in Central America.<sup>772</sup>

The regenerators espoused a belief that success would be demonstrated through their ability to develop Nicaragua, which required slave labor managed by white planters. Through *El Nicaraguense*, regenerators explained how “providence held a guardianship over this favored land,” while highlighting the ease in which one could plant “the great staples of true food.”<sup>773</sup> Walker even hinted that the regeneration campaign, itself, was a trial not for Nicaragua but for its regenerators. He claimed that “Providence fits its agents for great designs by trials, and sufferings, and persecutions.”<sup>774</sup> And while discussing the importance of Divine Providence during his inaugural address, Walker specifically focused on the importance of patriotism, skill, courage, and self-restraint for his soldiers. Such a belief fell in line with what John Duffy has shown was an underlying notion that grounded the foundation of early-professionalism in medicine: that the act of Christian stewardship was more important than the results, for the actions demonstrated the intent of the actors, which is how God and society should and would judge them. This meant

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<sup>770</sup> *El Nicaragua*, July 16, 1856.

<sup>771</sup> *El Nicaragua*, August 9, 1856.

<sup>772</sup> George W. Peck, *Nicaragua and General Walker* (Union Office: Washington, D. C., 1856), 7.

<sup>773</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, October 18, 1856.

<sup>774</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 430.

that the regenerators saw Nicaragua as a land to test their own resolve and their own abilities to carry out God's will, which they associated with development.

As previously stated, about half of Walker's soldiers were immigrants. For these immigrants, participation offered them a chance of upward financial and social mobility. For many of them, participation simply offered an outlet to transform from an immigrant to an American. As the Nicaraguan scholar, Alejandro Bolaños Geyer has demonstrated, at least 89 Germans, Prussians, and other inhabitants of Germanic lands, such as Saxony and Westphalia, fought for William Walker in the final months of the initial war. Thirty of them came from England and Wales and another seventeen came from Scotland. Other countries represented in the final ranks included Denmark, Austria-Hungary, Canada, Sweden, and Australia. For most of these men, their whiteness was never in question. What they fought for was for the right to be seen as American.<sup>775</sup>

However, for many of these soldiers, participation also meant a chance to Americanize their own status by contrasting it against Spanish American recipients of their regeneration message. They hoped that their efforts would whiten their own status by counterbalancing their image as regenerators against the *mestizo*, Indian, negro and *landino* inhabitants that they sought to help. At least 134 Irishmen fought for Walker. Likewise, Walker had Polish, Russian, Central and South Americans, people from the Caribbean, and one from Bengal fighting for him.<sup>776</sup> In later expeditions, at least one Maltese inhabitant of New Orleans fought for Walker. For these men, their daily lives reminded them that white Americans always questioned their own civility and claims to

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<sup>775</sup> Box 4, Folder 120A, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

<sup>776</sup> Box 4, Folder 120A, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

equality. The war, they hoped, would solidify the lines between themselves and those they civilized, which would, in turn, mean they could elevate their own social status by laying the same claims of regeneration and reform over the same brown and black people as their white compatriots.

By definition, to be one of Walker's regenerators meant to be a member of the American phalanx, which offered such immigrants a chance to blur the social lines of distinction that separated them from their American-born counterparts. These men could make the same claims that their American-born colleagues did as to being founding fathers of this new, exported American South. Such ideas were reinforced by how the regenerators discussed their presence during the war. Regenerators often highlighted the bravado of such immigrants as a way to encourage participation as a means to elevate their situations. For example, Walker described the Prussian Colonel Bruno Von Naztmer as "one of the best officers in Nicaragua."<sup>777</sup> Walker described the Cuban company serving him as a "valuable service" while *El Nicaraguense* described one Cuban, Lieutenant-Colonel F. A. Lainé, as "martyr to the cause he so nobly espoused since its very commencement, that of the regeneration of Central America."<sup>778</sup> Perhaps the most esteemed soldier in all of Walker's crew was Brigadier General Charles Frederick Henningsen, an Englishman whose own ethnic identity had been blurred due to his participation in wars for liberty in Spain, Hungary, and Russia, though Jamison later described him as the "great Hungarian patriot."<sup>779</sup> Similarly, regenerators described other foreign-born allies, such as the naturalized American Senator Pierre Soulé, of France, as

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<sup>777</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 84.

<sup>778</sup> *El Nicaraguense*, Nov 15, 1856.

<sup>779</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 131.



“setting a noble example” for identifying “himself with the fortunes of Central America.”<sup>780</sup> Even the Cherokee Indian Samuel Leslie earned respect for his service, with Carson admitting that there were “none braver” than him in Walker’s army. Thus, foreigners found that support for the cause could improve their own social status in a new civilization. While regenerators did not shy away from acknowledging the ethnic diversity of its soldiers, it depicted the soldiers as courageous participants of the American cause, which granted them the rights to claim status as founding fathers of the new civilization guided by Providence.

However, that is not to say that their non-American status could not be used against them. Regenerators were just as quick to highlight the non-American elements as being responsible for many of their failures, which served to remind participants that enrollment did not ensure success in this transformation. Multiple regenerators highlighted the foreignness of Colonel Louis Schlessinger, the scapegoat for the American defeat at the Battle of Santa Rosa. Walker emphasized his German and Jewish heritage while explaining how his own soldiers charged him with cowardice, while also officially being charged with neglect of duty, ignorance of his duties, and desertion.<sup>781</sup> Jamison described him as “wholly unfit for command.”<sup>782</sup> In fact, Walker, in his memoir, ultimately described his European recruits from New York as “trash” who “proved to be far worse than no men at all” while accusing them of vice and corruption.<sup>783</sup> Such conflicting claims allowed the regenerators to both provide promising futures for foreign

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<sup>780</sup> Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua*, 198.

<sup>781</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 165, 187.

<sup>782</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 71.

<sup>783</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 287.

assistance while simultaneously allowing them to distance the American identity away from their own collective failures. Their beliefs did not actually deter Walker from recruiting more Europeans nor did it deter Europeans from joining him in later campaigns. Nevertheless, despite such focused attacks, Walker and his allies made similar claims against several Americans, such as Parker French, that overall demonstrated that anyone could be blamed for their failures.

Ironically, the regenerators' claims of Americanness could be made precisely because the American phalanx, as a whole, laid a greater collective claim of being simultaneously both Nicaraguan and American while, paradoxically, not American. This was, perhaps, the greatest paradox that the regenerators could make. The regenerators made claims that they were Americans civilizing Nicaragua while also making separate claims that they were, in fact, Nicaraguan citizens. However, this worked, precisely because they distinguished citizenship from ethnicity. The regenerators performed as Anglo-Americans in a non-Anglo land by exporting Anglo culture to a savage land. While doing so, the Americans had to swear loyalty to Nicaragua and become its citizens. They never discarded their identities as Americans, though.

Thus, Americans could speak about the grand participation of injecting the “American element” into Nicaragua, a component which all regenerators could claim membership, as long as they proved themselves. Walker discussed how he partnered with C. K. Garrison and Charles Morgan, the Accessory Transit Company's California agent, precisely because he “hoped Garrison could be made to cooperate to introduce the American element” to Nicaragua.<sup>784</sup> The allure of inclusiveness allowed for Walker to

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<sup>784</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 149.

describe the “speedy increase of the American element in the government of the Republic [of Nicaragua]” while having such prominent foreign officers as Henningsen and Natzmer in charge of the actual agents of regeneration.<sup>785</sup> It ultimately allowed for a simple, racialized dichotomy that led to the regenerators, such as Jamison, as seeing only two sets of soldiers: the regenerating American phalanx, which Jamison claimed as “the American element” of “gentleness and kindness” and the native auxiliaries, which Jamison contrasted as proving too “difficult to infuse” such qualities into their “temper.”<sup>786</sup> The pursuit for inclusivity did not have to be completely logical or even well-thought out, it just had to offer the allure that upward mobility existed for those who did participate and demonstrate their commitment to the cause.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, the racial regeneration message allowed Walker to continue to receive support throughout the United States. Though Walker, as discussed in Chapter Four, certainly faced criticism for his slave decree, he still launched three more expeditions. In each of these expeditions, Walker continued to receive financial and physical support for his campaigns throughout the United States. Even for his last expedition, Walker still found success campaigning in New York City. He found success precisely because his regeneration message could appeal to the sensibilities and logic of so many Americans and immigrants.

People supported Walker because his message drew upon racialized aspects of progressive reformer ideals that spread throughout the United States in the 1850s. First,

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<sup>785</sup> Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, 144.

<sup>786</sup> Jamison, *With Walker in Nicaragua*, 22; 44.

the regenerators responded to a genuine perceived problem- Nicaragua was mismanaged because its current stewards failed to civilize the region. These beliefs were fortified by two seemingly contrasting but ultimately and paradoxically complementing ideas that non-whites could not and would be able to alter Nicaragua's state of savagery. On the one hand, believers of biological determinism, also known as scientific racism, assumed that empirical evidence existed to prove the inabilities of the *creole*, *mestizo*, and *landino* inhabitants of Central America. They believed that such inhabitants had reached the pinnacle of their own collective capabilities. All progress made by such inhabitants, they explained, resulted from contact with Anglo-Teutonic peoples. However, supporters of biological determinism insisted that such progress could, at best, be maintained only through constant paternalist oversight by those introducing the "American element" into Nicaragua.

On the other hand, people such as Amy Morris Bradley, who disavowed scientific racism, continued to demonstrate support for Walker, until his death. She celebrated President Walker's presence and tracked his progress. In fact, throughout her journal, Bradley fawned over Walker and called his men "Billybusters." Though Bradley wrote that she "wished no harm" to Costa Rica, Bradley expressed jubilation in hearing from her friend Mr. Mason, a resident of Puntarenas, that Walker's destiny included more of Central America. Bradley hoped that Walker would end war and anarchy in Central America. And as Walker's prospects diminished in late-1856, Bradley fretted over each bit of news and actively sought his soldiers to find any information that she could about the war. She believed that her support for Walker jeopardized her safety in Costa Rica. Ultimately, she fled Costa Rica on the same steamship with several of Walker's soldiers.

Tying her own fate in Central America to Walker's, Bradley gave "the Great little man" her "best wishes" but regretfully stated that she would not return to Costa Rica "if Billy is giving to Nicaragua."<sup>787</sup>

Bradley's support for Walker demonstrated the presence of a reformer element that correlated their stewardship for Nicaraguans with their own social status. They represented those who saw themselves as gatekeepers for civilization. These people planted the seeds for those same ideas that other scholars, such as Jackson Lears, Charles Postel, and Robert Wiebe demonstrate existed in the United States' earliest progressives and reformers.<sup>788</sup> They associated civility with economic development and understood that the stability brought by the regeneration process would offer improvement to its inhabitants while also offering its regenerators claims of power within the region. For the dregs of society serving in Walker's American phalanx, this meant access to the republican rights to status associated with planter land grants of 250 acres. It meant rank within a military. It meant guaranteed social status over mixed-race natives. For auxiliary supporters such as Amy Morris Bradley, it meant the power to erase any hints of residual subservience still lingering from her financial troubles that led her to serve as a governess for a Spanish American family.

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<sup>787</sup> Box 2, Folder 6, Diary and Letterbook, Amy Morris Bradley Papers, Rubenstein Library.

<sup>788</sup> Jackson Lears, Robert Wiebe, and Charles Postel all demonstrate the presence of similar ideas holding away in the United States in the second-half of the nineteenth century. Lears, in *Rebirth of a Nation*, demonstrates how older Christian ideas about race ceded to scientific racism in the 1880s. Robert Wiebe, in *The Search for Order*, shows how ideas about economic Darwinism influenced a eugenics movement in the United States after 1877. Charles Postel argues that the push for modernity coexisted with a populist pull to ancestry and tradition that took shape in moral reforms handled by the state while pursuing up-to-date racial exclusion policies. For more on these ideas please see: Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*; Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

However, in their eyes, such rewards were for reforming people in need of reform. Either because of culture or because of biological determinants, the Spanish Americans had failed to civilize and develop what looked to be an endlessly fertile land. They required more than guidance but oversight and direction. Even if Northerners and foreigners found the injection of slavery into Nicaragua as imperfect, many of his non-Southern regenerators and supporters could still admit that a less-perfect Anglo-American civilization was still preferable to no civilization.

Perhaps, it is no surprise that Bradley carried this same spirit with her into her future career as a health steward for the Union Army and, later, during her tenure as an education reformer in North Carolina. These regenerators, like their supporters, understood that their mission could lead to a complete reconstruction of an otherwise destabilized society. Ironically, that regeneration, much like the Reconstruction that many of these survivors would witness after their own American Civil War, would require authoritarian intervention from people who had already, in their own minds, reified the republican and democratic values that they wished to spread. And, perhaps ironically, for those values to remain, the teachers of those values would have to as well.

## CHAPTER VII – THE BUDDING OF WALKER’S REGENERATIVE SEEDS

"V. That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein." – The Platt Amendment, Approved on March 2, 1901<sup>789</sup>

### Why Walker Mattered

At the heart of this dissertation rests the argument that scholars have failed to understand adequately why William Walker and his regenerators intervened in Nicaragua. This failure has led to the acceptance of historical narratives that rarely include the War in Nicaragua as part of the early history of American empire building. Though Walker did not desire to participate in the expansion of the United States, he did seek an augmentation of Anglo-American power in the Greater Caribbean. His ideas and motives continued to gain popularity in the late-nineteenth century until they became public policy. The War in Nicaragua must be included into the greater American story of imperialism precisely because the anxieties about race, sanitation, and political stability that inspired Americans to intervene in Nicaragua throughout the 1850s continued to inspire Americans to act in that region decades later.

Outside of the field of History, and particularly outside of American schools of thought, academics from other backgrounds have correctly noted some continuity between Walker’s war and the creation of the Banana Republics. The prominent

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<sup>789</sup> Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining Their Future Relations as Contained in the Act of Congress Approved March 2, 1901, signed May 22, 1903; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 2006, RG 11, National Archives.

Uruguayan journalist Eduardo Galeano depicts the War in Nicaragua as a watershed moment in American foreign diplomacy, noting that the United States continuously relied on “invasions, interventions, bombardments, forced loans, and gun-point treaties” after the failures of Walker.<sup>790</sup> Similarly, Brady Harrison, an English professor, identifies imperialist and anti-imperialist writers, particularly fiction writers, poets, and playwrights, who correlated William Walker to the empire building underway in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>791</sup> And though Rodrigo Lazo, another professor of English, focuses on Cuban filibustering movements in the nineteenth century, his studies, likewise, show that the discourse about such movements generally outlasted the American Civil War and continued to matter during the advent of the Gilded Age.<sup>792</sup> These scholars demonstrate that filibusters and independent colonizing agents provided intellectual and strategic foundations for future interventionists.

However, despite such findings by other scholars, a definitive continuity narrative remains elusive because of the approaches and goals of those who have examined Walker. As Lazo correctly explains, many who have found continuity did so as critics of United States imperialism. Such scholars prioritized the finding of continuity by examining strategies enacted, as they took political and diplomatic approaches to understanding the links between these periods. They did not fully contextualize the goals and anxieties that compelled such similar strategies. As a result, scholars have often

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<sup>790</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997 [1971]), 107.

<sup>791</sup> Brady Harrison, “The Young Americans: Emerson, Walker, and the Early Literature of American Empire,” *American Studies* 40, no. 3 (Fall 1999), 75-97; Harrison, *Agent of Empire: William Walker and the Imperial Self in American Literature* (Athens, GA, and London: UGA Press, 2004). Both studies focus on how writers connected to Walker at the turn of the twentieth century.

<sup>792</sup> Rodrigo Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).



parceled filibustering history into its own niche, separate and distinct from empire building.

Similarly, researchers of imperialist rhetoric have fixated on the evolution of the discourse more so than the motives of inspiration. Brady Harrison, for example, explores how post-Walker writers employed him as a literary tool, focusing more on how Walker crafted his own “imperial self” in public discourse as well as how subsequent writers reacted to this creation.<sup>793</sup> Harrison describes a “world of performance” not a world of motives. He portrays Walker as a character that regenerators and post-Walker writers used to come to terms with the concept of masculinity. He does not examine why Walker went to Nicaragua except to say that Walker “identified the self with the nation and the continent,” which led him to perceive that he had an inherent right to “reshape the hemisphere and the world in” his own image, as did other antebellum imperialists.<sup>794</sup> While this is true, it does not explain why Walker felt that the hemisphere needed to be reshaped.

Writers and politicians during the early progressive-era wrote about Walker precisely because the amalgamation of health and racial anxieties that fueled the regenerators of the 1850s continued to inspire the creation of post-Civil War policies enacted by the federal government. Though the strategies did change, many of the motives remained the same. The difference between Walker’s colonization plans and the interventionist strategies that Galeano highlights illuminates the acceptance of those anxieties as they became prevalent enough that they compelled federal intervention.

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<sup>793</sup> Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 6-10.

<sup>794</sup> Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 18-20.

Americans transferred their faith to whom they believed could regenerate the region, away from private entities such as Walker and, instead, into the power that their increasingly centralized government wielded. Thus, they show that these views shifted from the fringes of society to the forefront. Walker may have failed to gain majority support in the United States during his own time, but his ideas outlived him as more and more Americans increasingly accepted the premise that they should intervene for the betterment of the hemisphere.

The progressivist imperialist policies that embodied the creation of the Banana Republics resulted from the acceptance that Anglo-Americans should stabilize the social hierarchies of the region and oversee the medical developments that jeopardized labor forces and consumers within and beyond their own borders. White elite Americans feared what would result from not interfering. The stabilization of the Caribbean remained something that elite Americans continued to correlate with a Providential mission assigned to them. While past scholars have often focused on the strategies and economic gains associated with progressive imperialism, they have often overemphasized the importance of profit, treating it as the goal and not as a reward for pursuing the stabilization of a perceivably unhealthy and backwards region.

Domestic-oriented progressive scholarship reveals that progressives often prioritized non-economic factors when determining how they would intervene in the lives of others. For example, Jackson Lears focuses on the private desires that motivated public policies of reformers while demonstrating how reformers pursued regeneration through a

world crusade guided by deep-rooted traditions of American Protestantism.<sup>795</sup> Likewise, Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick show that progressives desired to improve conditions associated with industrial life.<sup>796</sup> Deane Nuwer even demonstrates how post-Reconstruction Southern elites correlated stewardship with redemption, even at the risk of economic advancement.<sup>797</sup> Collectively, these authors prove that non-economic pressures motivated reformers to action.

Several scholars illuminate that progressives often focused on racial anxieties. Linda Gordon shows that progressive ideas about racial inferiorities affected the adoption practices of the Catholic church as it transported Irish orphans from New York to Arizona.<sup>798</sup> Alan Trachtenberg reveals that at the core of the progressive debate about race was the issue of moral depravation, which resulted in poor health and disease.<sup>799</sup> And Elizabeth Ewen explains that progressive women challenged the ability of immigrant women to meet the ideals necessary for assimilation.<sup>800</sup> This scholarship provides inroads into possible avenues for exploring what motivated progressive reform.

Some scholars have demonstrated that non-economic motives also compelled progressives towards interference in the Caribbean, yet few connections have been drawn to William Walker. Mariola Espinosa, in *Epidemic Invasions*, explains how the United

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<sup>795</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009).

<sup>796</sup> Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983).

<sup>797</sup> Deanne Nuwer, *Plague among the Magnolias: The 1878 Yellow Fever Epidemic in Mississippi* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009).

<sup>798</sup> Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>799</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, "Introduction," in *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenants of New York*, by Jacob A. Riis, edited by Sam Bass Warner, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), xiii-xxxii.

<sup>800</sup> Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1915* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985).

States government reacted to the terror of yellow fever by attacking it at its perceived source, Cuba, through a combination of humanitarian aid and sanitation reform after the Spanish-American War.<sup>801</sup> Similarly, Marilia Coutinho shows that the presence of chagas disease in Brazil shaped how Brazilians saw themselves as they, too, attempted to modernize. She argues that, for many Latin American countries, disease prevention correlated with imperial interests compelled by external forces coming from the United States.<sup>802</sup> These works demonstrate how disease challenged claims to sovereignty in Latin America.

Other scholars have also demonstrated the importance that late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century elites placed on the relationship between disease and modernity. Diana Obregón describes how Colombian elites feared that the discovery of leprosy in their country would stigmatize their nation by creating a backwards image of their country.<sup>803</sup> Similarly, Argentinian physicians combatted hysteria as they saw its presence in porteña women as a threat to a racialist utopia, as Gabriela Nouzeilles reveals.<sup>804</sup> And Nancy Leys Stepan demonstrates how, even as late as the 1930s, decades after the discovery of how malaria and yellow fever were transmitted, Brazil continued to rely on the “Italian” model for combatting malaria, which emphasized a social and holistic cures that targeted and blamed the behavior of the victims as much as it did the presence of

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<sup>801</sup> Mariola Espinosa, *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>802</sup> Marilia Coutinho, “Tropical Medicine in Brazil: The Case Chagas’s Disease,” in *Disease in the History of Modern Latin America: From Malaria to Aids*, by Diego Armus (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007 [2003]), 76-100.

<sup>803</sup> Diana Obregón, “The State, Physicians, and Leprosy in Modern Colombia,” in *Disease in the History of Latin America*, 130-157.

<sup>804</sup> Gabriela Nouzeilles, “An Imaginary Plague in Turn-of-the-Century Buenos Aires: Hysteria, Discipline, and Languages of the Body,” in *Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*, 51-75.

mosquitos.<sup>805</sup> These scholars collectively show that reformers throughout the Americas frequently relied on government to protect their pursuits of progress by combatting disease, often at the expense of citizens' liberties and humanity.

This dissertation thus argues that Walker's campaigns in Central America can be seen as the seeds for progressive imperialist intervention. What motivated Walker and his regenerators in the 1850s increasingly motivated Americans in the subsequent decades as progressive-minded social reformers continued to racialize medical threats and seek Anglo-American oversight as the solution to these perceived social and racial problems. The language, over the subsequent decades, became more refined as it filtered into Washington's policies, but it stemmed from those same motives of the regenerators that compelled them to see themselves as the only guaranteed solution for the health and stability of the Americas. Empire, for both Walker and Theodore Roosevelt, existed just as much as a reward for providing stability as it did as a goal to be achieved.

Because progressives shared the same anxieties as William Walker, he served as a prominent literary device for writers. Both imperialist and anti-imperialists deployed Walker as a mechanism for exploring the role of Anglo-Americans in the Greater Caribbean. Non-fiction writers chronicled his life as fiction writers created characters inspired by his exploits, particularly those in Nicaragua. Government officials, especially Theodore Roosevelt, relied on the same medical and racial narratives to promote intervention. His message of racial order and sanitation resonated with American society. To demonstrate this resonance, the conclusion of this dissertation will thus demonstrate

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<sup>805</sup> Nancy Leys Stepan, "'The Only Serious Terror in These Regions': Malaria Control in the Brazilian Amazon," in *Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*, 31.

the presence of this lexicon in the political policies and speeches of this era, in the fiction inspired by Walker's campaigns, and by the scholars who utilized him as an example of Anglo-American superiority.

The Platt Amendment, the Panama Canal, and  
the Legitimization of Walker's Message

On March 2, 1901, the United States Congress approved the Platt Amendment, which effectively granted the United States permission to extend its own authority into Cuba. With this Act, Congress informed the world that it could and would interfere with the sovereignty of Cuba whenever it felt that Cuba's foreign or domestic actions jeopardized the economic, political, or social interests of the United States. Congress both reified and legitimized Walker's dream of an Anglo-American-led regenerated Caribbean by relying on much of the same messages espoused by the Nicaraguan regenerators 45 years earlier. Equally important, the Platt Amendment also epitomized progressive imperialism by legally solidifying a paternalistic position of stewardship for the United States over its newly sovereign neighbor.

The Platt Amendment illuminated the very importance of medical science on foreign policy. At the heart of progressive policies lay the faith that progressives placed in the ability of science to quantify solutions. As William McNeill notes, the 1850s witnessed the first decade in Western history that the medical profession demonstrated any noticeable change in the mortality rates of urban populations.<sup>806</sup> Many early progressives were of the first generation to be raised in a world where scientific advancement could be undeniably linked to healthcare advancements. And as Charles

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<sup>806</sup> William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, Reprint (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 212.

Rosenberg and John Duffy demonstrate, the second-half of the nineteenth century witnessed an intense process of medical professionalization that continued well into the twentieth century.<sup>807</sup> This process coincided with the growing faith in science. An educated middle-class looking to fulfill the very same act of stewardship that William Walker professed as necessary for the civilizing of Central America spearheaded these changes on a wider scale. Business elites and progressive bureaucrats, in turn, applied the act of Christian stewardship as part of their strategies to ensure their own paternalism over an unhealthy labor force, both abroad and at home.

The Platt Amendment represented the most complete attempt by United States elites to attach a health care message to their foreign policy. As Mariola Espinosa explains in *Epidemic Invasions*, Washington linked many major outbreaks of yellow fever in the United States back to Cuba. Panic about the spread of the disease led many Americans to seek humanitarian aid for Cubans.<sup>808</sup> Intervention in Cuba allowed Washington to protect its own population and to extend United States's presence throughout the Caribbean world.

Furthermore, United States leaders perceived Cuba's unwillingness to combat yellow fever as an un-American and immoral violation of their social obligations. They judged Cuba's activities using their own lens of Christian stewardship. American citizens believed that Cuba shirked its duties to combat yellow fever, which compounded their own country's risk to the epidemic. Despite germ theory acceptance and the discovery

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<sup>807</sup> John Duffy, *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992 [1990]); and Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America's Hospital System* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987).

<sup>808</sup> Mariola Espinosa, *Epidemic Invasions*, 3, 11.

that the mosquito is the vector of yellow fever, American leaders still associated morality with cleanliness and health. Most American leaders still correlated economic success with health, for a healthy economy allowed for the financial means to spread their influence, which justified its existence. Cuba's inactions meant that they failed to perform their moral responsibilities. By codifying the Cuban government with a moral responsibility to protect American economic interests, United States's elites demonstrated a rationale that placed Cuba within the same world system under their watch.

Cuba's filth signified an un-American attitude. This rationale placed Cubans into a subaltern identity that implied a deviation from an idealized American persona while still awarding them a position to be judged by the standards of an American ideal. The Platt Amendment legitimized this rationale. It provided the United States government an outlet to oversee the regeneration of Cuba under a medical lens, something which Walker attempted in Central America less than fifty years earlier.

What changed between the time of Walker and that of Theodore Roosevelt was the role of the government. In the 1850s, two presidents refused to respond to the pleas of the regenerators. Though the United States military did intervene twice in Nicaragua in the 1850s, neither intervention was the result of the American government seeking a civilizing resolution founded on medical and racial regeneration. The bombardment of Greytown occurred before Walker's arrival and demonstrated the American government's attempts to test British resolution to maintain their hegemony in the region after signing the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. The second intervention occurred when the United States government deployed its own navy to impede Walker. This time, they did so because the government pursued stability, which it believed would protect the Transit



Route but decided that stability would not come from the return of the regenerators. It would instead result from treaties designed to prevent a new civil war.

However, the Platt Amendment demonstrated that, by 1901, the United States government had mostly adopted the health and racial messages of William Walker. The fifth clause of the Platt Amendment, explicitly linked the health of the United States, particularly that of the South, to the sanitation of Cuba. It described how the United States government would oversee the Cuban government as it secured the “sanitation of the cities of the island.” The Platt Amendment correlated sanitation with the “recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases,” which it declared “may be prevented.” It also declared that it placed emphasis on disease to protect both “the people and commerce of Cuba” as well as “the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.”<sup>809</sup> Thus, the fifth clause legitimized the correlations that William Walker and other antebellum regenerators placed on the presence of diseases in the South and on Caribbean healthcare, correlations which originally encouraged thousands to join Walker.

Other parts of the Platt Amendment validated Walker’s original claims that only Anglo-Americans, of all the Westerners exerting power in the region, could guarantee the security and safety of the Caribbean. The first clause prohibited Cuba from entering into any treaty or colonization plan that would “impair the independence of Cuba.” Likewise, the second clause prevented Cuba from entering into any debts with foreign powers that would allow Europeans to exert power there. The third clause even went as far as to grant

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<sup>809</sup> Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining Their Future Relations as Contained in the Act of Congress Approved March 2, 1901, signed May 22, 1903; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 2006, RG 11, National Archives.

the United States permission to “exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence.” The eighth and final clause described this agreement as a “permanent treaty with the United States.”<sup>810</sup> The Platt Amendment did in Cuba what Walker failed to achieve in Nicaragua,- it guaranteed Anglo-American paternalism in a land inhabited by Spanish Americans of mixed-race origins.

The Platt Amendment can and should be seen as a document that acknowledged the United State government’s unofficial but looming stance that non-white people could not govern themselves into any type of civilized or organized entity. This was certainly not a new belief in and of itself. As Sibylle Fischer explains in *Modernity Disavowed*, Westerners spent decades after Haitian Independence predicting the impending failures of the Black republic as they de-emphasized Black participation in the development of ancient civilizations.<sup>811</sup> However, the United States government did not express firm desires to interfere in the future of Haiti like it did with Cuba. Instead, Haiti served as an academic exercise in predicting an impending collapse. It also served as a warning in the form of a fear of a “second Haiti” that informed Anglo-Americans of what would become of other regions if their racial social orders were to collapse.<sup>812</sup>

The specter of a second Haiti, something that did influence how the regenerators approached Nicaragua, also affected how the American government approached Cuba.

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<sup>810</sup> Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining Their Future Relations as Contained in the Act of Congress Approved March 2, 1901, signed May 22, 1903; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 2006, RG 11, National Archives.

<sup>811</sup> Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 50-51, Fischer demonstrates that Westerners demoted Egypt, with its possibly Black origins from the pedestal as a cradle of civilization, which ultimately eliminated Egypt as proof that Blacks could participate in a civilization.

<sup>812</sup> Mathew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn. Press, 2010), 3. Clavin demonstrates that this fear lasted into the American Civil War.

As Rebecca J. Scott demonstrates, particularly in *Degrees of Freedom*, the Cuban government took a politically more inclusive approach to dealing with racial tension on the island, a process started before independence.<sup>813</sup> Article 11 of the Cuban Constitution, guaranteed that “All Cubans have equal rights before the law.”<sup>814</sup> This belief was further reinforced by Article 38, which guaranteed that “[a]ll male Cubans over twenty-one years of age have the right of suffrage,” with but a few non-racialized exceptions concerning mental capacity, criminal records, and active military service.<sup>815</sup> Such articles and others like them challenged any legal codifying of racial discrimination.

This system of inclusivity, however, compelled Americans to lower their opinions about the potential of a fully sovereign Cuba. Gilded-age and progressive Americans, even further steeped in scientific racism than their antebellum predecessors, still did not accept a reality where all people could be trusted with equal access to rights and responsibilities guaranteed by law. In the United States, citizens in the preceding decade witnessed the codifying of Jim Crow laws that explicitly challenged notions of racial equality. If Cuba was to guarantee all Cubans equality, then Cuba, by that logic, had, in a sense, denigrated all Cubans to a lower social rung that required Anglo-American paternalism. Americans found it difficult to accept the possibility of a politically stable government founded on principles of racial equality partly because it challenged the logic behind the more exclusive institutions in place throughout the United States. They were not prepared to give Cuba a chance and sought control over the fledgling country’s

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<sup>813</sup> Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>814</sup> Translation of the Proposed Constitution for Cuba, the Official Acceptance of the Platt Amendment, and the Electoral Law (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 5.

<sup>815</sup> Translation of the Proposed Constitution for Cuba, 7.

immediate claims of sovereignty to ensure a divide remained that could prove the importance of white leadership. They especially feared that Cuban attempts to marginalize the importance of race would lead to a “second Haiti.”<sup>816</sup>

The Platt Amendment effectively trumped the most important claim to Cuban sovereignty found in the Cuban constitution. Article 43, as a measure to guarantee the proper oversight for Cuba’s regeneration, stated that “[s]overeignty is vested in the people of Cuba and all public powers are derived therefrom.”<sup>817</sup> Yet, the Platt Amendment stripped away that power by forcing the Cuban government to allow American oversight on all of its foreign policies and on its internal sanitation policies, all to protect “the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.”<sup>818</sup> It even forced Cuba to loan land to the United States, which the United States used as a fueling station. These parameters ensured the United States power in Cuba.

American politicians justified American intervention in the Caribbean using similar language that Walker and his regenerators once espoused. Like Walker, Theodore Roosevelt based America’s interventionist claims upon concerns of civility and barbarism. On December 6, 1904, Roosevelt, in a speech to Congress, stated that “it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with [the] most sense of international obligations and with [the] keenest and most generous appreciation of the

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<sup>816</sup> Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 2. Many scholars have chronicled the importance that Cuban revolutionaries placed on eliminating racial divides. Ferrer, throughout *Insurgent Cuba*, demonstrates the importance of the fear of a second Haiti while also highlighting the emphasis that José Martí placed on establishing a raceless society.

<sup>817</sup> Translation of the Proposed Constitution for Cuba, 8.

<sup>818</sup> Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Cuba Embodying the Provisions Defining Their Future Relations as Contained in the Act of Congress Approved March 2, 1901, signed May 22, 1903; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 2006, RG 11, National Archives.

difference between right and wrong, to disarm.” He then contended that, “[i]f the great civilized nations of the present day should disarm, the result would mean an immediate recrudescence of barbarism in one form or another.” Roosevelt claimed that American action was “responsive to the general sentiment of humane and civilized mankind.”<sup>819</sup> Thus, as Roosevelt argued throughout that speech, Americans had an obligation to act in the Caribbean.

Roosevelt laced his message of Caribbean intervention with calls for humanitarian aid while mirroring the language utilized by the regenerators. Roosevelt contended that Americans intervened because “[a]ll that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous.”<sup>820</sup> He argued that the United States interfered in countries guilty of “chronic wrongdoing,” which he insisted resulted “in general loosening of the ties of civilized society.” He described interference as “the last resort.” He contended that the United States would only intervene when foreign actions in the Caribbean “violated the rights of the United States, or when such actions “invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.” Such statements paralleled Walker’s words concerning Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras.

Roosevelt also spoke directly about the Platt Amendment, once more relying on a language that echoed the sentiments of Walker fifty years earlier. Roosevelt credited the Platt Amendment for giving Cuba a “stable and just civilization.” He argued that the

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<sup>819</sup> Theodore Roosevelt's Annual Message to Congress for 1904; House Records HR 58A-K2; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives; Record Group 233; Center for Legislative Archives; National Archives.

<sup>820</sup> Theodore Roosevelt's Annual Message to Congress for 1904; House Records HR 58A-K2; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives; Record Group 233; Center for Legislative Archives; National Archives.

United States intervened in Cuba to “stop the intolerable conditions” present there. Roosevelt insisted that “many of the republics in both Americas” strove for that same stability. And, like Walker, Roosevelt linked such pursuits with American citizens and the American government, claiming that “[o]ur interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical.”<sup>821</sup> These words solidified a sentiment of the Nicaraguan regenerators, who had previously depicted the regeneration of Nicaragua as one step in stabilizing the entire Greater Caribbean.

Walker did not enter Nicaragua with an explicit plan to conquer it. It is not clear when Walker decided that Nicaragua required his leadership as a solution to its instability. Walker originally turned down the presidency in November 1855. He likely saw his leadership as a forced solution to continuing concerns about Nicaragua’s own future sovereignty. While rumors persisted that Walker had always sought immediate control over his own empire in Central America, much of that existed as speculations, aside from Charles Doubleday’s contention that Walker unraveled plans for his own Central American empire before the October peace treaty.<sup>822</sup> When contrasting the timing of the alleged statements to the peace treaty that shortly followed them, it is likely that Walker had not fully developed his ideas about such plans; thus, he did not act on them when the time came for a new Nicaraguan president. Walker sought the power that he deemed necessary to solve Nicaragua’s political and social problems. Power was not the

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<sup>821</sup> Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message to Congress for 1904; House Records HR 58A-K2; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives; Record Group 233; Center for Legislative Archives; National Archives.

<sup>822</sup> Charles William Doubleday, *Reminiscences of the “Filibuster” War in Nicaragua* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886), 165-166.

goal but the means to the greater goal of regeneration, something that even Doubleday contended through his defense of Walker's convictions.

Likewise, the American government in the Gilded Age did not see intervention only as a strategy to gain power but also as a solution to the instability and threats present because of European failures and Caribbean leaders. Alluding to their shortcomings, Roosevelt stated that "occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror as to make us doubt whether it is not our manifest duty to" interfere. Therefore, he argued that the United States must act for "those who have suffered by" such crimes while referencing American actions in Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, as well as military and economic actions in the Far East, particularly the open-door policy in China. Roosevelt depicted such actions as necessities enacted by a just power capable of righting wrongs and stabilizing debilitating political circumstances.<sup>823</sup>

In fact, Walker's message of regeneration constantly echoed throughout the speeches and writings of Theodore Roosevelt that concerned American action in the Caribbean. Roosevelt often stressed the importance of sanitation in such addresses. In his January 8, 1906, address to Congress concerning the Isthmian Canal, Roosevelt described how "great progress has been made" there while emphasizing that the "first work to be done was the work of sanitation," which he described as "the necessary preliminary to the work of actual construction."<sup>824</sup> This focus complemented emphasis placed on sanitation during the 1903 Isthmian Canal Convention, which, in Article II, granted the United

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<sup>823</sup> Theodore Roosevelt's Annual Message to Congress for 1904; House Records HR 58A-K2; Records of the U.S. House of Representatives; Record Group 233; Center for Legislative Archives; National Archives.

<sup>824</sup> *Annual Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission for the Year Ending December 1, 1905* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 3-4.

States the rights to occupy and control Panamanian land for the purpose of “construction, maintenance, operation, sanitation, and protection of the main Canal, or auxiliary works, or upon the cargo, officers, crew, passengers of any such vessels.”<sup>825</sup> Roosevelt relied on the American public’s acceptance that sanitation equated to progress and stability.

In many ways, Roosevelt’s speeches about the Isthmian Canal also mirrored the language utilized by those promoting the importance of sanitation and disease awareness, particularly of yellow fever. In a speech given in Mobile, Alabama, on October 23, 1905, Roosevelt spoke to the “citizens of this great seaport of the Gulf,” about the “sanitation of the Isthmus.” Roosevelt attributed sanitation policies to why they could now construct a canal in Panama, despite the fear of yellow fever epidemics. Perhaps ironically, in that same speech, Roosevelt had admitted that he had originally favored a Nicaraguan canal but switched his support to a Panama Canal because of Congressional decisions that limited the choice between a Panama Canal or “no canal.”<sup>826</sup> Roosevelt, like Walker, amalgamated concerns about sanitation with economic progress that an interoceanic route would provide, each aspect improving the lives of the American public, and, to a lesser extent, the Spanish American public.

Roosevelt, like Walker, fully emphasized the correlation between interventionist success and colonization missions and health and sanitation policies. Roosevelt demonstrated not only his awareness of these connections but also reaffirmed such beliefs

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<sup>825</sup> Article II, “Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting a Convention Between the United States and the Republic of Panama for the Construction of a Ship Canal to Connect the Waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Signed November 18, 1903,” *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt*. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/978.pdf>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>826</sup> Transcript of a Speech Delivered by Theodore Roosevelt at Mobile, Alabama on October 23, 1905, *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt*. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/161.txt>. (accessed February 22, 2017).



in his congressional reports. Roosevelt, in a 1905 report concerning military efficiency, focused on disease and sanitation. He relayed a message written by the War Department's Surgeon-General Robert. Maitland O'Reilly, which emphasized that "military sanitation" was one of the primary duties of the Medical Department while highlighting concerns that the "average practitioner" was not prepared to carry out this "well-marked specialty in medicine." O'Reilly, in that report, discussed how the "mortality from disease in armies in wartime greatly exceeds that from losses in battle," while citing the importance that disease had on the outcomes of great wars, such as the Mexican War and the American Civil War. O'Reilly estimated that the war against Spain escalated the country's death rate from 2.15 per thousand in July to 4.08 in August. Roosevelt utilized such findings to push for legislation to "increase the efficiency of the Army," to promote the effects of American-led sanitary development as a way to validate both sanitation and American control over it.<sup>827</sup>

Ultimately, just as the United States justified control over Cuba on the basis of sanitation, it also, under Theodore Roosevelt, relied on those same claims to extend control over Panama beyond the Canal Zone. In a congressional message given on December 17, 1906, President Roosevelt correlated sanitation with control over the region, even in parts outside of the Canal Zone. Roosevelt stated how the United States "exercises control for certain sanitary purposes" over two cities outside of the Canal Zone and thus not "under the United States flag," Panama and Colon. The United States justified such extension on the grounds of "caring for and housing of the employees, and

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<sup>827</sup> "Message from the President of the United States, Recommending Legislation to Increase the Efficiency of the Army, January 9, 1905," *Almanac of Theodore Roosevelt*. <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/954.pdf>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

the actual digging of the canal,” which it reiterated was in regards to the sanitation of the Zone.<sup>828</sup> Such language mirrored concerns expressed by the regenerators in their control over the Transit Route in 1855 as they combatted cholera. These statements illuminated the paternalist vision that Roosevelt and other progressives attached to their interventionist strategies.

Theodore Roosevelt, like the regenerators before him, delegitimized opposition to this extension of power by correlating their wishes with unsanitary effects. While discussing the preliminary work underway in Panama, Roosevelt warned that “[t]o have yielded to the natural impatience of ill-informed outsiders and begun all kinds of experiments in work prior to a thorough sanitation of the Isthmus . . . would have been disastrous.<sup>829</sup> The use of the word “outsiders” mirrored the same tone and language employed by regenerators as they challenged the validity of those opposing their colonization mission. Both Roosevelt and Walker, and to a lesser extent Cornelius Vanderbilt, utilized the call for sanitation as a way to clear opposition politically out of their respective ways precisely because they understood that Americans would favorably respond to the great health scares of yellow fever, malaria, and cholera.

And like Walker before him, Roosevelt juxtaposed the failed foresight of his opposition in regards to sanitation, with his own success at providing it. Roosevelt described sanitation as “[t]he first great problem to be solved, upon the solution of which the success of the rest of the work depended.” Roosevelt credited Dr. W. C. Gorgas for

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<sup>828</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal, Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress on December 17, 1906* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 3.

<sup>829</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal, December 17, 1906*, 7.

transforming the Isthmus, which he described as previously being a “byword for deadly unhealthfulness,” into a region whose sickness and death rates “compare favorably with reasonably healthy localities in the United States” after two years of work there.

Roosevelt especially credited Gorgas for “minimizing the risk due to the presence of those species of mosquitoes which have been found to propagate malarial and yellow fevers.” He asserted that Gorgas performed “astounding” services thereby constructing drainage ditches to diminish mosquito breeding grounds, clearing away jungle forests near the workers’ towns, which served as their habitation sites of preference, placing mosquito screens around doors and piazzas, and utilizing fumigation techniques, all of which “explain the extraordinary absence of mosquitoes” near the Canal Zone.<sup>830</sup>

Roosevelt used Gorgas in the same way that Walker utilized James Nott, for both promoted the skills and results of their physicians as extensions of their own success and power to persuade Americans to have faith in their sanitation messages.

Roosevelt also highlighted the importance of Anglo-American paternalism over the native workers as a contributing factor to the sanitation success in Panama. Roosevelt exclaimed how “[e]qual care is taken by the inspectors of the health department to secure cleanliness in the houses and proper hygienic conditions of every kind.” Such a statement inferred that American oversight extended not just in terms of geographic reach but also in terms of paternalist scope, matching levels replicated by progressives in their treatment of the poor in American urban centers. Roosevelt even reported that he “inspected between twenty and thirty water-closets, both those used by the white employees and

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<sup>830</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 8.

those used by the colored laborers.” He continued by stating that “[i]n almost every case I found the conditions perfect.”<sup>831</sup> Roosevelt, like Walker, took an active administrative role, linking himself to the very message that he proclaimed.

In fact, when Roosevelt did find sanitary conditions lacking, he, like Walker, blamed European imperialist powers for their failures to perform their paternalist functions. Roosevelt stated, “[i]n but one case did I find the conditions really bad.” Roosevelt blamed the French, stating that “the buildings were all inherited from the French Company and were being used temporarily while other buildings were in the course of construction.” While doing so, Roosevelt also asserted that the American colonizers fixed the failures of the French by stating that “right near the defective water-closet a new and excellent closet with a good sewer pipe was in process of construction and nearly finished.”<sup>832</sup> While Roosevelt certainly employed such language as a political maneuver, he understood that, for that maneuver to work, it required an audience receptive to both American exceptionalism as well as the importance that Americans could act as sanitary reformers in the region.

The very nature of Roosevelt’s 1906 report attests to the priorities that American progressive imperialists placed on healthcare as part of their colonizing mission. Aside from the combatting of yellow fever and malaria, Roosevelt, like Walker, also emphasized the importance of hospital care performed by Americans in the Canal Zone. In the American hospitals, Roosevelt noted that the laborers were “carefully cared for

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<sup>831</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 8.

<sup>832</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 8.

whenever they apply for care.” He contended that “[f]rom no responsible source did any complaint come to me as to the management of the hospital service.” Roosevelt insisted that such claims were representative of what he personally inspected at both the “large hospitals at Ancon and Colon” as well as the “receiving hospitals” in some of the other settlements.<sup>833</sup> The hospitals served as institutional proof of sanitary and health reform success.

While highlighting the benefits of the American-run hospital service, Roosevelt utilized the hospital to reinforce racial distinctions that, in turn, justified a racial social hierarchy. Roosevelt noted most of the patients were “colored men.” And although Roosevelt celebrated the lack of complaints from any “responsible source” he dismissed grievances from the actual patients, stating that “occasionally a very ignorant West India negro . . . becomes frightened by the ordinary hospital routine.”<sup>834</sup> Roosevelt also blamed the colored laborers for much of their health concerns, stating that “[t]he difficulty of exercising a thorough supervision over the colored laborers is, of course, greater than is the case among the whites.” He further stated that such workers were “less competent to take care of themselves,” which he insisted accounted “for the fact that their death rate is so much higher than that of the whites.” Nevertheless, Roosevelt stated that “[e]ven among the colored employees it will be seen that the death rate is not high.”<sup>835</sup> Such a position helped solidify a sense of paternalistic duty over the minority laborers as well as

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<sup>833</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 9.

<sup>834</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 9.

<sup>835</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 10.

a sense of necessity, beliefs once shared by Walker's regenerators as they ministered health care in Nicaragua.

And despite the perceivably comforting reports about the conditions of Panama, Roosevelt continued to caution about health concerns as a way to reinforce the need for continued American oversight, however, extended such supervision became. Roosevelt stated that he did "not believe that it [the present condition of Panama] can possibly continue."<sup>836</sup> He warned of the presence of typhoid fever and the virulence of pneumonia, which he described as the "most destructive disease" in the Canal Zone.<sup>837</sup> He also noted the presence of malaria, which he described as the second most dangerous disease facing workers. These diseases displayed a lack of development that justified Anglo-American paternalism.

Roosevelt contrasted such fears with the healthy expectancy of the white managerial staff and families. He assured Congress that "[o]f the 6,000 white Americans, including 1,200 women and children, not a single death has occurred in the past three months."<sup>838</sup> He noted that in October, a month that witnessed 98 deaths, only two of them were white Americans. Such claims harkened back to if only indirectly, Josiah Nott's antebellum assumptions that the white race could, in fact, thrive outside of their native primitive localities.

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<sup>836</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 9.

<sup>837</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 10.

<sup>838</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 9.

Much of the success, Roosevelt contended, resulted from the proactive measures underway to combat mosquitos. Roosevelt credited this success “to the vigorous work of the special brigade of employees who have been inspecting houses where the *stegomyia* mosquito is to be found.”<sup>839</sup> He noted that these inspectors destroyed the larvae of the yellow fever-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes while doing similar work to combat malarial mosquitos. Roosevelt stated that “[a] little over a year ago all kinds of mosquitos, including the two fatal species, were numerous about the Culebra cut.” However, he pointed out that, because of such reformers, “but a single mosquito, and this not of the dangerous species, was seen by any member of our [his] party during” his three days inspecting the Canal progress.<sup>840</sup> Roosevelt surmised that the lack of mosquitoes proved the good works that validated American intervention.

Ultimately Theodore Roosevelt expressed much of the same sentiments that Walker did by linking Anglo-American-led healthcare in the Caribbean to progress and development. Certainly, while neither Roosevelt nor Walker shunned economic development, both demonstrated that they perceived a more holistic understanding of American roles in the Caribbean as imperial overlords of non-white laborers.

Where they differed was on strategy. Walker sought private intervention which he hoped would be supported by Washington and the American public, but he did not rest on such assistance as the foundation for his colonization efforts. Walker hoped to establish, through such interference, an entirely sovereign government administered by Anglo-

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<sup>839</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 10. *Stegomyia* is the subgenus for the *Aedes aegypti*.

<sup>840</sup> *Special Message of the President of the United States Concerning the Panama Canal*, December 17, 1906, 8.

Americans willing to exchange their American citizenship to become Nicaraguan while not disrobing themselves of their Anglo-American identities. Roosevelt, however, utilized the government to establish administrative roles for Anglo-American agents of empire to oversee otherwise sovereign governments.

#### The Echoes of Walker in Early-Progressive Era Public Discourse

Walker's regeneration message also reverberated in how Gilded Age writers entered him into the discourse concerning American imperialist ambitions. Both historians and fiction writers highlighted their own understanding of the importance that racial ordering and medical regeneration had for Walker's regenerators. Equally important, many of the writers also defended the regenerators for pursuing such lofty goals.

Collectively, their writings demonstrate that Theodore Roosevelt, through his own promotion of American ambitions in the Caribbean, participated in a public discourse that existed beyond the creation of official American proclamations and speeches. The American government did not have a monopoly on the production of public discussions about either Walker or regeneration. However, that lack of a monopoly meant that Roosevelt did not have to create the discussion nor define the terms employed in it. Roosevelt spoke to a receptive American public, a public trained to be responsive to a lexicon of medical and racial regeneration.

Historians and antiquarians led the way in contextualizing the significance of Walker's regenerators as they related to modern imperial prospects. Three writers, James Jeffrey Roche, William Oscar Scroggs, and Judge Daniel B. Lucas illuminate how Walker's regeneration message crossed over from being points of discussion to points of



truth for much of the American public.<sup>841</sup> The writings of Roche and Scroggs highlighted the influence that Walker's contemporary supporters had, particularly William Vincent Wells, in shaping the historiography about him. They followed Wells and to a lesser extent Peter Stout, Laurence Oliphant, and Anna Ellea Carroll, by emphasizing Walker's medical background, highlighting the importance of disease, and justifying the need for racial re-ordering in Nicaragua. Though the writings of Lucas certainly betray some shared sentiments about civility and savageness, his study of Walker served as a counterweight against the support of American interference in Central America by criticizing Walker's right to be in Nicaragua as well as his beliefs. Even so, Lucas, like Roche and Scroggs, illuminated the importance that such a message played in how Americans were to understand their role in the Caribbean by tackling the same issues that his rival writers did.

Walker's education, particularly his medical background, remained a key theme for those discussing the colonization of Nicaragua. For many writers, his studies proved his credentials to be a leader, which morally, though not necessarily legally, justified his presence in a savage and undeveloped land. In *The Story of the Filibusters*, Roche was one of the first writers to provide a thorough reconstruction of what Walker would have learned at the University of Nashville as an attempt to present him as a qualified regenerator. Roche highlighted Walker's scientific background, stating that the university

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<sup>841</sup> Daniel Bedinger Lucas, *Nicaragua: War of the Filibusters* (Richmond: B. F. Publishing Co., 1896); James Jeffrey Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1891); and William Oscar Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers: The Story of William Walker and His Associates* (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1916).

offered such classes as astronomy, chemistry, geology, and natural theology.<sup>842</sup> Roche then emphasized his “liking for the medical profession,” while describing his time spent studying in Scotland, France, Germany, and Italy. Roche acknowledged that Walker practiced medicine in both Philadelphia and Nashville before finding that the profession was “unsuited to his health.”<sup>843</sup> In this way, Roche followed William Vincent Wells by bringing Walker’s education to the forefront of the War in Nicaragua. Unlike Roche, whose writings reveal a certain celebration of Walker’s motives and being, Judge Lucas, in *Nicaragua: War of the Filibusters*, offered almost no background about Walker’s education. Scroggs, whose studies followed both writers, returned to the traditional narrative that presented Walker’s medical prowess as a sign of legitimacy.<sup>844</sup> Supporters of Walker certainly won this part of the historiographical reconstruction, for few studies since Scroggs have failed to incorporate Walker’s medical background into any reconstruction about the War in Nicaragua.

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<sup>842</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 40-41. The full list of courses that Roche lists are as follows: “mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, navigation, belles-lettres, geology, moral and mental philosophy, logic, political economy, international and constitutional law, oratory, natural theology, the classics, and many other studies.”

<sup>843</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 41.

<sup>844</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 10-11. Like Roche, Scroggs highlighted the curriculum present at the University of Nashville, describing both the courses required for admission as well as those offered at the university. Concerning admission standards, Scroggs stated: “[t]he subjects then required for admission comprise ‘the Grammar, including prosody, of the Greek and Latin tongues, with Mair’s *Introduction*, and such other elementary books as are usually taught in respectable Grammar Schools: Cæsar’s Commentaries, Virgil, Cicero’s Orations, Greek Testament, and Dalzel’s *Collectanea Græca Minora*, or with other Greek and Latin authors, equivalent to these; and also with English Grammar, Arithmetic, and Geography.’” Concerning the studies offered at the university, Scroggs listed the following: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, descriptive and analytical geometry, conic sections, calculus, mensuration, surveying, navigation, mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, mineralogy, geology, experimental philosophy, natural history, Roman and Grecian antiquities, Greek and Latin classics, rhetoric and belles-lettres. History, mental and moral philosophy, logic, political economy, international and constitutional law, composition, criticism and oratory, natural theology, Christian evidences, and the Bible.”

Progressive-era scholarship also highlighted the importance of the regeneration message, sometimes even promoting it. Roche validated William Walker by citing Frederick Crowe's 1850 publication, *The Gospel in Central America*, stating that Walker fulfilled a Mosquito Coast prophecy about the region's regeneration. In what appears to be a partial paraphrasing of a much larger work about the religious regeneration of the region, Roche credits Crowe with writing that the local Indians believed "that a grey-eyed man would come from the far North to overturn the Spanish domination and regenerate the native race," which he states "seems likely to be confirmed, in part, at least" by Walker's actions.<sup>845</sup> Interestingly, Roche seems to have liberally paraphrased Crowe, for it appears he misquoted Crowe in a way that emphasized Walker's connection to regeneration more so than Crowe did with his recording of the prophecy. Crowe actually wrote that some travelers had reported that "there exists among the Mosquito Indians an old traditional prophecy purporting that their deliverance from the dark-complexioned Spaniard was to come from 'the grey-eyed man.'"<sup>846</sup> Elsewhere, Roche contextualizes Walker's slavery decree as one that Walker believed would "have regenerated Central America."<sup>847</sup> Roche represented Walker as a key element in the progress of Spanish American development.

Roche legitimized William Walker's actions by portraying him as an agent combatting barbarism. He stated that "[t]he states of Central America, torn by internal

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<sup>845</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 112-113.

<sup>846</sup> Frederick Crowe, *The Gospel in Central America, Containing a Sketch of the Country, Physical and Geographical – Historical and Political – Moral and Religious: A History of the Baptist Mission in British Honduras: and of the Introduction of the Bible into the Spanish American Republic of Guatemala* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850) 248.

<sup>847</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 151.

strife, wasting their scant resources in fruitless wars and sad faction fights, were lapsing into a barbarism below that of Nicarao when he bowed to the Spanish yoke.”<sup>848</sup> Roche described the native leaders of the Mosquito Coast as “ignorant negroes ruling a scattered tribe,” and all of its inhabitants as “the savage descendants of a slave cargo wrecked upon the coast in the seventeenth century.”<sup>849</sup> For Roche, like Amy Morris Bradley, the development of an imperfect American society was still more desired than the presence of no American civilization.

Roche also regenerated the servile narrative to legitimize Anglo-American intervention in Nicaragua. Roche specifically described the *Legitimistas* as serviles while reconstructing their advance along the lake towards Leon.<sup>850</sup> He attached character traits to this identity, depicting them as having “cowardly ferocity.”<sup>851</sup> He also portrayed the foreign allies to the *Legitimistas* as “Servile partisan” allies united with the goal of expelling the “foreign [American] element” out of Nicaragua. Roche contrasted such men to the “men of California,” who possessed “iron nerves and dauntless courage.”<sup>852</sup> Roche argued that the Servile forces allowed ignorance to hinder the development of Nicaragua, stating that “an unlettered bandit ranks almost as high as a rascally advocate” under their leadership for it is not “worth the trouble of mastering letters where illiteracy is no bar to civil or military advancement.”<sup>853</sup> Thus, Roche depicted a paradise squandered by inept Spanish American officials.

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<sup>848</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 63.

<sup>849</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 65.

<sup>850</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 71.

<sup>851</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 78.

<sup>852</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 98.

<sup>853</sup> Roche, *The Story of the Filibusters*, 55-56.

William Oscar Scroggs, whose writings on William Walker appeared twenty-five years after those of Roche, continued to position Walker as a focal point in understanding and even justifying American progressive intervention in the Caribbean. His writings demonstrated that not only did Walker remain a point of discourse for imperialist scholars, but aspects of Walker's own regeneration message also continued to be accepted as truth by imperialist intellectuals decades after his death. In 1916, Scroggs released *Filibusters and Financiers*, which examined Walker's life, his network of financial support, and the society that tempered his missions. Scroggs argued that Southern men dominated filibustering expeditions because they maintained American traditions of chivalry, slavery, and "puritanical austerity," which inspired them to contribute to the expanding of the nation.<sup>854</sup> He ultimately utilized Walker to explain why Americans continued to find a necessity in their intervention in the Caribbean at the same moment when Americans were once again occupying Nicaragua in what became a twenty-one-year engagement, which the United States government justified as a stabilization mission.<sup>855</sup>

Besides the Nicaraguan occupation, Scroggs' publications about Walker came during a wave of American interventions in Latin America. The United States continued to arbitrate in Cuba utilizing the Platt Amendment.<sup>856</sup> Even before the 1912 occupation of Nicaragua, the United States had interfered there and helped depose President José

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<sup>854</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 6.

<sup>855</sup> Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Wilmington, Delaware: A Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint, 2002 [1983]), 49-70, 175-211.

<sup>856</sup> Allan R. Millett, "The General Staff and the Cuban Intervention of 1906," *Military Affairs* 31, no. 3 (Autumn, 1967), 113-119.

Santos Zelaya.<sup>857</sup> The United States combatted Pancho Villa in northern Mexico and occupied Veracruz between 1914 and 1916.<sup>858</sup> It had also begun occupations in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic.<sup>859</sup> Almost all of these occupations came with both civilizing messages and goals for political stabilization based on racialized tropes concerning Latin American cultural shortcomings.

Scroggs justified much of the racial characterizations about Latin Americans. Inspired by Herbert Spencer's studies on evolution, Scroggs perpetuated Wells's racial framing of the war with a biological explanation justifying Manifest Destiny and Walker's actions. Scroggs argued that "whenever a superior or more energetic people are brought into contact with an inferior or less energetic group, a process of equilibration between the two groups necessarily occurs."<sup>860</sup> Scroggs explained the failure of Walker to retain possession of Nicaragua through a series of fiascos by Walker and his legion. Scroggs emphasized corrupted personnel, such as Walker's minister to the United States, Parker H. French, whose criminal history jeopardized diplomacy between Walker and the United States government.<sup>861</sup> He also highlighted poor military decisions by Walker's commanders to explain the series of defeats that the regime suffered. Finally, he focused on the feud between Vanderbilt and Walker over control of the transit routes, which led to Vanderbilt sabotaging Walker's efforts through domestic diplomacy in Washington.

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<sup>857</sup> Benjamin Harrison, "The United States and the 1909 Nicaragua Revolution," *Caribbean Quarterly* 41, No. ¾ (September-December 1995), 46-63.

<sup>858</sup> "Some Events in the History of Mexico and the Border," *The Journal of American History* 86, No. 2, 546-555.

<sup>859</sup> Suzy Castor and Lynn Garafola, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," *The Massachusetts Review* 15, no. ½ (1974), 253-275; and Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>860</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers*, 4.

<sup>861</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers*, 165-168.

All of these issues Scroggs utilized to diminish the importance that Spanish American actions had on contributing to Walker's failure.

In *Filibusters and Financiers*, Scroggs especially emphasized the importance of regeneration during the Walker expeditions. In fact, Scroggs offered a reconstruction of the War in Nicaragua that demonstrated how much of an effect Walker's calls for regeneration had on his supporters. Scroggs highlighted how the Northern wing of the Democratic party expressed that they sympathized "with the efforts which are being made by the people of Central America to regenerate that portion of the continent which covers the passage across the interoceanic isthmus."<sup>862</sup> Scroggs demonstrated that both James Buchanan and the public understood that his nomination by the Democrats attached him to a regeneration plan for Central America.<sup>863</sup> Scroggs also promoted that Walker sought a complex plan for the economic regeneration of Nicaragua, showing the importance of "the introduction of capital and superior managerial ability," that came with Anglo-American leadership, as well as the necessity for the reintroduction of African slavery that would provide the labor to implement their policies.<sup>864</sup> Thus, Scroggs contended that Central America's regeneration served as a motivating factor for Anglo-American intervention.

In fact, throughout the book, Scroggs blurred his own historical analysis of the war with the motives of Walker. Scroggs described Walker's Honduras campaign as an attempt to "recommence his work of 'regenerating' Central America while offering little

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<sup>862</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 117.

<sup>863</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 335. Scroggs specifically wrote that Buchanan "had accepted a nomination and had been elected on a platform which expressly sympathized with the efforts being made to 'regenerate' Central America."

<sup>864</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 211.

to contextualize where the quote originally appeared.<sup>865</sup> Elsewhere, Scroggs posited that “[e]ven before the death of Walker all immediate prospects of a regenerated Central America had disappeared,” again making it difficult to determine if such a statement reflected Scroggs’s thoughts or his interpretation of the regenerator’s feelings. In that same paragraph, Scroggs correlated the regeneration message proclaimed by Walker with the civilizing developments of contemporary Anglo-American colonizers. Once again obscuring interpretation with contextualization, Scroggs pointedly stated that “[a] region that for twenty years had been wasted by civil wars and whose heterogeneous population had demonstrated its inability to govern itself or prevent its own political dissolution, certainly needed the introduction of a new element to set things in order.” He then contended that “[t]he Nicaraguan emigrants belonged to a hardy race of toiling pioneers who had conquered the western wilderness and developed in half a decade in distant California a civilization superior to that of two-thirds of Europe.”<sup>866</sup> Such writing reflected the acceptance that many Americans did, in fact, intervene as part of a civilizing mission designed to improve the hemisphere.

However, not all progressive-era historians of Walker utilized his missions to justify American intervention. As previously mentioned, Judge Daniel Bedinger Lucas, a former president of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, admonished Walker. To do so, Lucas had to participate in a discourse dictated by pro-imperialist writers. Lucas had to challenge both Walker’s claims of validity as well as the subsequent writers’ claims that justified his ambitions.

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<sup>865</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers*, 383.

<sup>866</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers*, 396.



Lucas employed a study of Walker as a method to warn imperialist-minded Americans not to justify their own actions solely based on the perceived wrongs of other people if it meant that their own actions would only follow suit. He challenged the validity of Walker's ideals of regeneration methods. Lucas accepted the claim that Walker's "object was to 'regenerate' the country," though he stressed that, for Walker, regeneration rested on the institution of slavery.<sup>867</sup> He also emphasized that Walker linked regeneration, which he described as "roseate visions" with "the 'influence of the new element,'" which both Walker and Lucas understood to mean Anglo-American colonizers.<sup>868</sup> However, Lucas argued that Walker did not have "the sublime ideal of a redeemed and regenerated Nicaragua really and sincerely at heart."<sup>869</sup> Thus, Lucas cautioned readers not that the regeneration ideals were wrong but that earnest regenerators and civilizing agents should be wary of disingenuous claims and claimants.

To illuminate Walker's regenerative failures, Lucas depicted the discord between his motives and the results of his presence. Lucas, who did not oppose Anglo-American intervention, accused Walker of failing to understand the regenerative benefits of control over Transit Route, describing it as "an opportunity of advancement far greater than any which he or Castellon or Rivas had devised, or were capable of executing."<sup>870</sup> He argued that Walker only saw the Transit Route as "an adjunct to his own filibustering scheme of self-aggrandizement and power."<sup>871</sup> And while highlighting the political mishaps of

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<sup>867</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 9.

<sup>868</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 53.

<sup>869</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 56.

<sup>870</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 56.

<sup>871</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 56.

Nicaragua's leaders previous to Walker, Lucas concluded that "Walker's methods of government did not rise much above those theretofore prevailing."<sup>872</sup> He also contended that since Walker's expulsion, "[t]he people remained at peace with themselves and with their neighbors."<sup>873</sup> Thus, Lucas portrayed Walker and his regenerators as participating in a fruitless and fraudulent regeneration mission without vilifying the goals of regenerators and civilizing agents. In doing so, Lucas revitalized the warnings of David Deaderick III, a former regenerator whose writings served as a warning against supporting the wrong leader in such missions as a way to dissuade future support for Walker in 1859 and 1860.

Lucas also warned against those who put their own personal gain ahead of the greater good of the American public, which he saw as necessarily conflicting with Anglo-American ideals about progress and regeneration. Though Washington took hold of the political reigns of regeneration and intervention, American businessmen and other entrepreneurs continued to seek private means of interfering in Spanish-American affairs. In particular, fruit industry elites frequently interfered in Central America, including a now infamous rebellion led by the hired guns of United Fruit Company's Sam Zemmuary in Honduras, which culminated in further interference by the United States military.<sup>874</sup> Just as many progressive writers often found equal cause for equating such actions with Walker as did those who correlated Walker with the less economic aspects of progress and development.

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<sup>872</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 11.

<sup>873</sup> Lucas, *Nicaragua*, 12.

<sup>874</sup> Charles L. Stansifer, "Application of the Tobar Doctrine to Central America," *The Americas* 23, no. 3 (Jan. 1967), 257.

Discourse about Walker also pervaded in fiction during the progressive era, as novelists analyzed what motivated American intervention. Brady Harrison demonstrates that many authors utilized the grey-eyed general as a model to test the relationship of manliness to American imperialism as well as the overall validity of American claims in Latin America. While Harrison's studies certainly establish the importance of Walker as an embodiment of imperialism in Gilded-Age and progressive-era writing, there are other continuities that seeped through these writings than just the gendered and masculinity issues that Harrison highlights.

Several of the works examined by Harrison also illuminate that these writers understood the relationship between sanitation and intervention. Sickness served as a common subject for such writers as they utilized the presence of disease, particularly yellow fever, to enhance their readers' perceptions of savageness and developmental failures in Latin America, reaffirming that Theodore Roosevelt responded to genuine American anxieties about healthcare that drove Americans to intervene in Latin America.

In particular, Richard Harding Davis served as one of the leading voices for promoting American intervention in Latin America, as well as elsewhere. A popular writer and journalist, Davis brought the perceived problems of Latin American and African economic and social development issues into American households through his newspaper publications and novels. Davis glorified American intervention by promoting the need for Anglo-Americans to condition Latin Americans to appreciate and apply democratic values. Thus, he acted as an agent of progressive imperialism through his writings.

Even when Davis criticized the personal ambitions of individuals that he believed jeopardized the more altruistic and ethical aspects of America's empire, he demonstrated considerable continuity with William Walker in his understanding of why Americans had to interfere in Latin America. For example, like Walker, Davis legitimized the promotion of Anglo-American medical stewardship in the region as a point for Americans to consider as they grappled with future American control over an interoceanic canal. In a 1902 romance novel directly inspired by Walker's Nicaraguan campaign titled *Captain Macklin*, Davis created a hospital called the "Canal Company's Fever Hospital," which he situated in Panama. Davis used the presence of this fictional hospital to discuss Anglo-American concerns about disease near their desired canal route.<sup>875</sup> While setting up the importance of the presence of such a hospital, Davis relied on an almost identical description of the health of those in Central America that David Deaderick provided in his own critique of Walker over forty years earlier. He described one school master as "yellow-skinned" and "fever-ridden."<sup>876</sup> Elsewhere, he has a character fall victim to reoccurring bouts of fever. In other passages, Davis also commented on the importance of the lack of "sanitary arrangements" in a camp, which he then described as "a fever swamp."<sup>877</sup> Such passages reflected the same calls for regeneration promoted by Walker and his regenerators. Similar topics can be found in his other writings, such as *Soldiers of Fortune*, his 1897 novel that promoted American imperialism with less criticism than

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<sup>875</sup> Richard Harding Davis, *Captain Macklin: His Memoirs* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920 [1902]), 89-90.

<sup>876</sup> Richard Harding Davis, *Captain Macklin*, 91.

<sup>877</sup> Davis, *Captain Macklin*, 131.

*Captain Macklin*. Davis expected readers to understand the importance of the health theme as it concerned American interactions in the land he wrote about.

Richard Harding Davis even wrote about the history of William Walker in his 1906 book, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, which offered a series of biographies of great men whose imperialist efforts he believed improved the world. Davis described Walker as “the most distinguished of all American Soldiers of Fortune.”<sup>878</sup> Davis positioned Walker as a man of principles, even if they were based on values that modern readers found outdated or distasteful. Concerning Walker’s motives and character, Davis wrote: “[i]n Walker the personal vanity which is so characteristic of the soldier of fortune was utterly lacking.”<sup>879</sup> Though Davis did criticize Walker, stating that Walker did not go to Sonora to “save women and children” like he claimed but, instead, to extend slavery to assist the South, Davis still validated some of Walker’s claims.<sup>880</sup> Though he portrayed Walker as disingenuous about his motives, he reinforced Walker’s assertion that the people of Baja California and Sonora, Mexico were victims of tyranny while contending that they “had no desire to be free.” Thus, he accepted that the concerns that Walker proclaimed were genuine. Nevertheless, he still posited that Walker provided them a path for “an independent republic.”<sup>881</sup> He also described Walker’s Honduran and Costa Rican enemies as savage.<sup>882</sup> Such sentiments reinforced assertions found in other works that posited Americans as agents of republicanism and democracy by contrasting them against

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<sup>878</sup> Richard Harding Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 145.

<sup>879</sup> Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 168.

<sup>880</sup> Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 153.

<sup>881</sup> Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 155.

<sup>882</sup> Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 185.

authoritarian Spanish American leaders. In doing so, Davis's criticisms paralleled the apprehensions about servilism expressed by the regenerators who assisted Walker, the same men who would later serve him as models for his novels.

Davis did offer criticisms concerning American intervention and empire-building. *Captain Macklin*, as Harrison explicates, illuminated Davis's wavering support for American motives in the Caribbean, which he partly rectified with *Real Soldiers of Fortune*. *Captain Macklin*, Harrison contends, assesses soldiers whose personal ambitions separate them from American economic and political interests. Harrison also explains that such criticisms led to the public not favoring the novel as they did his earlier, more pro-imperialist writings.<sup>883</sup> However, the existence of the books and the choices that he made demonstrate that Davis wrote them to participate in a popular public discourse that pervaded in American press and media outlets. He attempted to sway opinions, sometimes for American intervention and sometimes against particular styles of it, by discussing aspects that he knew readers pondered when they envisioned the prospective futures of an American empire. Davis understood that both health and sanitation concerns, as well as racial and cultural concerns about the spread of republican values, intertwined into a greater discourse about the necessity of American presence in less-developed neighboring regions.

In fact, American media, in covering Davis's works, often expressed similar sentiments as did the author. *The Daily Journal*, of Oregon, described how, "[t]he traditions of military heroism are maintained gaily and jauntily, and yet without brutality," in *Captain Macklin*, through the story of a gentleman hero who was "not a

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<sup>883</sup> Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 118-121.

mere swaggering, butchering slaughterer of his own species.”<sup>884</sup> *The McCook Tribune*, of Nebraska, described *Captain Macklin* as a “high-minded picture of the kind of revolution that takes place every few days on the quarrelsome isthmus that divides us from South America.”<sup>885</sup> Such reviews revealed American concerns about both the need for a hero in Latin America as well as the type of hero needed.

Richard Harding Davis’s works certainly influenced Theodore Roosevelt. In fact, Roosevelt even provided an introduction for *Captain Macklin*. In it, he stated that he had known Davis “for many years.” He described himself as “among the number who were immediately drawn to him by the power and originality of ‘Gallegher,’” an earlier work that led to Davis’s fame. Roosevelt met Davis while in Cuba and noted that Davis also “took part in the fighting.” Roosevelt concluded that Davis’s “writings form a text-book of Americanism which all our people would do well to read at the present.”<sup>886</sup> Such a testimony suggests that writers like Davis did have access to important political avenues for influencing how Americans perceived their role in the Caribbean.

Likewise, other progressive-era writers utilized fiction to criticize both William Walker and American imperialist ambitions. Most of these writers did not write against American imperialism, but like Davis demonstrated concerns about what motivated policies. They specifically targeted ambitious but self-interested leaders. For example, Brady Harrison describes how Bret Harte endorsed economic imperialism governed by

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<sup>884</sup> “Captain Macklin,” *The Daily Journal* (Salem, Or.), October 30, 1902. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn99063956/1902-10-30/ed-1/seq-2/>>. Henceforth, this collection will be referred to as *Chronicling America*.

<sup>885</sup> “Public Free Library Notes,” *The McCook Tribune*. (McCook, Neb.), November 28, 1902. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94056415/1902-11-28/ed-1/seq-1/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>886</sup> Davis, *Captain Macklin*, vii-viii.

good deeds while offering scathing criticisms against Walker and filibustering in “Peter Schroeder,” and *The Crusade of the Excelsior*.<sup>887</sup> And William Sydney Porter, under the pseudonym “O. Henry,” lampooned the ambitions of American involvement in a make-believe Banana Republic called Anchuria as he portrayed many of the Americans there as lazy, corruptible, antialtruistic, or incompetent schemers looking for lower standards to be held against. These writers, also relied on common stereotypes about sanitation and race to draw readers into their works while offering their greater, and perhaps less obvious, critiques about American involvement in Spanish America.

In particular, William Porter’s *Cabbages and Kings*, which was published in 1904, illuminated the avenues that writers took to meld their criticisms of men like Walker with the discourse that drove progressive-minded readers to intervene.<sup>888</sup> *Cabbages and Kings* certainly addressed both the significance of disease in Latin America as well as the motives of American healthcare professionals there through the creation of a Doctor Gregg. Porter represented Dr. Gregg as a haphazard practitioner going through the motions of stewardship without putting forth the effort necessary for earnest healthcare. Porter described how Gregg served in Anchuria “by virtue of an appointment by the Board of Health of a seaport city in one of the Southern states.” Porter continued by emphasizing the anxieties that Southerners had concerning disease in Latin America, writing that “[t]he city feared the ancient enemy of every Southern seaport – the yellow fever.” Yet, Porter portrayed Gregg as almost listless about his duties to his clientele while writing that his fabricated physician “did not know ten words

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<sup>887</sup> Harrison, “The Young Americans,” 76; and Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 54.

<sup>888</sup> O. Henry, *Cabbages and Kings* (Doubleday, Page & Company for Review of Reviews Co., 1913 [1904]).



of Spanish,” a criticism once laid against William Walker. Porter depicted Gregg as unscrupulous in his assistance to Spanish-speaking locals. In his novel, a local came seeking help for a woman in his house. Gregg offered medicine without attending to the patient while offering his instructions in English. After realizing that the local confused his instructions concerning the dispersal of medication with a demand for two watches as payment, he took the man’s watch. The physician then described the locals as being of “[a] very ignorant race of people.”<sup>889</sup> Doctor Gregg, like many of Porter’s characters, represented different aspects of William Walker that he wished to contextualize for his audiences as he lampooned the great but selfish leaders who intervened under false claims designed to attract earnest support.

The American media once more responded to this publication using a language that reminded readers of Latin America’s perceived instability. *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier* of Connecticut offered legitimacy to *Cabbages and Kings* as a work of fiction, stating “[n]aturally in treating of a Central American country the book has [a] revolution or two mixed up in connection with the story.”<sup>890</sup> *The Topeka State Journal* described *Cabbages and Kings* as “a new Central American novel,” with an American “prevailing spirit” that “gives a vivid and satisfying impression of the topography, scenery, and climate of the country, and its delicious tropic charm, as well as of its sociological and political conditions. In fact, the newspaper went so far as to note that “it has rarely been better done than in Mr. Henry’s careless, debonair, and not unoriginal

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<sup>889</sup> Henry, *Cabbages and Kings*, 53-56.

<sup>890</sup> “The New Publications,” *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier*, (New Haven, Conn.), December 10, 1904. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020358/1904-12-10/ed-1/seq-9/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

style,” while claiming that the novel “seems peculiarly suited to the exploitation of a society made up by the people who favor a residence where they are exempt from afternoon teas, hand organs, department stores and the embarrassing exactions of an extradition treaty.”<sup>891</sup> *The San Francisco Sunday Call* described it as a humorous work that “has to tell of the broad farce that rules between the tropics of Cancer and of Capricorn” while it “finds fun in the equally inconsequential and diversified aspects of life and politics that hold sway over the eruptive little republics down on the isthmus neck.” Correlating uncivilized characteristics of Central America, the paper further stated that “[r]unaway Presidents, vagrant commercial wolves, rag-tag-and-bobtail officials of republics and the overindulgent labor shunning American Consul all bring grist to Mr. O. Henry’s mill.”<sup>892</sup> These newspapers thus groomed readers on how to think about Central America through such discussions.

Thus, both fiction and non-fiction writers prepared readers for American involvement in Latin America. They established what aspects of Latin America needed attention. They informed readers of what could be done to bring resolution to those problems. And, most importantly, they took turns relying on a shared discourse that mirrored Walker and his allies’ writings while using Walker as a focal point for discussion to determine who should be seen as a leader for such interactions.

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<sup>891</sup> *The Topeka State Journal*, December 24, 1904. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82016014/1904-12-24/ed-1/seq-13/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

<sup>892</sup> “Humor by a New Funmaker,” *The San Francisco Call*, January 01, 1905. *Chronicling America*. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1905-01-01/ed-1/seq-11/>. (accessed February 22, 2017).

## Conclusion

Neither the speeches and political actions of Theodore Roosevelt and the United States government nor the writings of the historians and novelists who wrote about American imperialism existed in an intellectual vacuum. Instead, they represented the intertwining of a specific set of lexicon and motives that originally guided William Walker and his regenerators. More importantly, writers showed a distinct awareness of this continuity by choosing William Walker as a topic of focus. Progressive-era historians, scholars, and fiction writers utilized Walker to direct readers in understanding America's role throughout the Americas, particularly in Cuba, Honduras, Panama, and Nicaragua. They took interest in him precisely at a time when discussions about interoceanic travel routes revitalized American interests in Central America. All writers, both critics, and champions of Walker, understood that an analysis of his ideals and motives would determine how their readers would judge him more so than his actions. They either portrayed him as a man guided by a civilizing mission or as an ambitious adventurer looking for self-aggrandizement.

Writers felt that such an approach was necessary precisely because the writings, speeches, and political documents created by imperialist progressive officials so closely mirrored those of William Walker and his supporters. As Harrison explains, writers understood that both President McKinley and President Roosevelt adopted and adapted “the ambitions of Walker” into their policies.<sup>893</sup> They effectively perceived a continuity that had been underemphasized, or even dismissed, by scholars for several decades.

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<sup>893</sup> Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 82.

Ultimately, however, even Brady Harrison has underemphasized the extent of the historical continuity that existed between Walker and his progressive-era critics. Harrison depicts Walker as a symbol of Americans' desires to "impose our political, military, and economic will upon less powerful nations." He describes him as a "would-be Napoleon," who "wanted to be a Caesar."<sup>894</sup> He argues that Walker, above all, sought power, not change, contending that "Walker meant to be a king in the most literal sense: he wanted to be emperor of someplace, anyplace outside of the United States." Though Harrison acknowledges that Walker spoke of regeneration, he portrays Walker as "[d]eploying the organic metaphor of 'regeneration,' as a rhetoric tool to reach his desires for power by drawing on a pre-existing discourse spearheaded by men such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman.<sup>895</sup> He does not depict Walker as being driven by the ideals that he decried, those same ideals reborn in the progressive-era political policies illuminated by writers repeated in their own works three to five decades later.

On the contrary, Walker did not display ambition for power as much as he exhibited a determination to develop Spanish America. Walker and his followers, which may have numbers as high as 10,000, saw themselves as regenerators.<sup>896</sup> They believed that they went to Central America to alleviate both the region and the United States of the political, racial, and sanitary woes that stagnated the region, which they understood affected both Central America as well as the United States. They saw themselves as participating in a providential mission of stewardship. They did not employ the use of regeneration rhetoric as simply a public transcript but perceived it as their guiding light.

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<sup>894</sup> Harrison, "The Young Americans," 78-79.

<sup>895</sup> Harrison, "The Young Americans," 82-83.

<sup>896</sup> Davis, *Real Soldiers of Fortune*, 178.

Walker did want imperial power. The “five or none” rhetoric employed by him and his supporters represented a belief that God required their regenerative powers to fix a cultural blight upon a fruitful land.<sup>897</sup> Thus, Walker sought power because he had confidence that he alone could lead a necessary regeneration effort in Central America.

Thus, the striking parallels that existed between William Walker and Theodore Roosevelt as well as between Walker’s supporting cast of writers and the progressive-era scholars and novelists that responded to them, represented the evolution of sincere ideas about regeneration that went beyond imperial self-interest. William Walker and Theodore Roosevelt both shared an understanding that financial success and political power proved the successful completion of fulfilling their stewardship duties in the region. For Walker, empire was a reward, not a goal. Walker was a man driven by the ideals of regeneration as he defined them: an intertwining of racial ordering and sanitation that would stabilize a region and allow it to develop. Roosevelt, through the Platt Amendment, as well as his writings and proclamations concerning Panama, expressed an almost identical intertwining of regeneration and success precisely because his feelings and motives represented the maturation of the seeds planted by the Nicaraguan regenerators almost fifty years earlier.

It is only by distinguishing the differences in the motives, strategies, and goals of William Walker that the continuity between his regenerators and the progressive-era imperialists becomes more obvious. Concerns about political and health stability motivated Walker. He believed Anglo-American colonization combined with sanitary and racial reform served as the strategy to reach his goal of stabilization. Empire, he

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<sup>897</sup> Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financers*, 245.

hoped, would be his reward. “Five or none” existed not as an excuse to conquer but as his reality that all of Central America required similar regeneration.

Previous scholars and fiction writers who wrote about Walker made these distinctions. Even the more critical writers rarely challenged the premise that Spanish America was unstable or that it could benefit from Anglo-American oversight. Most understood the intimate connections that linked the racial and political stability of the region back to the United States, particularly to the Southern states. They did not see this as mere rhetoric but as a zeitgeist that represented genuine concerns that motivated Americans to seek resolution in the Greater Caribbean.

When progressive-era writers challenged Walker or used him as a motif for criticizing American intervention, they usually tested not the proclaimed motives but the possibility that those purposes were false. Critics portrayed Walker as a conman taking advantage of genuine and justifiable concerns that warranted American involvement. Sceptics portrayed him as a warning for Americans to be wary of lies that hid selfish gains. Nevertheless, those same writers still portrayed an unhealthy, dilapidated Spanish America in need of regeneration. In a sense, such critics of William Walker represented the seeds of David Deaderick, the regretful detractor, just as much as his supporters represented the revitalization of his message.

In both the 1850s and in the progressive-era, politicians, historians, journalists, and colonizing agents relied on a shared rhetoric that spoke to the importance of racial order and medical sanitation in Central America. In the 1850s, the public did not display a desire to invoke government action to assist in such affairs, leaving regeneration to private entities. By the 1890s, after a generation had been raised in an era when science

had demonstrated quantifiable proof of success and the government had proven its ability to wield scientific finds, the public had displayed a general desire to see federal action usurp regenerative dreams away from the public. The motives remained the same, but the strategies changed.

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