Empire for Slavery: Economic and Territorial Expansion in the American Gulf South, 1835–1860

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Kimberly Ann Lamp

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presented by Kimberly Ann Lamp

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Signature .....

Typed name Stephan Thernstrom

Signature .....

Typed name David Donald

Signature .....

Typed name .....

Date May 22, 1991

EMPIRE FOR SLAVERY: ECONOMIC AND TERRITORIAL EXPANSION IN THE AMERICAN GULF SOUTH, 1835–1860

Kimberly Ann Lamp, Ph.D. Harvard University, 1991.
Thesis Director: Stephan Thernstrom, Harvard University.

No other part of the antebellum South was as demographically dynamic nor as economically productive as the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Although these states have received individual attention from social and economic historians who have provided a general outline of their agricultural and social development, no work exists that examines these states together.

The dissertation investigates aspects of the economic and social development of the region called the Gulf South (the Gulf states and the western panhandle of Florida) for the period 1835–1860. This twenty-five-year period is an important one because it witnessed the region's interest in expanding its territory into the tropics as well as developing its local economies and intra- and extraregional trading networks. The antebellum Gulf South constitutes a region apart from the rest of the South (Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia) for several reasons. First, it was more economically and demographically dynamic than the Atlantic South. Second, it developed an economic interdependency for basic foodstuffs; in other words, ports in each state exchanged goods that were needed in various parts of the region. The more or less extraregional, triangular water and rail trade with Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, the Midwest, and the mid-Atlantic states. The Atlantic South's own economic connection with the Gulf South, moreover, diminished precipitously in the early 1850's. Third, the Gulf South overwhelmingly supported territorial expansion into Texas, Cuba, and Nicaragua to both protect slavery where it already existed and to acquire new slave territories for the South. Politicians and the press in the Atlantic South, on the other hand were categorically unsupportive of such clandestine missions.

The thesis demonstrates that territorial expansion into the tropics was primarily not a result of the South's inability to expand on the North American continent so much as it was a product of long-standing Gulf South connection with the lower Gulf. It argues that the preeminent motivation of filibusters for foreign territories was commercial, not ideological or racial, interest. Finally, the thesis argues that the region was beginning, albeit too late in the 1850's, to develop a self-consciousness of itself as being different from the Atlantic South. This thesis emphasizes the historical significance of the South's most dynamic area, the Gulf South.

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Abbreviations

Agricultural History	*AH*
American Historical Review	*AHR*
Alabama Department of Archives and History	*ADAH*
Alabama Historical Quarterly	*AHQ*
Alabama Review	*AR*
Austin Papers	*AP*
Barker Texas History Center Archives	*BTHCA*
De Bow's Review	*DBR*
Duke University Archives	*DA*
East Texas Historical Association	*ETHA*
Florida Historical Quarterly	*FHQ*
Handbook of Texas	*TH*
Journal of Mississippi History	*JMH*
Journal of Political History	*JPH*
Journal of Southern History	*JSH*
Library of Congress, Manuscript Division	*LC*
Louisiana Historical Quarterly	*LHQ*
Louisiana State University Archives	*LSUA*
Louisiana Studies	*LS*
Mississippi Department of Archives and History	*MDAH*
Mississippi Valley Historical Review	*MVHR*
Papers of the Texas Revolution	*PTR*
Publication of the Mississippi Historical Society	*PMHS*
Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association	*QTSHA*
Quitman Papers, Harvard University	*QPHU*
Rosenberg Library, Galveston	*RLG*
Southern Studies	*SS*
Southwestern Historical Quarterly	*SWHQ*
Texas Handbook	*TH*
The Lamar Papers	*LP*
Tulane University Archives	*TUA*
University of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collection	*UNCSHC*
W.S. Hoole, Special Collections Library, University of Alabama	*WSHSCLUA*

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Introduction

The renaissance in colonial historiography has produced many good studies on community and economic studies on New England, the Chesapeake, and in the Southern backcountry. Such an in-depth look into society and community-building for the field of Southern antebellum studies, however, has not taken place. Such paucity of local, community, or regional studies has been cited repeatedly as one of the biggest gaps in the field. Recently, a prominent member of the Alabama Historical Association remarked that Alabama is one of the poorest researched states in the Union.[1] Actually, Alabama is one of the best locally documented states in the lower South. Compared to Mississippi or Louisiana, states whose local studies represent less than one-half of all their respective counties, Alabama's local history is well-researched.

Originally, this study was borne not from a desire to fill in some of the missing local history of the Gulf states, but rather from a curiosity about whether a "Gulf world" existed. I had admired Fernand Braudel's *La Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II* (1949) and his notion of a "Mediterranean world." To Braudel, different political affiliations existing between those who lived around the Mediterranean could not erode the overwhelming similarities they shared, such as diet, culture, and patterns of living. Although this work is scarcely Braudellian, for it does not use similar methodology, a major part of my argument

1. Malcolm M. MacDonald, "Research Possibilities in Alabama History," *Alabama Review*, XXXIX (1986), 165–6. So far, I have located 23 counties that have histories written of them. Alabama was composed of 51 counties by 1860.

bears strong resemblance to Braudel's argument about the Mediterranean, namely, that the Gulf South developed economically because of its dependency upon interregional trade rather than on its ties with the Northwest or southern Atlantic states. People all around the Gulf South needed similar goods and provisions with which to build communities or feed their families, and these items were purchased locally, through the markets in the port cities.

From all we have read in literature on the antebellum South, from Thomas Kettell's *Southern Wealth and Northern Profits* (1850) to, most recently, Gavin Wright's *Old South, New South* (1987), the South's growth and development is credited to its "colonial" dependency upon the Northeast. Certainly, the entire South was an economic satellite of the North. Northern banking and money helped fuel the spread of cotton into all parts of the South by the 1830's by unleashing its own factors and bankers into the South to establish firms that would extend credit to planters. But day-to-day life included much more than people obtaining huge amounts of credit to grow seasonal crops for sale in the Northeast and in Europe. Everyday life required year-round contact with markets to buy necessary goods—lumber, bricks, slaves, animal skins, and sugar. These goods were, in the main, not obtained from the Northeast or from Europe. They were obtained from sources *within* the Gulf South itself. Chapter one documents the interregional development of the Gulf South.

If much historiographical ink has been spilt over the sources of Southern economic growth, that amount is paltry compared to what has been written on the many Souths. There is the Upper South, the Lower South, the Deep South, the Old Southwest, and the Old South. Some writers maintain that in terms of the chronology of settlement, a distinction should be made between the South and the Southwest. Still another distinguishes the area that I would call the "Gulf South" (the panhandle of Florida; all of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana,

and east Texas[2]) from the South, calling it instead the "Caribbean."[3] It is impossible to deny that the Gulf states traverse both the South and the Southwest. Still, most historians group them together with Georgia and South Carolina.

There appear to be a couple of reasons for this. The land in the areas south and west of Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina was richer than that of the Upper South. Indeed, contemporary minds perceived correctly that the nitrous soils of black in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana were superior by far to soil in the Chesapeake. So it would seem that if any states were kith and kin to the Gulf states, they were South Carolina and Georgia. In reality, however, their soils were comparatively poorer, having been settled earlier than those in the Gulf. Decades of indigo, tobacco, and rice production had left the lowlands of both states bare of verdure.[4] By the mid-1830's, the soil condition in South Carolina and middle Georgia resembled that of their sister states to the north than to Mississippi, Alabama, or Louisiana. The only other plausible explanation is that the Gulf South joined South Carolina and Georgia in the first wave of secession. But writers of history should judge not how later events reveal and unfold the history of a former period but rather how present events constitute a history unto themselves. The inclusion of South Carolina and Georgia, therefore, into the same category as the other states of the Lower South is not a very useful one. It is unsound to argue that on the basis of a similar agricultural and social system, the Gulf states belong to an alliance with South Carolina and Georgia that historians call the Deep or Lower South. While we recognize all these states had the same social,

2. East Texas is defined as the part of the state east of the 98th meridian. This is based on the delineation that Randolph Campbell and Richard Lowe make in their book, *Planters and Plain F... Agriculture in Antebellum Texas* (Dallas, 1987), when they talk about "antebellum Texas."

3. Contemporaries talked about the "Deep South" or "Lower South," usually to designate direction. When historians use the terms, they usually mean an area including South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. Historians John Hebron Moore and Larry Schweikart, for example, write about the Southwest, defined as Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Recent historians, who are looking at the Gulf South in a Caribbean context, are Julius Scott and Austin Cummings.

4. Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States* (2 vols., Washington, 1933), II, 910.

political, and economic system, with slavery as their underpinning, the Gulf states were much more dynamic areas of growth in the South than were the Atlantic states.

First, some definitions are in order. The "Gulf South" is a term meant to define an area of the South that is roughly analogous to the political boundaries of the Gulf states themselves. This is particularly true of the northern limits of the Gulf South. Even though topography can inform us about its western boundary, and shipping manifests can indicate its eastern limit, political boundaries, particularly of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, they are not very accurate indicators of where we can call definitely the northern parameter of the region. As the map below illustrates, the boundaries of the region are not clear-cut because there is no exact geographical line that marks the beginning of a region and the ending of another.

The arc represents the approximate parameters of the Gulf South, and will be the area upon which the study will concentrate.

For example, Huntsville, Alabama, traded not only with other areas of the Gulf South, but with the Tennessee River Valley, especially in the 1810's. But because this northern Alabama area was known primarily as a cotton-growing one, it is included in the Gulf South region because all of its cotton was sold in New Orleans by one factor. As early as the 1810's, factors in New Orleans advertised their services in the Alabama newspapers. The famous soldier and pioneer John Coffee, who served in 1817 as a surveyor of the northern district of the Mississippi Territory, was by the 1820's and 1830's a cotton planter in the town of Florence, Alabama.[5] The cotton grown at Hickory Hill, his plantation, was exclusively

5. Coffee usually ginned and marketed cotton sent to him by Florentine merchants whose own clients, the local cotton planters, paid for goods with their cotton. Gordon T. Chappell, "John Coffee: Land Speculator and Planter," *AR*, XXII (1969), 42.

consigned to a New Orleans factor.[6] The force pulling the territories into the Gulf of Mexico was the strength of the port cities—New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; Apalachicola, Florida; and Galveston, Texas. The further one moved away from the port cities, the weaker the attraction or interconnection within the region.

The Gulf South corresponds only roughly to the political boundaries of the individual states themselves. The ports of the Gulf South gave direction and unity to trade and created the cornerstone of its economic interdependency. Acting as magnets, the ports exercised a tight hold over many areas within the region. Still, the further one traveled away from the source of regional or economical unity, the Gulf of Mexico, the weaker became the magnetism. Counties lying on the borders of Alabama and Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee, Alabama and Tennessee, or Louisiana and Arkansas, did buy and sell goods, such as livestock. James M. Torbert, for example, a small cotton planter in Macon County, Alabama, usually had his cotton marketed in Columbus, Georgia; occasionally he would carry his bales to Montgomery to be sold.[7] Some northern counties in Mississippi, on the other hand, frequently traded in the Memphis market, which was close and convenient. Parts of the more recently settled northwestern part of Louisiana, for the same reason, traded goods with Arkansas and Texas.

The dissertation also mentions the "lower Gulf," which is shorthand for the "lower Gulf South." This area refers to the countries in the Caribbean that the Gulf South wanted to annex through filibustering campaigns. The "lower Gulf" includes Cuba, Mexico, and Nicaragua. The eastern coast of Nicaragua lies on the Caribbean Sea, not on the Gulf of Mexico, but the term is appropriate because it refers not so much to geographical placement as it does to regional possession.

6, Either Maunsell White, who had a virtual monopoly of northern Alabama cotton, or a Dr. Bedford. Chappell, "John Coffee," 39.

7. "James M. Torbert's Journal for 1856," *AHQ*, XVIII (1956), 221.

The trade between the West and the Southwest was healthy, but in the 1820's and 1830's western New York and Pennsylvania farm produce, which formerly was sent down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and then into the Gulf South, began to flow East; this trade increased heavily over time.[8] The trade conducted between the Ohio Valley and the border states region (Kentucky and Tennessee). With the Gulf South decreased in the period 1840–1860 for two reasons: the railroad system and the 1837 financial crisis. The railroad had, by the mid-1840's, usurped farm produce going from the Old Northwest to the Gulf and redirected it to the Atlantic North and South. At the same time, the Gulf states, after the financial disaster in which cotton prices declined precipitously in the early to mid-1840's, began making attempts at local self-sufficiency by growing the same foodstuffs that they had been relying on from Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In less than fifty years New Orleans' trade with the Northwest decreased from 90 percent after 1812 to just 28 percent in 1860.[9]

The dominant economic trend in domestic trade during the 1840–1847 period of economic deflation is the decrease in West–South trade.[10] The presumption is that the Mississippi River was the most important link between the Northwest and the South. The last time the West and South shared a close economic relationship was the period 1816–1818, when the West contributed over fifty percent of New Orleans' receipts. By contrast, in 1839,

8. Guy Stevens Callender, "The Early Transportation and Banking Enterprises of the States in Relation to the Growth of Corporations," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XVII (1903), 114-31; A. L. Kohlmeier, *The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of the American Federal Union* (Bloomington, IL., 1938).

9. Albert Fishlow, *American Railroads and the Transformation of the Ante-Bellum Economy* (Cambridge, U.S., 1965); Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York, 1965), 107; Frederick Merk, *History of the Westward Movement* (New York, 1978), 222.

10. Albert Fishlow, *American Railroads*; Louis B. Schmidt, "Internal Commerce and the Development of National Economy Before 1860," *Journal of Political Economy*, XLVII (1939), 798–822; Robert E. Gallman, "Self-Sufficiency in the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South," *AH*, XLIV (1970), 5–24; Diane L. Lindstrom, "Southern Dependence upon interregional Grain Supplies: A Review of the Trade Flows, 1840–1860," *AH*, XLIV (1970), 101–114; John G. Clark, *The Grain Trade in the Old Northwest* (Urbana, 1966), 235.

Southerners needed less than one-fifth of all Western produce.[11] In 1860, eastern railroads and canals carried most of the Northwest's exports—62 percent of its flour, 61 percent of its salt meat, 80 percent of its corn, and almost 100 percent of its wheat.[12]

Contemporaries provided several explanations for the diversion of Western goods from New Orleans to the Northeast. First, grain, flour, and especially, corn shipped to the Northeast was saved from damage because it skipped altogether the tropical Southern climate. Second, rail transportation to the Northeast eliminated the uncertainty of river navigation through the South during the summer months, which could increase the number, in case of drought, of delays in shipments. Third, sending foodstuffs directly to the Northeast was efficient because it saved time; food would not have to travel to New Orleans first before it was reshipped to the Northeast; it was also more efficient because the comparatively greater population in the North than the South created a greater dependency on Western products. Fourth, New York was seen as a "superior" importing point than New Orleans, perhaps because contemporaries believed that New Orleans' reliance on cotton and sugar as its main export products restricted its versatility as a trading center; the port of New York, on the other hand, offered a variety of goods and merchandise from which customers could choose, in great bulk and at cheaper prices, than in New Orleans.[13]

The argument has been made that the border states, Kentucky and Tennessee, supplied the Gulf states with a significant amount of foodstuffs, chiefly livestock, corn and vegetables.[14] What is significant about this evidence is that much of this kind of trade was

11. Fishlow, *American Railroads*, 283. Whiskey excluded. One historian has made the argument that although its bulk may have been declining in the port of New Orleans, Fishlow and others have ignored the possibility that Western produce may have been sold in towns or plantations in the Mississippi Valley. Harry N. Scheiber, "On the New Economic History—And its Limitations: A Review Essay," *AH*, XLI (1967). But the *Report on Internal Commerce for 1887* maintained: "There was no trade between the Western cities and the Southern plantations, very little even with the towns; it all paid tribute to New Orleans." *Report on Internal Commerce for 1887*, quoted in Fishlow, *American Railroads*, 286.

12. George R. Taylor, *The Transportational Revolution, 1815–1860* (New York, 1951), 163–4; D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez* (Baton Rouge, 1968), 215.

13. Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Agriculture in the United States in 1860* (Washington, D. C., 1864), clvii.

14. Diane Lindstrom, "Southern Dependence upon Interregional Grain Supplies," 101–5.

indirect, conducted intermediately through the port of New Orleans. Of such trade, New Orleans was the dispenser of goods to ports from Texas to Florida, as well as to ports in Cuba and Mexico.[15]

One critic[16] of Fishlow claims that reliability in interregional trade flows cannot be established until historians investigate, among other things, the extent and role of the coastal trade. The Atlantic South traded with the mid-Atlantic states and the Gulf states traded with each other.[17] By the mid-1830's, the Atlantic and Midwestern states began construction of the Charleston and Hamburg railroad, a line that would connect the regions. This railroad began its operations in 1833. The effort, according to railroad president Elias Horry, was to better exploit the Western and Piedmont trade, bringing it to the Southeastern seaboard. A second effort was made to drain the Ohio Valley produce by linking Charleston with Cincinnati, but because of the economic bust of the 1840's, the line was not completed until 1853. A third effort, proposed by Georgia, aimed at linking the hinterland with the Savannah river by rail. By 1841 the line had reach Madison and Athens.[18]

By the end of the period 1840–1847, the trading patterns of the South were slowly taking form. The loose triangular trade between the Atlantic South ports of Savannah and Charleston, the western cities of Louisville and Cincinnati, and the mid-Atlantic cities of Baltimore and New York, by the railroad unification, created one South whose economic

15. Harry A. Mitchell, "The Development of New Orleans as a Wholesale Trading Center," *LHQ*, XXVII (1944), 953. Even the historian intent on forging a connection between several Teche planters in Louisiana and Atlantic South factors had to concede that "in addition to foodstuffs such as corn, potatoes, flour, and lard, nearly every item of [their] refinement ... came through the New Orleans merchants." Merl E. Reed, "Footnote to the Coastwise Trade—Some Teche Planters and Their Atlantic Factors," *LH*, VIII (1967), 197.

16. Robert W. Fogel, "American Interregional Trade in the 19th Century," in Ralph L. Andreano (ed.), *New Views on American Economic Development* (Cambridge, U.S., 1965), 213–24.

17. This is true especially after 1852, when the Atlantic South received none of its flour or corn from any Gulf port. Lindstrom, "Southern Dependence upon Interregional Grain Supplies," 105; Fishlow, *American Railroads*, 287. Battalio and Kagel use the 1860 census to maintain that South Carolina's farmers produced goods enough for themselves as well as for surrounding urban populations. Raymond C. Battalio and John Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, A Case Study," *AH*, XLIV (1970).

18. U. B. Phillips, *A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860* (New York, 1908), *passim*.

interests were essentially those that looked outside their region, grounded more in the trade with western products into eastern markets than with the products and markets in the Gulf South. The trade that the Atlantic South ports carried out with the Gulf ports was decreasing noticeably, until the early 1850's, when the exchange of items such as foodstuffs finally stopped. Trade in the other South—the Gulf South—was mostly within the region; its reciprocal trade was limited to markets located within the region.

My hypothesis is that the antebellum Gulf South constitutes a region. First, its economy was more dynamic than the Atlantic South in terms of agricultural production, economic power, and demographic shifts. Second, the widespread economic interdependency within the Gulf South itself and with foreign territories bordering the Gulf of Mexico (Cuba, Mexico, and Nicaragua) presents strong evidence that the Gulf South engaged in an intraregional trade for its basic foodstuffs; the Atlantic South, on the other hand, engaged in a more or less extraregional, triangular rail trade with the West and mid-Atlantic states, and its economic connection with the Gulf South diminished precipitously in the early 1850's. Third, the region of the Gulf South overwhelmingly supported filibustering to acquire new slave territories to the Union; politicians and the press in the Atlantic South categorically were unsupportive of such clandestine missions.

This dissertation is a regional study that explores particular areas of the economic and social development of the Gulf South for the period 1835–1860. It makes no attempt, however, to treat its development exhaustively; its aim is to call attention to the Gulf South as a fertile field for investigation and to suggest some of the economic, political, and social developments that arose in connection with the region. It shows that settlers who came to the Gulf South met a series of new conditions in the unfamiliar habitat that required them to create new, or adapt old, institutions to survive and prosper. For example, new conditions included frequent epidemics of yellow fever and Asiatic cholera as well as irregular and

infrequent economic and social contact with the Atlantic South. Settlers confronted these new conditions in a variety of ways: they developed systems of public health in the port cities; groups and leaders supported reopening the African slave trade; a commercial network of intraregional trade for basic foodstuffs was developed; and finally, a social network, based on friendship and kinship, uniting the planter and merchant elite (growers of sugar and cotton) into a group, was formed that desired the political unification of foreign territories in which its members held an economic elite.

The mind of the South before the Civil War was militant, nationalistic, romantic and proslavery. The mind of the Gulf South—or more appropriately, the temperament—was characterized by a localism engendered by the economic and familial interconnection within the region, and an obsession with slavery that committed its leaders to fight for its survival everywhere it existed. The Gulf South mind[19] was a mixture of values and ideals, some new, some borrowed, and some old. Militancy, obsession with slavery, nationalism were all components of the Southern mind, as so many historians have illustrated.[20] There is no question that the Gulf South believed itself to be part of the South. Economically, politically, and socially, the Gulf South and Atlantic South were bonded together by the institution of slavery. For most of the period (1835–1860), the Gulf South mind was not a self-conscious one. Part of the reason for this lay in the newness of the area, a developmental immaturity that prohibited much regional self-identity. Even though many parts of the Gulf South had developed settled societies out of frontier existences by the late 1840's, no similar changes in character or temperament would take place. Only during the commercial conventions of the late 1850's did some Gulf Southerners begin to speak of their states as being different from those of the Atlantic southern states. Thus, the political expression of the Gulf South was filibustering—in Texas, Cuba, and Nicaragua—in order to both preserve slavery in the lower

19. "Mind" here is defined as encompassing the character or temperament of the region as well. Additionally, the mind here refers to that of white Gulf Southerners. And finally, this study deals only with particular aspects of the mind, and that this is not an inclusive examination.

20. W. J. Cash, *Mind of the South* (New York, 1941) and, most recently, Drew G. Faust, *James H. Hammond and the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1982).

Gulf and to politically unify a region whose members were so economically wedded to each other.

For the American in the early to mid-nineteenth century, the desire to acquire property and wealth was magnified by the enormous amount of land available for exploitation. Nowhere was the spirit of acquisition more powerful and heady than in the Gulf South, where yeoman and planter alike united in the quest for material progress. This was no abandonment of the Jeffersonian ideal; on the contrary, participating in the economic booms of the antebellum period was the crowning of his dream for a strong, independent citizenry. Everything that occurred in the region, from the opening up of lands ceded to the United States by the Indians to the plans proposed to colonize Brazil, was conceived in this spirit. In the last twelve years of the period, however, this zeitgeist became transformed from one whose interest was to move into and occupy new land for the sake of personal, material benefits to that of sectional survival.

Historians usually have treated filibustering as an aberrant response to sectional conflict by fire-eating Southern nationalists. William O. Scrogg's *Filibusters and Financiers* (1908) was the first major historical account of pre-Civil War attempts by Southerners to overthrow foreign governments. This work still provides one of the best narratives on the separate filibustering missions of Narcisso López, in Cuba (1848, 1850, 1851) and William Walker (1856, 1857), in Nicaragua, that is available in the English language.[21] The combination of these two elements make for powerful drama, and this fact has not been lost on Hollywood.[22] Those who have followed Scroggs have used various angles to talk about the same person and the same expeditions that Scroggs' delineated. Two similar books published in 1976 are Noel Bertram Gerson's *Sad Swashbuckler: The Life of William Walker*

21. Other good accounts in Spanish are Virgilio Rodriguez Beteta, *Trascendencia nacional e internacional de la guerra de Centro America contra Walker e sus filibusteros* (7th ed., Guatemala, 1965); Francisco Escobar, *La campana nacional: refleciones de un sociologo* (Alajuela, Costa Rica, 1984); Rafael Obregon Lotia, *Costa Rica y la guerra del 56: La campana del transito, 1856–1857* (2nd ed., San Jose, Costa Rica, 1976).

22. Alex Cox's movie, *Walker* (1987), is a melodramatic diatribe against Oliver North and American support for the Nicaraguan contras.

(Nashville) and Frederic Rosengarten, Jr.'s *Freebooters Must Die! The Life and Death of William Walker, The Most Notorious Filibuster of the Nineteenth Century* (Wayne, Pennsylvania) although both are far more romantic accounts of Walker's life than Scroggs's book. Charles Brown's *Agents of Manifest Destiny* (1980) is a crisply-written, engaging narrative of López' and Walker's campaigns, but it lacks context and interpretation. For example, Brown relates in some detail Walker's rise and fall in Nicaragua, but he does little either to link those actions to their effects on Southerners at the time or to place his narrative within the context of general historiography on Southern history. The most recent work on filibustering is Alejandro Bolanos-Geyer's two-volume study, *William Walker: The Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny* (1988–1989).

Historians have talked about the New Orleans or Texas connection with filibustering, but that phenomenon was not geographically exclusive to those two areas. Filibustering was a political recourse that was pervasive throughout the Gulf South. Second, filibustering was not simply a reaction by the Gulf South to political events of the 1850's, but was a perennial preoccupation on their parts, dating back to the early nineteenth century. So we cannot say that filibustering simply sought to acquire more cotton lands or to reestablish to slave trade. Filibustering was part of the way Americans settled in the Gulf South. This study, unlike other historical treatments, views filibustering within the context of larger Southern history, and argues that it was not aberrant behavior on the part of a group of crusty fireaters. The work also shows that filibustering was an expression of economic interdependency that bound the Gulf region together, and that it offered economic betterment for those willing to trade their military services for land in captured territories.

1 *Development of Trade Connections in the Gulf South*

In 1835 the Gulf South encompassed lands as constant in quality as the black soils of Alabama and the alluvial bottom lands of Louisiana, people whose temperament was as restless as it was romantic, and cities whose Greek revival facades often hid from the eyes of the casual observer their own lack of sanitation. Throughout the region encompassing Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and West Florida, men and women labored in the agricultural production and sale of their staples. Planters tilled their soil and planted seed, observant at all times of the weather, the price of their products in the United States and abroad, and of the local and national political events. Along the coastline, commission merchants and cotton factors gathered in the port cities of Mobile, New Orleans, Brazoria, Pensacola, and Apalachicola to haggle for the highest prices on their clients' crops.

Most of the cotton and foodstuffs within the Gulf South throughout the period 1835–1860 was traded over water, not rail. That was not true of migration, however. Land transportation was cheaper and livestock could be transported easier by rail than by water. When John Heard Burns gave his future father-in-law, South Carolina planter Elias Lake, instructions on moving to Caddo Parish, Louisiana, he suggested that "it will be the cheapest to come by land but the route will be a long and tedious one. You will be at least fifty or fifty-five days

coming."[1] The long trek began after the Lake's furniture and other family possessions were packed carefully in in wagon and the slaves' belongings were consolidated and secured. The white family traveled by rail to Montgomery, went to Mobile by boat, steamed its way over to New Orleans, made their way up the Mississippi river to the northwestern part of the state, and then traveled overland to the Louisiana parish of Caddo. Their slaves, on the other hand, traveled to the Gulf South quite differently. Lake's thirteen-year-old son and "a trusty white man," probably the overseer, supervised the caravan of wagons, livestock, and forty slaves. Burns correctly estimated that if the party departed on October 15, 1853, they would arrive at their new home just in time for Christmas.

People from the older parts of the South migrated to the newer regions along the Gulf of Mexico with great regularity for much of the antebellum period. In 1840 the states bordering the Gulf sea swelled with the population from states that lay on the Atlantic South. A major shift in population, from the Atlantic to the Gulf South, had taken place from 1830–1840. Although Georgia's population was more dynamic, increasing by 33 percent, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi increased their populations respectively by 91 percent, 63 percent, and 175 percent.[2]

Between 1840 and 1850, about 60,000 Georgians, 50,000 South Carolinians, and 30,000 North Carolinians settled in Alabama alone. In turn, about 35,000 Alabamians moved into Mississippi, 12,000 more settled in Texas, and 7,000 others went to Louisiana to live.[3] The map on the next page indicates the "bumping effect" that was created when people moved westward, as if, even though no actual displacement occurred, older populations had to move out to make room for the newer.

1. Tom Henderson Wells, "Moving a Plantation to Louisiana," *LS*, VI (1967), 281.
2. Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the U.S. in 1860*, in Tommy W. Rogers, "Migration Patterns of Alabama's Population, 1850 and 1860," *AHQ*, XXVIII (1966), 603.
3. J. D. B. De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*; cf. John Lauren Harr, "The Ante-Bellum Southwest, 1815-1861," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1941), 28–69, for a general discussion of migration.

The years between 1850 and 1860 demonstrate the completed population shift. Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia had modest population increases of 12 percent, 14 percent, and 16 percent increases. South Carolina's population grew by only 5 percent. On the other hand, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas recorded 30 percent, 25 percent, 27 percent, and 183 percent increases, respectively. The census figures illustrate the comparative demographical dynamism of the Gulf South over the sluggish Atlantic South. The figures also show the constant, deliberate, and incluctable progress of white American settlement. For example, what the graph on the previous page illustrated for 1840–1850 is repeated in the next decade. About 85,000 Georgians, 45,000 South Carolinians, and 35,000 North Carolinians left their homes to live in Alabama. Alabamians themselves also moved to the same places—about 40,000 went to Mississippi, 35,000 to Texas, 12,000 to Louisiana.[4]

One Alabama observer marveled at the sheer numbers of people who passed along the main road running between Montgomery and Mobile.[5] One geological surveyor thought that the seemingly endless march of people south struck him as being similar to what ancient migrations might have looked like. One day he passed twelve hundred people, black and white, on foot, all carrying their earthly possessions on their backs over the pocked earth, determined to claim new land.[6] The Lides family of Alabama left familiar surroundings in

4. Kennedy, *Population of the U.S. in 1860*, in Rogers, "Migration Patterns," 50.

5. Maria Lide to Hannah L. Coker, February 24, 1836, in Fletcher M. Green (ed.), "The Lides Go South ...And West: The Record of a Planter Migration in 1835," *South Carolinian Sesquicentennial Series* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1952), 12.

6. George W. Featherstonhaugh, in Walter Brownlow Posey (ed.), *Alabama in the 1830s as Recorded by British Travellers* (Birmingham, 1938), 30.

Springville, South Carolina to settle in the Gulf South. Like the Lake family, they moved overland into Alabama. They sold everything to move to a region that had been advertised as cheap, rich, and fertile. The journey was difficult—the muddy roads were uneven and extremely hazardous to wooden carts; the winter weather could be uncompromisingly cold and wet.[7]

The weather, in part, made the Gulf South the most economically dynamic region of the South by 1840. The longer planting season, temperate year-round climes, and a nutrient-rich soil contributed to making that year an auspicious one; for the first time, the Gulf South's cotton production surpassed that of the Atlantic South. Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia produced a combined 701,308 bales of cotton in 1839. Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana gathered 1,157,739 bales in combination, of which Mississippi accounted for 483,504 of the total.[8] Farmers experimented with new machinery, like the steam-powered gin stand and the screw press. Gulf South cotton bales, at 400 to 500 pounds, weighed substantially more than the 300 to 325 pound bales packed in the Atlantic South.[9] By 1850, the numbers were proportionately similar: the Atlantic South produced 877,784 bales to the 1,285,530 harvested by the Gulf South.[10] Finally, by 1860, all the Gulf South states had at least doubled their production of cotton, except Texas, whose harvest increased 642 percent over the decade.[11]

Agriculture was only one part of the Gulf South; its port cities were another. The oldest and biggest were New Orleans and Mobile; together with Apalachicola as the third largest

7. Green (ed.), "The Lides Go South," 42. A poignant account of a family's exodus to the Gulf is Thomas McAdory Owen (ed.), "John Owen's Journal of His Removal from Virginia to Alabama in 1818," *Publications of the Southern History Association* (Baltimore, 1897). The journey of Joshua and Rosanna Nesbitt Benson bears out Barnes E. Lathrop's description of the "ladder" population growth. While on their way from South Carolina to Mississippi, a son was born in Georgia. They named him Georgia Roads. Benson Papers, *BTHCA*. Barnes E. Lathrop, *Migrations into East Texas* (Austin, 1943), chapter 4.

8. *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1841), 355.

9. William Kauffman Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Baton Rouge), 313.

10. Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Agriculture of the United States*, 189.

11. Kennedy, *Agriculture of the United States*, 185.

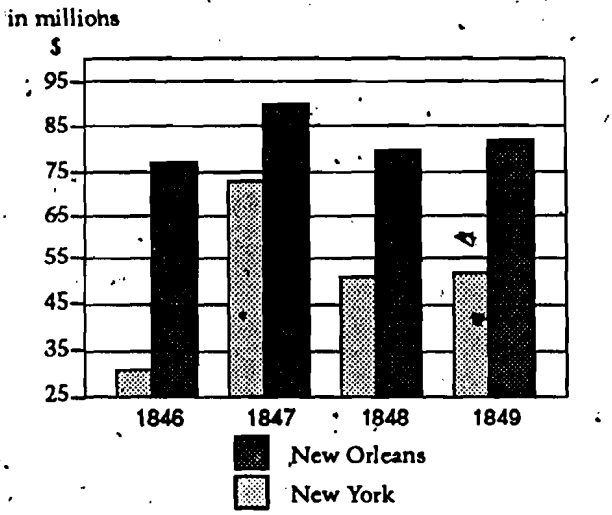
cotton port in the Gulf South[12], these three dominated most of the trading of western Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas throughout the antebellum period. These ports also were homes to some of the wealthiest and most powerful members of their own states. Outside the port cities, only a few hinterland towns could compete for the attention of important citizens. In Texas, the nearest rival to Galveston was Austin; in Alabama, the powerful Montgomery held a great deal of economic and political might in the state. But in Louisiana, no city could compete with the complete control New Orleans wielded over economic affairs. New Orleans was the heart of the Gulf South.

Louisiana's port sits at the bottom of what was the most accessible transportation system the interior had to haul its cotton to market—the Mississippi river. Unlike other Gulf South ports, New Orleans lies not on the Gulf of Mexico, but eighty miles in the interior. Because of the striking geographical peculiarity of the delta, its location is further south than any other major Gulf port, cradled between Lake Pontchartrain and a crescent curve in the Mississippi river. By 1835, New Orleans offered merchants the most diverse goods to buy and trade. For almost a decade, from 1834 to 1843, New Orleans outpaced New York in the bulk of total goods it exported.[13] New Orleans produce, coming down from the Mississippi, was greater than that coming down the Hudson, via the canals, into New York (as indicated on the next page):

12. From 1840–1860, Apalachicola was the third largest cotton port. Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida, 1821–1860* (Gainesville, 1973), 169. Harry P. Owens, "Port of Apalachicola," *FHQ*, XLVIII (1969), 1. Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "Ante-Bellum Pensacola: 1821–1860," *FHQ*, XXXVII (1959), 337–356; and Ernest F. Dibble, *Ante-Bellum Pensacola and the Military Presence* (Pensacola, 1974).

13. Robert G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815–1860* (New York, 1939), 105, 389–90; Harry A. Mitchell, "The Development of New Orleans as a Wholesale Trading Center," *LHQ*, XXVII (1944), 954.

New Orleans Port Performance, 1846–1849
Value of hinterland produce vs. New York



Source: *DBR, VIII* (1850), 382.

The port of New Orleans exerted an unifying economic influence in the Gulf South. Goods or products that did not themselves originate in the Gulf South generally found their way into the various corners of the region *indirectly* through the Crescent City.[14]

The Champagne fairs of the twelfth century were to European commerce what nineteenth century New Orleans was to business activity in the Gulf South. Many of the goods Gulf coast ports needed were bought in New Orleans. To the Gulf South economy, New Orleans was the central marketplace for the purchase of slaves.[15] Because the state of Mississippi had no other substantial waterways connecting hinterland to coast, the river counties relied heavily upon New Orleans to market their goods. Buyers would gather from all parts of the region during the winter to buy additional labor for their plantations. The competition, notes one historian, was so heated that businessmen often devised ingenious

14. See a discussion on the following pages of West-South trade through New Orleans.

15. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore, 1931), 312, quoted in James E. Winston, "New Orleans as a Slave Mart Before 1860," 1, typewritten copy, *TUA*.

marketing techniques to attract prospective buyers.[16] For example, slave traders might hire musicians to lure planters into their mercantile lairs in the hope that lively entertainment would attract a large number of clients. Bernard Kendig, one successful slave trader, must have used that or similar techniques, for between 1852–1860, he sold 758 slaves. Unlike some traders, he bought and sold slaves exclusively from the local area, instead of trading extraregionally with the Atlantic South. The advantages to interregional trade were time and expense. Extraregional trade entailed a waiting period of up to six months between the purchase and the delivery of slaves. In addition, travel, food, and the housing of slaves from the Atlantic to the Gulf South were all extremely expensive.[17]

Most of the slaves sent to New Orleans to be sold were bought by planters who lived nearby, in the river counties of Louisiana and Mississippi. In particular, most buyers lived in the parish of Orleans.[18] Mississippi planters had to purchase their slaves out-of-state because the Constitution of 1832 prohibited slave traders from selling slaves within state boundaries. They either traveled to New Orleans or Vidalia, Louisiana, to buy their labor.[19] These Gulf South planters were accustomed to buying slaves on credit in the flush times before the late 1830's. But in the 1840's, economic retrenchment and conservatism demanded that specie or goods be paid for slaves. It was commonly the case in the 1840's that slaves were sold to pay off debts.

16. Richard Tansey, "Bernard Kendig and the New Orleans Slave Trade," *LH*, XXIII (1982), 160. Slave traders sometimes made large profits from their business. Kendig owned $64,000 in real estate and another $64,000 in personal wealth, according to the 1860 U.S. Census. Tansey, 177. Isaac Franklin, for example, operated in a firm (Ballard, Franklin, and Company, of New Orleans) that netted $33,000 in 1829. Between 1839 and 1846, his share alone in the firm amounted to $45,000. W. H. Stephenson, *Isaac Franklin, Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1938), 67, 93. Most of the Gulf South's supply of labor came into New Orleans from the Atlantic South. Winston, "New Orleans as a Slave Mart," 2, *TUA*.

17. Tansey, "Bernard Kendig," 163; David O. Whitten, "Slave Buying in 1835: Virginia as Revealed by Letters of a Louisiana Negro Sugar Planter," *LH*, XI (1970), 231–44.

18. Stephenson, *Isaac Franklin*, 69, 86; Tansey, "Bernard Kendig," 163.

19. Stephenson, *Isaac Franklin*, 63.

But New Orleans did not completely eclipse the other Gulf ports. The port of Mobile was often congested during the late winter months of cotton harvesting.[20] The cotton belt counties of central Alabama made the port town of Mobile powerful. It could not have existed without the cotton that flowed down the Tombigbee and the Alabama rivers, lifelines that connected the counties to the coast. Even though geography wedded Mobile and New Orleans together in a close economic relationship (only forty-three miles separate the two ports[21]), such proximity meant more to Mobilians than it did to New Orleanians. Goods and merchandise not found nearby could be purchased in the Crescent City port easily and quickly. Frequently, Mobilians sent their own native cotton to New Orleans to be weighed and priced according to the latter's standards. As late as 1860, Mobile ranked third, behind New York and New Orleans, respectively, in the sheer volume of goods exported.[22]

Although some heralded Galveston as having one of the best ports between Pensacola and Vera Cruz[23], one English traveler, Francis Sheridan, remarked with characteristic wit: "The appearance of Galveston from the Harbour is singularly dreary. It is a low flat sandy Island about 30 miles in length & ranging in breadth from 1 to 2. There is hardly a shrub visible & in short it looks like a piece of praiarie that had quarrelled with the main land & dissolved partnership."[24] Sheridan's inauspicious first impression apparently was not shared by the thousands of people who journeyed to Galveston in the mid-nineteenth century to establish livelihoods and families and to conduct trade. Galveston symbolized the imminent wealth and power for which the immense Texas territory seemed destined. The rise and development of this prairie flatland was fast; born much later than other ports, it jumped into the bidding for Gulf South shipping trade. Travelers who visited Texas in 1836 could talk

20. *NR*, XLVII (November 8, 1834), 146. Neither the Tombigbee nor Alabama river could compete with the flow of goods coming down the Mississippi river into New Orleans.

21. The distance is marked from the port of Mobile to the Passes.

22. Harriet Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (University, 1985), 23; Albion, *The Rise of New York Port*, 400–401.

23. "The City of Galveston," *DBR*, III (April, 1847), 348.

24. *Galveston Island or, A Few Months Off the Coast of Texas. The Journal of Francis C. Sheridan, 1839–1840*, ed. Willis W. Pratt (Austin, 1954), 32.

about the growth of Brazoria or Velasco and never mention Galveston. Travelers who visited Texas four years later could scarcely mention any port other than Galveston.

Ports provided the means by which Gulf Southerners were able to buy and sell goods that they needed. But these ports did not import and export American goods solely. Gulf South trade extended into the non-American territories around the Gulf of Mexico—in Texas, Mexico, and Cuba. Often what is overlooked is that Mexico, Cuba, and the lower Americas received Gulf cotton.[25] In the Gulf South-lower Gulf South equation, the trade was balanced and consisted of necessary goods or staples, whereas Gulf South-European or Gulf South-U.S. Atlantic was seasonal and chronically lopsided.[26] The Gulf states had daily contact with the territories of the lower Gulf. Cuba supplied the American Gulf South with cigars, rum, and illegally-imported African slaves. Havana regularly took in lumber, bricks, flour, lard, corn, and dry goods.[27] This trade continued throughout the year. Cuba's bricks and lumber came from either Mobile or Pensacola. In addition, New Orleans and Mobile had a closer relationship with Tampico or Cuba than they did with Charleston or Savannah. The major Gulf ports were close enough to each other to enable vessels to make frequent trips between states. Once in the port, the major tributaries of the state could transport supplies to a number of depots upriver. By far the busiest activity in the ports lay in the number of smaller

25. For example, Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City*. Mobile's exports of cotton to the lower Gulf amounted to $753,000 in 1848, and $679,000. *DBR*, VI (1848–1849), 428. During the years 1848, 1849, and 1850, Mobile exported roughly as much cotton to New Orleans as it did to New York. 1848–1849—New York received 41,175 bales to the 40,016 sent to New Orleans. 1849–1850, New York received 37,418 bales to New Orleans' 35,164. *DBR*, IX (1850), 659.

26. Although the Gulf-American Atlantic and interGulf trade was greater than the Gulf-European Atlantic trade. Generally, the Gulf ports conducted more coastwise trading than foreign trading. *DBR*, VI (1848), 455.

27. For example, the total number of African slaves entering Texas for the period 1816–1860 was a little over 1,000. Ephraim Douglass Adams (ed.), "Correspondence from the British Archives Concerning Texas, 1837–1846," *SWHQ*, XVII (October, 1913), 188–206; Fred Robbins, "The Origin and Development of the African Slave Trade in Galveston, Texas, and Surrounding Areas from 1818 to 1836," *East Texas Historical Journal*, IX (1971), 153–161. Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, 1970), 26, on American-Cuban trade. Alfred Toledano Wellborn, "The Relations Between New Orleans and Latin America, 1810–1824," *LHQ*, XXII (1939), 770–780, for an excellent account of early nineteenth century trade between New Orleans and Latin America.

vessels that frequently brought supplies in to a port and took from it the goods its people needed at home.[28]

Ports helped foster an interdependency in the Gulf South that was necessary in the first place because of the topographical peculiarity of the region. With New Orleans as the nexus[29], the different markets in the Gulf South converged as one massive meeting-ground and exchange place. The topography of either side of the Mississippi river is quite different, and is the key to understanding how the jigsaw needs of the sides fit together. The western Gulf coast is a wet place, a saturated ground that, like a sponge in water, can support the agriculture of rice and sugar cane and is the breeding ground for certain species of wildlife, namely, fishes and invertebrates. Although cotton did command a larger share of Louisiana planters and slaves, the sugar cane industry ran a close second throughout the antebellum period.[30] De Bow estimated that sugar production in 1850 encompassed one-third of the state's topography, extending on both sides of the Mississippi river; as far north as Point Coupee and St. Francisville, south to the area below New Orleans; and westward, covering the Atchafalaya region. Anywhere north and west of that area was cotton country. One writer notes that because of the highly concentrated vegetable mold in the black soils of eastern Texas, the bottom lands there were far superior to the alluvial soils of the Mississippi river, which had too many clay and sand. Even so, the sugar industry in Texas was nascent even at the time of its Revolution, and became established only in 1846 when it exported its first yield. Even though Louisiana's sugar plantations yielded a larger number of hogsheads per

28. Examination of the port of New Orleans for the months of May, June, and July 1838 reveals that steamers and schooners outnumbered brigs, barques, and ships for heaviest activity. Many of the steamers came from Opelousas, Attakapas, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Bayou Sara. The schooners were likely to have come from Pensacola, Tampa Bay, Havana, Mobile, Matagorda, and Galveston. 325 steamers, 277 schooners, 230 brigs, 165 ships 41 barques, and 21 sloops entered the port. This information was taken from daily marine intelligence reports in the New Orleans *Picayune*.

29. Stephenson, *Isaac Franklin*, 199, calls New Orleans the "unifying economic influence in the Lower Valley."

30. Rice in Louisiana drew a distant third. In 1838–1839, sugar brought in over a half million dollars in revenue. *DBR*, IV (1847), 129. On the politics of sugar in Louisiana, D. L. A. Hackett, "Slavery, Ethnicity, and Sugar: An Analysis of Voting Behavior in Louisiana, 1828–1844," *LS*, XIII (1974), 90–91; and Hackett, "The Social Structure of Jacksonian Louisiana," *LS*, XII (Spring, 1973), 349, 352. Letter from J. D. B. De Bow to the Commissioner of Patents, *DBR*, VIII (1850), 34.

year, it could not rival Cuban production throughout the entire antebellum period.[31] Sugar and molasses produced in the western part of the Gulf South competed with the sugar and molasses manufactured in Cuba for buyers throughout the Gulf and the world. No conflicting voices rang out among the sugar planters in Louisiana, however, when the Gulf began to maneuver for the acquisition of Cuba.[32] In the Gulf, all the territories sharing the same body of water were parts of a whole.

East of the Mississippi river is topographically quite different. The Mississippi, Alabama, and west Florida coastlines lay on level ground covered with pine and oak, through which many rivers flow. The Pearl, Pascagoula, Mobile, Connecuh, Yellow, Choctawhatchee, and Apalachicola rivers flow directly into the Gulf. Much of this area was formed much earlier than the coastline west of the Mississippi river. The soils of the area east of the Mississippi along the coastline are sandy and red with clay. They are almost destitute of valuable minerals.[33]

The commercial advantages of Pensacola and Mobile lay principally in their timber and brick-making resources. The first commandant of the new Navy Yard in Pensacola noted how abundant and cheap was pine, while clay was "of a superior kind."[34] Its products exactly fitted the needs of the upper Texas Gulf Coast, which desperately needed lumber; one Anahuac resident wrote that wood was needed to build houses for the Matamoras families who would be moving there presently. Having relocated to Galveston in 1838, he remarked

31. James R. Anderson, *A Geography of Agriculture in the United States Southeast* (Budapest, 1973), 320; Sandra Lee Watts, "A history of the Texas sugar cane industry with special reference to Brazoria County" (unpubl. M.A. thesis, Rice University, 1969), 13; R. D. G. Mills to James F. Perry, Galveston, 20 December 1852, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*. At the peak of her production, Louisiana could not satisfy the nation's demand for sugar. In 1841, the U.S. demand for sugar amounted to 165,000 tons; in that same year, Louisiana produced 52,000 tons. Roland T. Ely, *Cuando reinaba su majestad el azúcar* (Buenos Aires, 1963), 128–129.

32. Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854–1861* (Baton Rouge, 1973), 195.

33. "Notes on the Geology and Mineralogy of Alabama," *DBR*, III (1847), 323.

34. Letter from Captain Lewis Warrington to the President of the Board of Commissioners of the Navy, Washington, D.C., April 27, 1826. Ernest F. Dibble, *Ante-Bellum Pensacola*, 22.

that all their lumber was Mobile white pine.[35] When Galveston merchant Samuel M. Williams and his business partner, Thomas McKinney, decided to build a warehouse and other improvements in Quintana (a port town at the mouth of the Brazos River), they used Mobile lumber.[36] Maunsell White, the wily New Orleans merchant who controlled the selling of North Alabama agricultural products, commissioned Mobile lumber for many of his clients in Louisiana.[37] Pensacola was also an important source of lumber for factors and yard owners in New Orleans. J. C. Pooley, one of the partners in a Pensacola lumber business, Criglar, Batchelder and Company, owned two lumberyards in New Orleans. Another Pensacola mill owner, E. E. Simpson, frequently shipped large amounts of lumber in the 1850's to a New Orleanian who owned two yards in the Crescent City.[38] Even in the lumber country of southeast Mississippi, large amounts of wood were sent to New Orleans. By 1860, the 229 saw and planing mills in the Piney Woods were worth almost $2 million in lumber revenue.[39]

Because of its similar cultural and economic identity, the Florida panhandle saw itself more aligned to Alabama than to Middle or Lower Florida. Several times in the antebellum period west Florida attempted to annex itself to Alabama, without success.[40] As early as 1819, the Alabama constitutional convention asked Congress to acquire from Spain the

35. Nicholas D. Labadie to Anthony Lagrave, Anahuac, March 19, 1831; Nicholas D. Labadie to Anthony Lagrave, Galveston City, October 6, 1838. Labadie Papers, *RLG*. The first "ready cut" house in the U.S. "if not in the world," was the house built for Sarah Groce by her father, Jared Groce, in honor of her marriage in 1827 to William Wharton. The wood was cut, sawed, and each plank numbered, in Mobile, Alabama. Bertlet Papers, *BTHCA*. In 1855, Galveston imports of Mobile lumber were second only to Philadelphia for all coastwise exports: Galveston bought $16,765 (1,656,500 feet) of sawed lumber from Mobile. Florida was third, buying $13,120 (1,319,000 feet); Indianola, Texas was fourth, buying $10,250 (1,032,000 feet). *DBR*, XX (1856), 355–356.

36. Abigail Curlee Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Antebellum Texas," *SWHQ*, LXXIII (April, 1973), 435. It was only until the 1850's that east Texas mills were able to produce wood supplies for themselves and even export lumber to New Orleans. In 1860, the state had 192 saw and planing mills and produced $1.75 million in lumber profits. Eisterhold, "Lumber and Trade," 90.

37. White to Alexander McCaskill, Deer Range (near Pensacola), December 7, 1845, Maunsell White Papers, *UNCSHC*.

38. Eisterhold, "Lumber and Trade," 86.

39. Eisterhold, "Lumber and Trade," 90.

40. Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Chimerical Scheme of Ceding West Florida," *AHQ*, XXXIII (Spring, 1971), 5–36.

territory "as lies West of the Appalachicola river," so that it "may be annexed to the State of Alabama."[41] When this request was ignored and the Adams-Onis Treaty made Florida (with the panhandle) one territory in 1821, Alabama Senator John W. Walker argued that without the acquisition of Pensacola and western Florida, his state would suffer the geographical misfortune of being landlocked on its southeastern side, a considerable portion of the state.[42] But even his political weight could not stave off the perceptions among other Southern senators that such a request, if seriously entertained by many, would reopen political wounds first injured in battles over the territorial expansion of slavery, controversies that the Missouri Compromise had attempted to stitch together. Although both Alabama and west Florida desired political union, apprehension over the political implications of annexation effectively prevented any such union from taking place.

Not only was the Gulf South united by its topography but also by the kinships that people formed within the region. The H. H. Williams & Company firm of Galveston, Texas, conducted trade throughout the Gulf South. The firm's founder, Henry Howell Williams, was the brother of Samuel M. Williams, the Galveston merchant whose economic connections in the Gulf region, it will be shown, gathered support for the Texas revolution.[43] William Moore Hudson, one of the firm's representatives, married Josephine Blandin, the sister of powerful Gulf South merchant Ramon Blandin, who conducted trade from his mercantile houses in Cuba and Tampico. Using the Cuban connection, Moore would contract with Blandin to trade animal hides, corn, and lumber for Havana cigars. The hides and corn were Texas

41. *Journal of the Convention of the Alabama Territory begun 5 July 1819*, reprinted in *AHQ*, XXXI (1969), 57, 87; Shofner, "Ceding West Florida," 8.

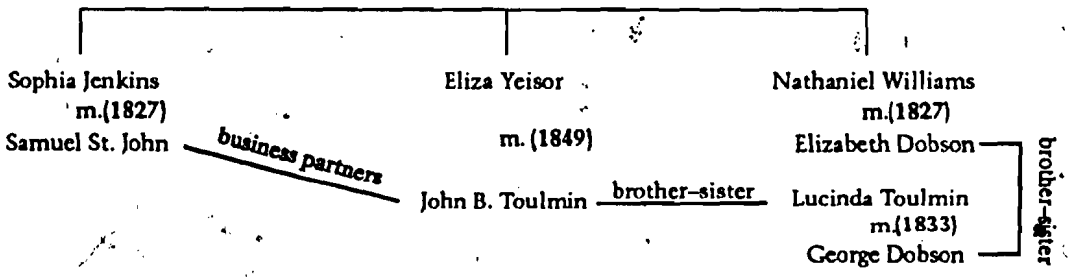
42. Hugh C. Bailey, "Alabama Political Leaders and the Acquisition of Florida," *FHQ*, XXXV (1956), 26–27; Shofner, "Ceding West Florida," 9.

43. Sam Williams' brother-in-law, Samuel P. St. John, Jr., operated a mercantile firm in Mobile called Beers and St. John; Williams' brother Nat formed the partnership of Dobson & Williams in 1827 at Mobile with his brother-in-law, the year of his marriage to Elizabeth Dobson. *Marriages of Mobile County, Alabama, 1813–1855*, eds. Clinton P. King and Meriam A. Barlow (Baltimore, 1985), 177. Dobson & Williams shared a close economic relationship with Toby Brother & Company of New Orleans, which served as the Texas agent in the United States during the Texas Revolution, and was in charge of raising men, money, and munitions for the cause. The two firms forged an intimacy after the Revolution, shipping to each other goods their clients desired. The importance of kinship among American merchants is most ably demonstrated in Bernard Bailyn, *New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA., 1960).

products, but the lumber was sent to Texas from Mobile by a port merchant named J. H. Jewett.[44]

Samuel Williams himself had intricate family ties in the Gulf South. Although he made Galveston his home, his sister, Sophia, married a wealthy Mobile merchant named Samuel St. John. Nat, Williams' brother, also married a Mobilian whose brother served as a partner in his mercantile firm. That partner, George Dobson, married Lucinda Toulmin in 1833. Toulmin's brother, John B., himself a cotton factor in Mobile and St. John's business partner, married a sister of Williams', Eliza Yeisor, in 1849. Williams' wife, Sarah Patterson Scott, was the daughter of William Scott, a Texan in the shipping business. Of Williams' children, his daughter, Mary Dorothea (Molly), married Thomas Jefferson League, son of a Houston merchant.[45]

Samuel M. Williams of Galveston, Texas: Marriages and Business Alliances of His Siblings in Mobile, Alabama



44. Hudson to Ramon Blandin, Galveston, November 11, 19, 1847; May 8, 1852 in the Blandin, Hudson Family Papers, *RLG*. Stephen F. Austin declared that Cuba was the best market for their beef cattle, oxen, hogs, horses, mules, corn, lard, beans, and peas. John H. Jenkins (ed.), *PTR, 1835–1836* (9 vols., Austin, 1973), I, 34; John A. Eisterhold, "Mobile: Lumber Center of the Gulf Coast," *AR*, XVI (1973), *passim*; idem, "Lumber and Trade in the Lower Mississippi Valley and New Orelans, 1800–1860," *LH*, XIII (1972), 71–91. Jewett began his mill business in 1845 when he was 26 years old. According to John W. Davis, a recordkeeper for Dun & Company, Jewett was a "very industrious, prudent, managing man" worth about $5,000 or $6,000 in 1849. By 1857, Jewett operated the largest lumber business in Mobile. Alabama vol. 17, p. 236, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration.

45. Margaret Swett Henson, *Samuel May Williams, Early Texas Entrepreneur* (College Station, 1976), 19, 165–167. At the time of the Texas Revolution, Toulmin operated a commission firm with another merchant named Hazard. J. B. Toulmin to Harvey Chase, Mobile, November 8, 1834, *WSHSCLUA*; *Marriages of Mobile County, Alabama, 1813–1855*, 44. After the Civil War, George Dobson continued his cotton brokerage business. By 1871 he operated with his brother J. B. Dobson a firm called the "Dobson Brothers," and were in "fair credit," with good prospects. By 1876 George Dobson was dead. Alabama Vol. 17, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration.

Kin groups, like the Williams-Dobson-Toulmin families, made getting and receiving goods (in this case, between Galveston and Mobile) reliable. Relatives liked doing business with each other; economic ties were strong and long-standing.[46]

Even as it is true that no contemporary used the term "Gulf South," it is also unlikely that any Gulf Southerner saw himself as living any differently from Atlantic Southerners. In fact, the only glimmer of Gulf South distinctiveness occurred in the 1850's when James D. B. De Bow began profiling civic leaders in the Southwest, and when, at a Commercial Convention in Richmond, a heated discussion broke out between the Atlantic and Gulf port cities over railroad connection in the two regions.[47] The newer South was still too young to have developed a mind apart from its parent, too inebriated and awestruck by its own raw power to contemplate its regional significance. But the Gulf South led the Atlantic South in economic wealth and agricultural production by the mid-1830's. Had the economic downturn in the 1840's not occurred, the Gulf South might have realized the distinctions that nature had given it apart from the Atlantic South, and it might have emerged holding the reins of power over the entire section. During the 1830's most of the American Gulf South—Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and western Florida—was preoccupied with the development of various local economies. This decade also witnessed the growth of interregional links within its geophical boundaries. Those two developments are the subject of the next chapter.

46. Instead of using "kin firms" to conduct their business in other areas of the Gulf South, some merchants chose to set up their own firms in other port cities. Robert Mills, a merchant and planter of both cotton and sugar, conducted trade throughout the Gulf South with his younger brother, David, operating commission firms in Galveston, New Orleans, and Mobile. *PTR, passim.*

47. Paradoxically, the 1850's would also mark the beginning of the region's economic integration with the Midwest and Atlantic South.

2 *Flush Times in the Gulf South, 1832–1837*

I.

Even though Texas offered the newest lands to settlers coming to the Gulf South, it was not the only place land was available. Since the 1810's, families poured into Louisiana and the Mississippi territory. For most overland routes were the only way to travel because they cost nothing to use. But the roads were bad and sometimes impassable. Still, in scenes repeated over and again throughout the Atlantic South, wagons were loaded with only the most essential possessions necessary for travel—practical clothes, bed sheets, a sentimental chest or rocker, and food, as much food that could sustain a family that moved in a period of three to four weeks at a time. Breads and cakes were carefully wrapped in clean linens and consumed with dried beef and, occasionally, fresh fruit and vegetables. Travel was slow, often precarious—especially if wagons broke down or children got sick—and most, owing to the distinct possibility of disaster, entrusted themselves to God's care, to protect and preserve life, family, and fortune in a new homeland.

The Gulf South was settled differently from any other region in American history. It was settled as a slave region. The first American settlers who dribbled into the area after the War of 1812 were frontiersmen and cotton planters who settled either near Indian villages or on fertile lands near major rivers. The desire to purchase land shadowed any of the many reasons people had to immigrate south and, in the Jeffersonian tradition, buy land and become

independent and self-sufficient. The lure of easily acquired, cheap land on free-flowing credit was powerful to many. Credit was the catalyst to development, of course, and it created an entire society in the 1830's.

The availability of credit animated the spirit of colonization in the Gulf South, but combined with the system of factorage, the Gulf South became fossilized primarily as a cotton and slave region. Cotton was the only way a farmer or planter could repay his debts. As he extended his property, he sank further into debt, and his crop had to be bigger and better every year just to catch up. However fossilized the Gulf South had become by the end of the third decade, it was the South's most prosperous cotton area. Factors and merchants encouraged banks to extend thousands of dollars in credit to cotton planters as an advance on their winter cash crop. The more indebted the planter was to his bank, the more dependent he was on his factor. Factors made their living and wealth on their clients' dependency on the credit system, but they too were becoming as dependent on a system that, by the mid-1830's, was spinning out of their control.

Credit opportunities in the United States acted as a sort of "invisible hand" that pushed hundreds of thousands of people into the Gulf South region.[1] Land was the first commodity people wanted to buy with credit. The land rush of the 1810's had created a pattern whereby millions of acres of land suddenly became available in the area after the cession of various Indian lands. During the 1810's boom, about six million acres changed hands. This premier land craze of the nineteenth century occurred at a time when U.S. public lands sold for $2.00 per acre, a price that could be lowered if one paid cash, or raised if one bought on credit or was competing with others for highly prized terrain. The United States government established in 1800 that purchasers could pay for Federal lands in four-year biannual installments, with interest set at six percent at the date of sale.[2] By 1820 the price was

1. See the population figures in chapter one.
2. Benjamin H. Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies* (New York, 1924), 81–4 in Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1933), II, 633.

lowered to $1.25 per acre, although the financial crisis of 1819 successfully prevented most from taking advantage of such low prices.[3]

The first peak of nineteenth century land speculation occurred in the years 1817–1818. The northern and south central parts of the Alabama Territory set the pattern of immigration and land speculation in 1818–1819 that Mississippi replicated half a generation later.[4] Immigrants rushed into the Tennessee River Valley and the Cotton Belt areas in the late 1810's, when lands taken from the Indians became available. Never before that time had such a wave of people all headed for one area. One North Carolinian wrote Thomas Ruffin that he was extremely anxious about the numbers of people leaving his state for the Southwest. "The *Alabama fever*," he complained, "rages here with great violence and has carried off vast numbers of our citizens. I am apprehensive[...] if it continues to spread as it has done, it will almost depopulate the country... Some of our oldest and most wealthy men are offering their possessions for sale and are desirous of removing to this country.[5] The Atlantic Southerner's fears were justified; much of the Tennessee River Valley was being settled before the close of the first decade by his neighbors. Over one million acres of land were sold there, at an average price of $6.95. Some of the better areas were sold for twenty or fifty dollars per acre; river bottomland went for as much as one hundred dollars per acre.[6]

The second highest peak of speculation in American history occurred in the early 1830's. National prosperity, a currency inflation, the easing of Federal land policies, and the absorption of more Indian land all contributed to the dispersal of over twenty million acres of public lands. Over seven million acres of land were taken from the Cherokees alone. During

3. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, 632; Frederick Merk, *History of the Westward Movement* (New York, 1978), 236–7.

4. Gordon T. Chappell, "Some Patterns of Land Speculation in the Old Southwest," *JSH*, XV (1949), 463–77; Bray Hammond, *Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton, 1957), 452–3.

5. James Graham, Hillsborough, North Carolina to Thomas Ruffin, In J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton (ed.), *Papers of Thomas Ruffin* (4 vols., Raleigh, 1918–1920), I, 198, quoted in John Lauren Harr, "The Ante-Bellum Southwest, 1815–1861," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1941), 50.

6. Charles S. Davis, *Cotton Kingdom in Alabama* (Montgomery, 1939), 28.

this time prime cotton land sold for at least $40 to $50 per acre before the 1837 financial crisis. The wealth of the land quickened the movement of people into the Gulf South. "I often think how can I do without my Father and Mother," wrote Eli Lide from Alabama two decades later. "Yet something within me whispers onward and urges me on like a prisoner." Eli moved from his parents' home in Montgomery to Texas, and ended up in Woodville, where he died of cholera only one month later.[7] Other settlers were hardier. By the mid-1830's the United States consistently had spilled over its areas of established settlement, and without uniformity. The Midwest settled over 150,000 in that decade alone; in Texas, Mexico's northernmost state, about 10,000 Anglo-American settlers trickled into the gulf plains area.[8] While the tendency among those from the mid-Atlantic and Northeast was to move into the Midwest, the inclination among Atlantic Southerners was to move into the Gulf South. What motivated most was the cheap, easily attainable land from which boundless productivity could be eked out.

Agricultural reform contributed to the success of the cotton kingdom in the Gulf South. Planters, especially those in Mississippi, were progressive and experimental with the cotton they grew; they constantly sought a tougher and more resilient strain that would bring them higher prices in the marketplace. Gulf cotton was either a Sea Island variety that grew successfully near the coast, or an import from Siam that could withstand winter temperatures more effectively than the Sea Island. Both strains produced large, smooth, easily-removable black seeds and snowy-white cotton. Their Atlantic South counterpart, the Georgia Upland variety, had green seeds that were small, fuzzy, and difficult to remove from the floss. The quality of the Georgia Upland lint was starkly inferior to the Siamese strain, primarily because the former was short and coarse. The differences in cotton floss marked

7. Eli H. Lide to Mr. and Mrs. James Lide, in Coffeeville, Alabama, April 15, 1854, in Fletcher M. Green (ed.), "The Lides Go South ...And West: The Record of a Planter Migration in 1835," *South Carolinian Sesquicentennial Series* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1952), 42. Eli died of cholera in Woodville, Texas, on May 21, 1854.

8. Most immigrants to the Gulf states were themselves former members of upper South states. Barnes F. Lathrop, *Migration into East Texas, 1835–1860: A Study from the United States Census* (Austin, 1949), 50–51.

one reason Gulf South cotton fetched higher prices in European markets than Atlantic South cotton.[9] By the mid- to late 1830's, the strains of cotton in both the Atlantic and Gulf had improved. Along the Atlantic seaboard grew a cotton strain produced by the Georgian Upland and a cotton grown in Mexico. It allowed slaves to pick bolls easier, and was highly resistant to rot disease.[10] In the Gulf South, a group of cotton breeders living in the "Gulf Hills" section of Mississippi developed a strain called Petit Gulf cotton, which was even easier to pick. By growing the Petit Gulf hybrid, the Atlantic farmers could produce a cotton of very high quality.[11]

Merchants and banks too were vital to the economic development of the Gulf South. They determined who got loans and for how much very simply because many sat on the boards at local banks. They enthusiastically supported the broadening economic privileges granted by banks in the 1830's. Due to the influence of merchants and factors in New Orleans, the banking capital of the Crescent City soared from $1.7 million to $36.8 million from 1815 to 1837.[12] In Mississippi, the net worth of banks shot up from $2.7 million to $20.6 million between 1831 and 1837. In many banks, merchants' signatures were required on all loans granted to planters, making them indispensable to the very production of cotton in the Gulf South.[13] In Mobile in the late 1820's, the business transactions of the city added up to more than $10 million, but the city's branch of the Bank of the United States had capital amounting to no more than $500,000. When Alabama set up its own private bank in

9. John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest: Mississippi, 1770–1860* (Baton Rouge, 1988); idem, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi* (New York, 1971; orig. publ. 1958), 28–30.

10. This bacterial disease, probably caused by the Bacillus Gossypium Stedman, attacked the cotton boll, often destroying its entire contents. Moore, *Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom; Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, 31.

11. Moore, *Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom; Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, 34–36.

12. Robert E. Roeder, "New Orleans Merchants, 1798–1837," (unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1959), 295.

13. Marvin Bentley, "Incorporated Banks and the Economic Development of Mississippi, 1829–1837," *JMH*, XXXV (1973), 381–401.

1822, the State Bank in Mobile, its capital stock was set at $3 million.[14] Local merchants, appointed by the state legislature, sat on the board of directors at the bank.[15] The banking system in the Gulf South promoted economic development by accumulating and distributing funds to those who would produce cotton, the source of the region's wealth.[16] All this is not to suggest, however, that the objectives of planters and merchants were at odds, or that planters resisted the power of merchants over them. Historians have protested too much over the shared antagonisms of factors and planters.[17] In New Orleans, the only conflict between planters and merchants that occurred over an anti-usury bill in 1822-23.[18]

Credit's "invisible hand" pushed a young John Hardie into the Gulf South in 1818. A native of Richmond, Virginia, Hardie had decided that the city was "not such a good place for a young man by a great deal." The enterprising Scotsman settled in Huntsville, Alabama and, like so many other young, single, adventurous men in the early nineteenth century, he set his mind to making money. Having sufficiently impressed a local merchant, John Read, with his assiduity, Hardie was able to find work in the country store and local land office Read controlled. Long-term employment often was a losing competitor to opportunity and advancement in the Gulf South. Read wanted his bright, hard-working employee to stay on in his businesses for at least one year. He offered Hardie $400 for a year's work. Hardie refused, daring instead to take leave in six month's time in order to start his own business.

14. Larry Schweikart, *Banking in the American South from the Age of Jackson to Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 1987), on the general subject of Southern banking. Arkansas is included with Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee as states whose banks were interested in furthering the cotton kingdom by massive extensions of credit, not in maintaining stable currencies. Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Louisiana, according to Schweikart, were states that had healthy specie-to-currency ratios.

15. Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama* (University, 1937), 220; Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (University, 1985), 36.

16. Bentley, "Incorporated Banks...of Mississippi," 397, 392.

17. Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (New York, 1965), on the class separation of planters from merchants. The wider literature on planters and factors is varied: R. W. Haskins, "Planter and Cotton Factor in the Old South: Some Areas of Friction," *AH*, XXIX (1955), 101–114; Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 185–205; Charles S. Davis, *The Cotton Kimgdom in Alabama*, 141–205; J. S. Bassett, *The Plantation Overseer as Revealed in His Letters* (1925), 221–60 and *passim*; A. H. Stone, "Cotton Factorage System" *AHR*, XX (1915), 557–565; and M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry* (1897), *passim*; Woodman, *King Cotton*, *passim*; in Roeder, "New Orleans Merchants," 223.

18. Roeder, "New Orleans Merchants," 296; Davis, *Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, 139.

An ambitious man, Hardie was growing exceedingly impatient with each day spent in another man's service. "People here," he cried, "[are] making almost as much in a day or two as I can make in a whole year." In various letters to his brother, Hardie wrote excitedly about the agricultural promise in the Alabama Territory: "One acre of good land will produce from 800 to 1500 lbs. of seed cotton, worth from 4 to 6 dollars per hundred pounds, or form 200 to 350 lbs. of clean cotton, worth from 18 to 22 cents per pound, which will pay in one year the cost price of the land."[19]

As a resident of Madison County, Hardie watched the area fill up with Atlantic Southerners. In late 1818, he observed that a "good part" of the area had been sold in that year alone, and "a great number of towns" had been settled. Another resident, Judge Thomas J. Taylor, recalled that Huntsville was the great rendezvous of emigrants and land speculators, "whose lands were auctioned off at prices $27 to $100 per acre. These highly-inflated prices were the result of massive competition for good land. Some of the competition came from land-hungry profit-seeking speculators whom contemporaries saw as vultures descending onto Alabama during the previous years, gorging themselves on land and tearing away pieces from each other in the process. In order not to alarm the local people, many of them would steal into a town late at night, find out information on land up for sale, purchase it, and scurry off before their identities could be discovered.[20] Their success was aided by banks that loaned money easily and almost without qualification, feeding into the spirit of land speculation.

As they did in Mississippi in the 1830's, land speculators swarmed into Alabama in the late 1810's to capitalize on the cheap lands available. In southern Alabama, speculators in Butler County were known to outbid those settlers who had come to buy the land they had

19. John Hardie to Joseph Hardie, Huntsville, Alabama Territory, 28 October 1818; Huntsville, Alabama Territory, 3 March 1819; in B. Palmer Lewis (ed.), *John Hardie of Thornhill: His Life, Letters and Times* (2d. ed., New York, 1928), 72–3, 79. See also Darwin S. Fenner, *How Proudly We Hail! A Genealogical Study of The Hardie Family* (privately published), *TUA*.

20. J. L. M. Curry, "Reminiscences of Talladega," *AHQ*, VIII (1946), 357. This article was first published in the *Alabama Baptist* some time in the late nineteenth century; the *AHQ* gives no exact date.

cleared and upon which they had built homes. One man, for instance, had ridden over one hundred miles on his mule to Cahaba, the location of the land office, only to have his place "knocked off" by another who outbid him. Unwilling himself to be victimized, the man's friend, who also faced the potential loss of his homestead, "mounted a barrel, with rifle in hand, and announced that he would put a ball through the first man that bid against him for his own land." The Alabama state legislature changed its land policy in 1820 in response to complaints over the sale of cleared land, and barred all future sales of such acreage.[21]

The type of land speculation that forced smaller farmers out of the market was a very real phenomenon in some parts of Alabama.[22] One contemporary historian of Pickens county recalled with disdain the occurrence of those in the "poorer class" who had to move further into the wilderness because they could not compete with the land speculators who gathered at public land sales.[23] Not even the laws passed by state legislators in 1820 could prevent all speculation from occurring. In the historian's opinion, "the snake was only scotched, not killed." Speculators, he maintained, continued to bully settlers by forcing them into "compromises," forcing them to pay the "gangs of sharpers" prices of up to 100 per cent on the government price before they would be allowed to bid off their own property at the minimum price of $1.25 per acre.[24] Speculators raised the ire of local citizens who were relatively helpless against them, and most "sharpers" did not keep the lands they purchased but resold them, at highly inflated prices, to those who would generally buy more than five

21. John Buckner Little, *The History of Butler County, Alabama, from 1815 to 1885* (Cincinnati, 1885), 35–6.

22. Regarding speculation in the rest of the country, see Paul W. Gates, "The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development" in Vernon Carstensen (ed.), *The Public lands* (Madison, 1963), 349–68; Hibbard, *History of Public Land Policies*, 211; Edward H. Rastatter, "Nineteenth Century Public Land Policy: The Case for the Speculator," in David O. Kingaman and Richard K. Vedder (eds.), *Essays in Nineteenth Century Economic History: The Old Northwest* (Athens, 1975), 118–37, who presents evidence that speculators did not significantly retard the settlement of public lands in the Old Northwest. Studies of speculators in the Southwest have not established similar effects. See, principally, Mary Elizabeth Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830–1860* (Norman, 1961), 125–37.

23. Nelson F. Smith, *History of Pickens County, Alabama, From Its First Settlement in Eighteen Hundred and Seventeen, to Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Six* (Carrollton, Alabama, 1856), 42.

24. Smith, *History of Pickens County*, 43.

hundred acres of land at a time, thus ensuring the virtual inability of those who came to purchase small holdings at the minimum government price to do so.[25] In 1819, however, a glut of cotton in the British market diminished the demand of the South's largest customer. Whereas in 1810 Great Britain consumed 67,478,203 pounds of cotton, the figure dropped to 19,183,720 pounds in 1820. A drastic fall in cotton prices resulted. The new state of Alabama, for example, stared into the face of financial insolvency as people wondered how they would pay the $11 million debt owed to banks for land they bought on credit. The economic depression was sustained in the early 1820's until demand for cotton rose again.[26]

By 1830, all of Alabama was settled into counties except for the areas on the eastern and western sides of the state. In the decade 1830–1840 alone, thirteen counties were formed: Lowndes, Barbour, Benton (becomes Calhoun in the 1860 census), Chambers, Coosa, Macon, Randolph, Russell, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Sumter, Cherokee, DeKalb, and Marshall. The speculative fever of the 1810's returned in the 1830's. The flush times of the 1830's in Alabama resembled closely that which took place all over the Anglo-American Gulf South. In Macon County, for example, settlement commenced in 1834, when two rival towns, Tuckabatchee and Talissee, were founded.[27] Each town raced to build the larger city, and each claimed to be at the head of the Tallapoosa. The towns were built in a few, short weeks—hotels, warehouses, storehouses, and private homes all were constructed "as if by magic"; land was cleared and crops were planted. Lots were sold in both towns for prices running between $50 to $1,000, but little money changed hands. Almost all land sales were conducted on credit, in payment over a period of one to four or five years.

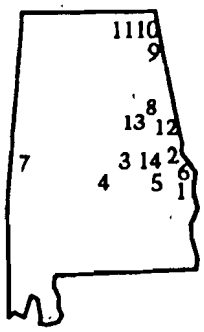
25. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 125–37.

26. J. D. B. De Bow, *The Industrial Resources, Etc., of the Southern and Western States...* (2 vols., New Orleans, 1852), , I, 150; Davis, *Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, 29,31; Nina Leftwich, *Two Hundred Years at Muscle Shoals, Being an Authentic History of Colbert County 1700–1900 with Special Emphasis on the Stirring Events of the Early Times* (Tuscumbia, Alabama, 1935), 36; Jacqueline Anderson Matte, *The History of Washington County: First County in Alabama* (Chatom, Alabama, 1982), 51.

27. H. M. King, "Historical Sketches of Macon County," *AHQ*, XVIII (1956), 209.

New Alabama Counties, 1830–1840

Cotton-Growing	Non Cotton-Growing
1. Barbour	8. Benton
2. Chambers	9. Cherokee
3. Coosa	10. DeKalb
4. Lowndes	11. Marshall
5. Macon	12. Randolph
6. Russell	13. Talladega
7. Sumter	14. Tallapoosa



For one contemporary of Fayette County, Alabama, the most salient feature of flush times was the general access to unlimited credit. He recollected that "the plow-boy, scarcely out of his teens could go to the store and buy his Broad-Cloth Coat, Velvet Vest, Cassimer Pants, and Hat and Boots to match. I know this to be true, for I did it." He remembered how stores offering credit on all merchandise were to be found at every crossroad, how worthless paper money was, and how careless merchants and planters were to let themselves be sucked into the habit of credit spending. Even though he understood that the cotton kingdom relied on a massive system of credit, the Alabamian repeated what was then a common adage regarding the "disappearance" of gold and silver. Specie, he quipped, had "gone into a hole and pulled the hole in after it." He also compared the crisis to "a huge Castle, built upon an imaginary foundation, and [when] the foundation [gave] way the whole superstructure fell with a *terrible crash*."[97]

Another Alabamian who remembered the flush times of the late 1830's was a man named Curry, who resided in Talladega County.[98] He and his family migrated to east central Alabama in 1837 from Lincoln County, Georgia, having sent a caravan of slaves, wagons, mules, and an overseer ahead to occupy the land and prepare for a crop. His father paid an average of $39 per acre for his land. Curry remembered Talladega flush times as "a time of shinplasters, of fiat money." The currency fascinated him to the extent that he kept many "specimens" long after the years of prosperity had passed. Most striking to him was that

97. E. A. Powell, "Fifty-Five Years in West Alabama," *AHQ*, IV (1942), 507–8. Powell's piece was originally written for the *Tuscaloosa Gazette* in 1886.
98. Curry, "Reminiscences of Talladega," 349–99.

when the currency was torn or worn out it was "in some instances pasted on a piece of paper, and continued on [its] mission of getting something for nothing." Everyone manufactured currency—country stores, stage companies, and railroad companies. People made what turned out to be foolish investments, like planting hundreds of acres of mulberry trees for the manufacture of silk. "Rude attempts" were made to unwind and collect the delicate material of the cocoon. Disenchantment soon overtook such operations, and "visions of riches disappeared as suddenly as they were created. The excitement collapsed."[30]

The economic deflation hit Mississippians hardest primarily because they bought, borrowed, traded, sold, and lived on credit to a degree most extraordinary for the region. Mississippi was the most prolific cotton growing state in the nation by 1840, and the depressed cotton prices made worse its own economic indebtedness. The Magnolia state sweated with that same maniacal, speculative fever that struck other Gulf states in the 1830's. What the nullification crisis was to national politics, land speculation was to every fact of Mississippi's life in 1833. The quest for land was interwoven into the fabric of the state. Joseph G. Baldwin, a contemporary observer, captured the ubiquitous economic frenzy:

> Emigrants came flocking in from all quarters of the Union, especially from the slaveholding States. The new country seemed to be a reservoir, and every road leading to it a vagrant stream of enterprise and adventure. Money, or what passed for money, was the only cheap thing to be had. Every crossroad and every avocation presented an opening,—through which a fortune was seen by the adventurer in near perspective. Credit was a thing of course. To refuse it—if the thing was ever done—were an insult for which a bowie-knife were not a too summary or exemplary means of redress. The State banks were issuing their bills by the sheet, like a patent steam printing press *its* issues; and no other showing was asked of the applicant for the loan than an authentication of his great distress of money. Finance, even in its most exclusive quarter, had thus already got, in this wonderful revolution, to work upon the principles of the charity hospital. If an overseer grew tired of supervising a plantation and felt a call to the mercantile life, even if he omitted the compendious method of buying out a merchant wholesale, stock, house and good will, and laying down, at once, his bull-whip for the yardstick—all he had to do was to go on to New York, and present himself in Pearl-street with a letter avouching his citizenship, and a clean shirt, and he was regularly given a through ticket to speedy bankruptcy... Banks, chartered on a specie basis, did

30. Curry, "Reminiscences of Talladega," 353–4. "Shinplasters" were people who manufactured "rag money." Moore, *History of Alabama*, 221.

> a very flourishing business on the promissory notes of the individual stockholders ingeniously substituted in lieu of cash.[31]

One might think that Mississippi issued credit as if it knew it would have only four years to enjoy its prosperity, or if it were in a hurry to catch up with the settlement of older sections.

A traveler touring some of these Mississippi counties in the mid-1830's was struck by the "most extraordinary character" of speculation.[32] The character was epitomized by bands of people constantly moving from place to place. He noted that these rovers created embryo cities by camping in one area and calling the location a town. But as soon as the wagons were packed to move to another area, the cities were aborted and "were known no more forever." In addition to the phenomenon of the portable city, the traveler observed the evanescence of financial success. "A man would brag at breakfast, such as it was," he remarked, "that he had made fifty thousand dollars that morning, and at night would be without a dollar to brag upon, even on paper." One final peculiarity of Mississippi and of the Gulf region bothered him: gratuitous and graphic violence. What frightened him most was that "strong, queer, extraordinary, ludicrous, merciless, and inhuman acts and deeds were daily perpetrated," and yet no one "knew when he was safe." Nearly everyone carried a weapon, except the traveler himself, becoming an object of sport for one Mississippian, who poked a friend's ribs and laughed: "The stranger aint acquainted with our ways." Easily-acquired money, land, and wealth cheapened life. The ephemeral quality of life in the Gulf South made for the particularly brutal and violent lifestyle. In 1835 one resident of the Choctaw Nation wrote that everyone in his general region of Mississippi was "extremely rude and ignorant," and that the general population could be divided into two groups: churchgoers and outlaws. Baptists and Methodists composed the first group, and since he noticed how highly industrious, dutiful, energetic, and hardy they were, he ventured little more to say about them. Much more ink, on the other hand, was spilled for the second group:

31. Baldwin, *The Flush Times*, 82–86, in Richard Aubrey McLemore (ed.), *A History of Mississippi* (2 vols., Jackson, 1973), I, 288–9.

32. James R. Creecy, *Scenes in the South, and Other Miscellaneous Pieces* (Washington, 1860), *passim.*

> I [speak] of a different stamp, thorough outlaws, without religion, morality and very little decency, eternally drinking and swearing and flourishing their drinking knives and pistols. One thing which strikes and shocks at first one coming to this country is the comparative little regard for human life, the familiar use of deadly weapons which prevails, almost every man goes armed constantly.[33]

Speculation was a major component of change in the Gulf South, mirroring the national sentiments current at that time. A huge expanse of land in Mississippi that had become available for purchase in 1833 for $1.25 at an 80-acre minimum formed seventeen counties out of land from the Choctaw Cession. Squatters and speculators outside the region had to compete with groups of Alabamians who were also interested in buying lands. Three years later, from land granted by the Chickasaw Cession, thirteen more counties were organized. In just three years, from 1832 to 1835, over four million acres of land were sold in Mississippi. In 1836 alone, 3.3 million acres of land were sold.[34] The mania for land in Alabama and Louisiana grew to a frenzied pitch in that same year. While Mississippi's land sales peaked at over $15 million, Alabama sold approximately $13 million; Louisiana showed receipts of $10 million. Florida sold about $2 million in public land, a figure that partially reflects the reluctance of settlers to move into a territory in the midst of ongoing battles with Osceola and the Seminole Indians.[35]

The historian Mary E. Young has shown that most of the ceded Indian lands in Mississippi were bought by large-scale land dealers. An examination of those speculators who originally purchased Chickasaw allotments reveals that most lived in Mississippi or Alabama. This fact alone is worthy of emphasis because most of the original counties created from the Chickasaw Cession lay on the Mississippi-Tennessee boundary. Tennesseeans bought 109,075 acres of land. Alabamians bought 233,740 acres. Mississippians purchased 301,638 acres. Altogether, thirty-three purchasers of Chickasaw land bought units of at least

33. William Harwood letter, Louisville, Mississippi, 8 December 1835, *LSUA*.

34. Dennis East, "New York and Mississippi Land Company and the Panic of 1837," *JMH*, XXXIII (1971), 300; Miles, *Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi*, 118.

35. Miles, *Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi*, 118; Arthur H. Cole, "Cyclical and Sectional Variations in the Sale of Public Lands, 1816–1860," in Vernon Carstensen (ed.), *The Public Lands*, 243–4; Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 47–72; 109; 114–53.

10,000 acres. About 65 per cent came from the Gulf South and bought over a half million acres. From the beginning of Pontotoc (near the center of the Chickasaw Cession) land sales in 1837 to their final sale in 1854, almost two million acres of land were bought by speculators, approximately 70 per cent of whom resided in the Gulf South.[36] Many believed these lands, plus the tracts of land in Alabama formerly belonging to the Creek Indians, were the last good cotton lands left in the Gulf South. So they were willing to pay up to one hundred times the government minimum ($1.25) for land that could be resold at a profit. These men sold their land to others in the 1840's, for money was hard to raise in the late 1830's. By 1850 almost all the large speculative holdings had disappeared. But settlement of the land did not necessarily follow such disappearance. More than 50 per cent of the land simply was held by others, uncultivated.[37]

But none of the foregoing is to suggest that because most Chickasaw land was purchased through speculation and then resold, that speculators necessarily made sizable profits. James Silver has pointed out that although almost all profited, the margins of profit were not large and the venture always was risky. Rare was the instance that a man like William Armour could resell land at a huge profit.[38] In this land sale of 1837, some held on to their lands past 1839; an unfortunate error in timing given the aftermath of the Panic of 1837, and this fact, known only in hindsight, accounts in large part why many speculative partnerships, in Silver's opinion, would have been better off speculating in commercial ventures in a more

36. Of the 61, 30 came from Mississippi, 14 from Alabama, 8 from Georgia, 5 from Tennessee, 2 had joint ownership, and of the remaining two, one represented a land company and the other's hometown as not given. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 165–6.

37. Twenty out of thirty-three came from the Gulf South. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 130–4. The pattern of land being sold by speculators by the 1850's was replicated by Panola County, Mississippi, an area that was part of the Chickasaw Cession lands. One resident wrote that "the purchasing of land is now a much safer business than at the first settlement of the country... The land speculators had thousands completely in their power in the first settlement of the country and used it to the temporal ruin of many but their reign is over." J. Blackwell to his brother and sister, Panola County, MI, February 22, 1849, Edmund B. Blackwell Papers, *DA*.

38. Armour profited 515 per cent by selling his $14,000 investment of $5,600 acres at a $6,000 profit one month later. Only a few lost money speculating on Chickasaw land. James W. Silver, "Land Speculation Profits in the Chickasaw Cession," *JSH*, X (1944), 91.

stable, established community in the East.[39] One resident of the Chickasaw lands in 1841 wrote that the lands, selling then for $5–$10 per acre, were "all owned by speculators but [are] settling up very fast."[40]

A burgeoning population moving into the state, buying and cultivating the land, was the foundation of Mississippi's phenomenal growth. Communities in Mississippi were built quickly. Although the city of Jackson was settled in the early 1820's, the construction of public buildings, railroads, and a satisfactory mail service was an invention of the 1830's.[41] The Capitol, Governor's Mansion, and state penitentiary were all authorized for construction in mid-decade. When the Capitol was completed in 1840, it had cost taxpayers about $400,000. The Governor's Mansion exceeded its 1833 budget five times, costing about $150,000 in 1842, the year of its completion. Jacksonians spent more on housing their governor than they did their criminals, spending only $136,849 for a prison. These "internal improvements" were permanent fixtures on the Jackson landscape. More ephemeral were the business and industry elements that flocked to the permanent seat of the state government during the decade. The most noticeable feature of businessmen who came to Jackson between 1830–1840 was the alacrity with which they left. Most firms that established businesses and were taxed disappear from the records by 1840. Callan and Salmon, another store, went out of business. Merchant firms D. W. Connely & B. A. Ludlow as well as D. C. Hardee & D. H. Dickson dissolved their respective partnerships in 1839. Baldwin, List and Company, a dry goods, grocery, and produce business dissolved its firm in 1840. So did the firm of Shields & Dulaney. This store, which boasted the patronage of Alexander McClung, Mary Stith, A. L. Bingaman, and Turner M. Ellis, did much heavier business in 1837 than it

39. Silver, "Chickasaw Land Speculation Profits," 92. The partnership of Anderson and Saffarans bought 2,560 acres at $3,200, which they sold four years later at a $4,278.72 profit.

40. James T. Sims Letter, 30 July 1841, Alabama, *LSUA*.

41. William D. McCain, *The Story of Jackson: A History of the Capital of Mississippi, 1821–1951* (2 vols., Jackson, 1953), I, 34–53; 58, 62.

did in 1836, but like many of its colleague firms, was swept up when the storm of 1837 blew business away.[42]

Holly Springs, Mississippi, was created by the flush times of the 1830's.[43] Several reasons combined to produce a 150 per cent increase in population for the period 1830–1840. As part of the Chickasaw cession, the area surrounding Holly Springs was, as one historian put it, "the last great block of virgin land" in the American Gulf South. In 1836, cotton sold for 16.8 cents per pound, its highest price since 1825.[44] After the Panic of 1837 had come and gone, Holly Springs was still spending. Convinced that economic hard times had passed, two state financial institutions were created in 1838, the Union Bank and the Northern Bank of Mississippi. Speculators formed the Holly Spring Real Estate Banking Company, whimsically continuing to deal out large credit advances to those who wanted to own property. Patrons subscribed twenty thousand dollars to build the Literary Institution at Holly Springs, a college for young men. Hotels, inns, churches, newspapers, dry goods stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, tailoring establishments, bakeries, and taverns appeared by 1838. Not far behind were the lawyers, and by 1838, forty called Holly Springs their home and proceeded to adjudicate the over 1,200 cases that had been brought into the Circuit Court in that year alone.[45] Flush times ended in Holly Springs in 1840 only when cotton prices finally had bottomed out. Many residents left for Texas.

James J. Chewning, a Vicksburg speculator and planter, was characteristic of many Mississippians who swooned on flush times. He formed partnerships in merchant firms in Vicksburg and New Orleans that sold real estate. Chewning bought many lots in Vicksburg

42. McCain, *The Story of Jackson*, I, 77.

43. Hubert H. McAlexander, "Flush Times in Holly Springs," *JMH*, XLVIII (1986), 1–14.

44. James H. Stone, "The Economic Development of Holly Springs During the 1840's," *JMH*, XXXII (1970), 343. For the county of Marshall, of which Holly Springs was part, the population increased 300 per cent in 1837 alone from a figure of under four thousand to 13,498 (8,274 white; 5,224 slave). McAlexander, "Economic Development of Holly Springs," 2, 8; J. D. B. De Bow, *The Industrial Resources*, I, 149.

45. Most would appear to have been bankruptcy cases. McAlexander, "Flush Times in Holly Springs," 8–11.

in local land sales and resold many of them, accruing profits of up to fifteen hundred dollars per deal.[46] Almost all of his wealth, like that of so many others, was on paper. Through the help of his father-in-law, Ferdinand Sims, Chewning was able to obtain the position of President of the Commercial and Railroad Bank in Vicksburg, which had capital stock of about $4 million, and had branches in Clinton and Vernon (in Warren County). By the end of 1829, Chewning sat at the apex of his business career, owning many slaves and thousands of acres of land.[47] Just at this time, he mortgaged all his property to obtain a $130,000 loan from the Commercial and Railroad Bank. This sum was undoubtedly needed to pay off other existing debts he had amassed from his flimsy wealth. The Vicksburg bank failed, and Chewning had to remortgage some of his property to obtain another loan. The pattern continued in the early 1840's when Chewning mortgaged his property five times over to satisfy his creditors. His speculative career over, Chewning settled down to his Bolivar County plantation, and began his tenure as planter and local judge, having lost almost all his wealth.

Others were not as lucky as Chewning. Leroy Pope Walker, son of Senator John Williams Walker, and future Confederate Secretary of War, set out in early 1837 to try to benefit from the flush times of the Gulf South region. As the third oldest brother of one of Alabama's most distinguished families, Leroy Pope was the only one not to have settled into a profession.[48] Of his two merchant brothers, one operated from Mobile and the other was a resident of Huntsville. Leroy Pope set out for Madison County, Mississippi, to become master of his own plantation and, perhaps along the way, get rich. He had high hopes; he borrowed money to buy a 960 acre plantation, costing $43,000. Circumstances and the economic vissicitudes of the day did not, however, equal his desire for advancement. In 1837

46. Willie D. Halsell, "A Vicksburg Speculator and Planter in the Yazoo Delta," *JMH*, XI (1949), 232.
47. In Louisiana, he owned 815 acres and 39 slaves in Carroll Parish. In Mississippi, he had 1,360 acres in Carroll county; he owned 1,526 acres and 31 slaves in Bolivar county; he owned 1,570 acres in Washington county; he owned 600 acres in Yazoo county. He owned a house and lot in Clinton, Mississippi. Finally, in the city in which he was a resident, Vicksburg, he owned "numerous" lots of land. Halsell, "A Vicksburg Speculator and Planter in the Yazoo Delta," 234–5.
48. Willie D. Halsell, "Leroy Pope Walker's Mississippi Interlude," *AHQ*, XXIX (1967), 65.

a fire consumed his cotton gin, rope and bagging, and 20 to 30 bales of cotton. In 1838, the cotton crop was smaller than he anticipated. It may have been quite difficult for him to meet his own credit payments. In 1839, he sold the 960 acre plantation for almost a third of the price he paid for —$14,249.[49] John James Walker, Pope's older brother, must have assumed a majority of his brother's debt, for Pope wrote him in the spring of 1839: "I wish you could let me know how much is due you—& how much would satisfy you until fall. I am determined hereafter to meet my debts to you punctually."[50] Very soon afterward, Leroy Pope Walker returned to Alabama for good, thus ending his days as a speculator.

Other Gulf Southerners were more careful speculators. A resident of Natchez, Mississippi, James Campbell Wilkins decided, in 1835, to try his hand in several land speculation ventures within the state. Wilkins already owned property in partnership with another Natchez entrepreneur, John Quitman.[51] Wilkins, an unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Congress in 1830, was determined to entertain ventures only "with great judgment and discretion." He wanted the matter conducted with utmost secrecy and financial integrity; one of his partners, Benjamin Ludlow, traveled to Philadelphia to get a bank loan to buy the property. Ludlow got a loan in the late fall of 1835, but at a rate much higher than he would have gotten in New Orleans. In late November, 1835, he traveled to Columbus to buy land, but said that little remained after the local land officers had "satisf[ied] the Indian floats." What was available was selling from $2 to $10 per acre, but only in very small plots. Pointing out that he know Wilkins was not interested in buying land "in a small way," he decided to test the waters at Chocchuma and Clinton. While in Chocchuma, Ludlow wrote in astonishment that the local land sales during October had amounted to $12,470 while the

49. Deed Record, Madison County, Mississippi, Book G, 417–8, quoted in Halsell, "Walker's Mississippi Interlude," 69.

50. L. P. Walker to John J. Walker, Huntsville, Alabama, May 25, 1839, quoted in Halsell, "Walker's Mississippi Interlude," 76.

51. Accounts of property held by Wilkins, Quitman, and Pelton; Indenture note between William Minor and Wilkins, Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*. In addition, Wilkins, Pelton, Turner and Quitman bought lands in 1836, two tracts along the Bayou Ferdoche and one on the Grosse Tete, both amounting to 3,641.2 acres. The Ferdoche land description, October, 1842, Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*.

sales for November, a month not yet completed, stood at $39,985.[52] Wilkins, in partnership with Ludlow and Robert Sterling, bought land in Mississippi.[53]

Although Wilkins' Natchez would not support many plans for internal improvements, the town was rapidly engaged in construction of its own. A local schoolteacher remarked: "Money is either very scarce or the people are hoarding up—but no I rather think the gaudy buildings and fantastic improvements are swallowing it [up] as fast as it appears, it is a perfect rage, I am sure that next spring the Town of Natchez will rival Cincinnati, every man is building a villa, or a castle, or a palace, or some such [grandiose] edifice, I wonder what has set them going."[54] Many people in the state favored a massive internal improvements plan in order to accommodate the massive economic growth. Roads, which attempted to connect towns and people, were in an extraordinarily bad condition—muddy, cluttered, and sometimes flooded over, impeding travel. The Mississippi General Assembly created a Board of Internal Improvements in 1829 to investigate and recommend specific plans for roads, bridges, rivers, and causeways. This Board, however, was removed the following year by a group of commissioners who preferred improvements be made by private companies, and not at the public's expense. Thus ended the plan to improve transportation conditions in the state. Whig-dominated Natchez had been known for its resilient opposition to any state policy that attempted to eclipse its power. Since two-thirds of all Mississippi tax money came out of the pockets of those residents who dwelled in the southwestern portion of the state, the Whig stronghold had been instrumental in seeing to the destruction of those projects that could dismantle its fortress. They blocked an 1822–23 Pearl River improvement, which would have increased the amount of goods going directly to New Orleans. Second, in early 1837, they defeated a New Orleans-Nashville railroad project. The completion of both

52. Wilkins to George Halston, Natchez, April 18, 1835; Lascice to Wilkins, Philadelphia, July 16, 1835; Articles of Agreement between R. H. Sterling, B. A. Ludlow, and Wilkins, September 15, 1835; Benjamin A. Ludlow to Wilkins, Columbus, November 18, 1835; Robert Sterling to Wilkins, Chocchuma, November 19, 1835, in Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*.

53. Ludlow to Wilkins, Jackson, December 4, 1838; Sterling to Wilkins, Natchez, November 23, 1840, Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*.

54. Margaret Wilson Diary, January 12, 1837, *MDAH*.

projects would have created transportation systems that would have avoided the towns along the Mississippi River altogether.[55]

Although these plans for internal improvements in Mississippi were rejected, one would be mistaken for believing that all hopes for improving transportation were dashed. Mississippi chartered twenty-three railroads during the 1830's. In order to finance rail projects, more financing was needed. In 1834, Anthony Campbell, a journalist from Natchez, wrote: "There is not a town or village, however remote and insignificant, that will not demand and must receive, a Railroad Charter, with banking privileges." By the end of the decade, twenty-five banks had been chartered.

In Louisiana, too, the sugar planters were expanding and solidifying their land holds and expanding their production throughout this decade. This period of time saw expanding cotton production in the state, and sugar planters watched as cotton became a very productive crop to raise when, in comparison, sugar remained a much more tenuous crop. Second, in the mid-1830's sugar prices were much lower than were cotton. In this decade nothing could compete with cotton as a cash crop. One Louisianian wrote that "the planters make ten bales to the Hand if they do that I think it much better than making Sugar at the present prices." In terms of the state's internal improvements, New Orleanians moved into the railroad age early in the 1830's by inaugurating the New Orleans-Pontchartrain road. The line was initiated by the need to facilitate the "trade between Mississippi and Alabama, and the city and the transportation of goods and passengers in both directions." Ironically, however, these two lines would be the only ones of which Louisiana could boast until the 1850's.[56]

55. Miles, *Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi*, 21; Dunbar Rowland, *History of Mississippi, the Heart of the South* (2 vols., Chicago, 1925), I, 592; Edwin A. Miles, "Franklin E. Plummer: Piney Woods Spokesman of the Jackson Era," *JMH*, XVI (1952), 7; Merl E. Reed, *New Orleans and the Railroads: The Struggle for Commercial Empire, 1830–1860* (Baton Rouge, 1966), 22, 24–5; Reed, "Boom or Bust—Louisiana's Economy During the 1830's," *LH*, IV (1963), 35–545, sees the complacency of Whigs, brought about by flush times, as the reason why the state failed to construct a railroad line.

56. *NR*, XL (May 21, 1831), 196.

The business community in Texas during the 1830's was quite small; it corresponded to an expanse of settlement limited to the Gulf plains. At the time of the Revolution there were only two mercantile firms operating out of the northern Mexican state—McKinney & Williams of Quintana and Robert Mills of Brazoria. The two competed for and even shared many customers. It seems not to have been uncommon for planters to have used both firms interchangeably. And it also seems quite plausible that both may have been necessary for planters, depending on the availability of the firms' vessels or connections to New Orleans' commission firms. One Texas planter who seemed to have had contact with many mercantile firms in Texas and New Orleans was James F. Perry, whose plantation, Peach Point, lay just outside Brazoria. Much of his transactions, from the point of the Revolution forward, were wide and varied. He had accounts with both McKinney & Williams and Robert Mills in Texas. These local firms would see to the transportation of Perry's cotton into New Orleans, and into various factorage houses. For example, Perry's connections in New Orleans included but probably were not limited to the firms of Brander & McKenna, Toby & Brother, Bennet & Sharp, Mills & Bennet, John A. Merle & Co., George Fisher & Co., Smith & Adriance, and William Hendley & Co.[57]

The flush times that characterized the American Gulf South at the time carried over quite smoothly into the Republic of Texas. Texans engaged in much speculation throughout the 1830's. For example, Richard T. Archer, brother of the prominent Texas Revolutionary figure, Branch T. Archer, bought lands outside of Jefferson College in Natchez with assurances from John A. Quitman that James C. Wilkins, who was handling the finances of the transaction, could execute a promissory note for the land.[58] In 1837 Harvey Alexander

57. General Correspondence, 1835–1860, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*. Specifically, Brander & McKenna to Perry, New Orleans, February 8, 1835; Lastrapes & Dasmure to Perry, New Orleans, February 24, 1835; McKinney & Williams to James F. Perry, Quintana, March 7, 1835 [re: Toby & Brother]; McKinney & Williams to Perry, Quintana, February 29, 1836, September 17, 1835, October 8, 1835, December 2, 1835, March 1, 1836–1839; R. Mills & Co. to Perry, Brazoria, February 27, 1837, September 30, 1836, 1837; Bennet & Sharp to Perry, receipt for the year 1836; John A. Merle & Co. to Perry, 1837; Mills & Bennet to Perry, 1838, March 31, 1838; George Fisher & Co. to Perry, Houston, July 7, 1838; Smith & Adriance to Perry, November 27, 1840; R. & D. G. Mills & Co. to Perry, 1846, 1848; William Hendley & Co. to Perry, June, 1849, 1853, 1854.

58. Richard T. Archer to Benjamin Wailes, Natchez, February 14, 1838, Wailes Papers, *BTHCA*.

Adams traveled from New Orleans to Texas, and arrived in the Republic on January 5, 1837. His only plan was that of adventure and excitement, and he wanted to stay in a town as long as it held his interest. By March he had meandered into Houston and while there built the first frame house. In that year he recalled the "money was plenty and I thought there would be no end to it; kept house and lived like a Nabob." Although he was having a good time, Adams left Houston because it was a sickly area. From there he traveled to San Felipe and invested in land. For him, a serendipitous event occurred in 1839; the wreck of a boat that was carrying timber for the construction of his new house in San Felipe wrecked on the river; the misfortune prevented him from moving to Texas in, as he put it, "the time of the sleet in 1839." Admas moved on, escaping the economic slowdown that occurred in Texas.[59]

Precariousness hung over the dealings of commission firms in Texas toward the end of the 1830's. Even though Texas had won its independence from Mexico, the latter did not consider the fight over. Of the continued conflicts between Mexicans and Texans in various frontier battles, the historiography is thorough and weighty[60], but for the impact these tensions had on business conducted between the Republic and the United States, less is known and even less has been written. Commission merchants believed that Mexican vessels traveling to and from New Orleans and Galveston, were a constant threat to their business. One merchant wrote James F. Perry in 1839 to warn him "to send [his cotton] by an American vessel as we are informed by Captain Wright that there are again some armed Mexican vessels on [the] Coast."[61] In the latter part of the decade, despite the battles between Mexico and Texas, trade still continued. One contemporary stated that "in the years 1838–9

59. Harvey Alexander Adams to L. L. Adams, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, December 5, 1849, Adams Papers, *BTHCA*.

60. Joseph Milton Nance, *After San Jacinto, The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836–1841* (Austin, 1963); Rupert N. Richardson, *Texas, The Lone Star State* (New York, 1943); Thomas Maitland Marshall, "The Commercial Aspects of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition," *SWHQ*, XX (1916–7); William Campbell Binkley, *The Expansionist Movement in Texas, 1836–1850* (Berkeley, 1925) offer excellent information on the military expeditions of the 1840's.

61. John A. Merle & Co. to James F. Perry, New Orleans, March 31, 1838, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

& 40 not less than one hundred thousand dollars in gold and silver was annually brought into Texas by Mexican traders and exchanged for articles of merchandise."[62]

The 1830's flush times mirrored the prosperity of the 1810's and proved that Americans had both learned and forgotten nothing. The same speculative fever and mania for land enticed enormous flocks of Americans to move to the Gulf South and gobble up cheap lands—hundreds of thousands of acreage that they could purchase on credit. The 1830's settlement in the Gulf South superseded migration of half a generation beforehand. Town-building was fast and furious; land-clearing was conducted by men who sought to master their environment, but unbeknownst to them, nature was packing a wallop for her new visitors, the likes of which would cause many to wish they had never come to the Gulf South.

62. Isaac Van Zandt to the Honorable William S. Archer, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington City, January 10, 1843, Van Zandt Papers, *BTHCA*.

II.

> In Louisiana, although interspersed with sea marsh, swamps, ponds, lagoons, and bayous, and subject to the periodical inundations of several large rivers, the average length of human life, particularly in the French parishes, is as great as in the valleys of Switzerland. On the Teche, the LaFourche, and other steams, it is no uncommon sight to see grandfathers, and sometimes great grandsires mingling in the same cotillion with their children's children.
>
> ..."after the late heavy falls of rain, there were from eighteen to twenty inches of water on the surface of the ground, *on which a great number of coffins were seen floating, and being agitated by the wind were driven in different directions, knocking against each other, and forming a deadly representation of a sham seafight.*[63]

These two images of Louisiana represent two very accurate and composite pictures of life and death in the Gulf South throughout the antebellum period. Life in the region was sometimes as precarious as the shinplaster money upon which fortunes, like houses of cards, were built. If the expanse of newer and more productive land attracted people and pulled them from one area of the Gulf South to another, leaving towns deserted in their wake, disease also created another kind of transience, one that affected the topographical arrangement of people just as effectively. Disease was part of the region, and it reinforced the unstable living conditions there. Although life in the Gulf South was marked by a certain amount of transience, no decade other than the 1830's underscored the evanescence of life. The Gulf South on all fronts struck hard blows against those who moved into it. Whether economic or social, the costs of immigrating to the Gulf South affected everyone, at least indirectly. English settlers to the Chesapeake region in the seventeenth century encountered death by dysentery, typhoid, salt poisoning, and malaria.[64] Although the Gulf South killed its

63. *NR*, XL (May 14, 1831), 185; XXVII (November 20, 1824), 192.

64. Carville V. Earle, "Environment, Disease, and Mortality in Early Virginia," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (eds.), *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, 1979), 96–125; Gordon W. Jones, "The First Epidemic in English America," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXI (January, 1963), 3–10; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Apathy and Death in Early Jamestown," *Journal of American History*, LXVI (June, 1979), 24–40; John Duffy, "The Passage to the Colonies," *MVHR*, XXXVIII (June, 1951), 21–38; idem, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge, 1953); Darrett B. Rutman and Anita N. Rutman, "Of Agues and Fevers: Malaria in the Early Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXIII (1976), 31–60; Wyndham B. Blanton, *Medicine in Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Richmond, 1930); Daniel B. Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VIII (1978), 403–27; Richard H. Shryock, *Medicine and Society in America, 1660–1860* (New York, 1960), are excellent sources on the high mortality rates for the early to mid-seventeenth century in the Chesapeake.

nineteenth century immigrants by different diseases, the effect was the same—death in large numbers. The widespread Anglo-American settlement in the Atlantic South of the seventeenth century and the Gulf South of the nineteenth century share the same unusually high mortality rates for the first generation of settlement.

Louisiana was not the only state in the Gulf South hit by disease. Port cities from Apalachicola to Corpus Christi and their respective hinterlands were in danger from disease throughout the antebellum period. The most common Gulf South disease was yellow fever, although Asiatic cholera visited the region as well.[65] Discovered in the early twentieth century to be transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, antebellum Americans, especially Southerners, thought that yellow fever (known variously as the "saffron scourge," "bronze john," "black vomit," and "yellow jack") was brought on by the decay of "vegetable matter," which, in the process of decomposition, emitted a miasmal "fog," spreading the disease. When one recalls pictures of the Gulf coast, particularly those of oak and cypress trees covered with Spanish moss, it is understandable how contemporaries might have blamed the disease on rotting organic matter. The sickly season began in the later summer and ended with the first frost of late fall[66], and during that time, physicians urged residents in many of the suffocatingly hot Gulf South cities and towns to sleep at night with their windows closed.

Although antebellum Gulf residents knew nothing of the epidemiology of the disease, almost everyone there was familiar with mosquitoes and the general filth of the cities. Mary Austin Holley, traveling throughout the Gulf Coast on her way to Texas in 1835, spent two days getting to New Orleans from the Passes, during which time "it rained hard, the Cabin leaked, we were wet to the skin in our berths & every where, & the mosquitoes devoured

65. John Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," in Hodding Carter et al. (eds.), *The Past As Prelude: New Orleans, 1718–1968* (New Orleans, 1968), 88–115.

66. Primarily for yellow fever.

us."[67] Traveling with a regiment of soldiers on their way to Mexico through Texas was Howard Morris, from Vicksburg, who noted that "when last I wrote I said we had no mosquitoes—at that time we had none—but now we have a hundred here to one in Mississippi, and about twice as large."[68] Some believed disease was a result of the uncleanliness of the city. One governor of Louisiana was horrified by the smell of waste material that permeated the bedchamber of his home, located on the waterfront.[69] In an editorial in the New Orleans *Picayune*, the city's sanitation was compared to that of Mobile, whose citizens, it was reported, fussed about their own filth. "They complain indeed? If they would take a look at us," the paper argued, "just for instance, stand in our office floor and view the prospect we have constantly before us, fifty yards each way—they would never say another word. The vilest, dirtiest street in Mobile it a delightful promenade when compared with our best—we know the place."[70] Even by 1853, the cleaning of New Orleans' roads, which were covered with garbage, was considered to be "in an experimental condition."[71] Still others had even stranger notions of the epidemiology of disease. One Texan from Quintana wrote his stepfather and mother to say that "there has been a great deal of sickness on your place since you left, from what [cause] I cant imagine unless it be because there are so many peaches this year."[72]

Quick was the death of those stricken with yellow fever. In a matter of two or three days, one usually succumbed to the principal effect of the disease—dehydration. One prominent historian of yellow fever, John Duffy, has correctly leveled serious criticism against the New Orleanian leadership for its unwillingness to arrest the disease in its early stages by providing

67. J. P. Bryan (ed.), *The Texas Diary, 1835–38*, by Mary Austin Holley (Austin, 1965), 31; June 13, 1835 journal entry.

68. Howard Morris to Marmaduke and Levina Shannon, Brazos Santiago Island, August 13, 1846, Crutcher-Shannon Family Papers, *BTHCA*.

69. Governor Claiborne, in Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 101.

70. New Orleans *Picayune*, February 1, 1837.

71. Gordon Gillson, "Nineteenth Century New Orleans: Its Public Health Ordeal," *LS*, IV (1965), 88; Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 101–2; Grace King, *New Orleans: Its Place and its People* (New York, 1895), 288.

72. Moses Austin Bryan to Mr. and Mrs. Perry, Quintana, July 19, 1840, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

residents with information on preventive sanitation measures or on the outbreak and/or spread of disease.[73] And so it was that in 1827 New Orleans, the so-called "Necropolis of the South," *Niles' Register* received "private letters and verbal accounts" stating that an epidemic had broken out in the city, but that none of the newspapers would confirm any sickness. It pointed out simply, without giving explanation, that "about forty persons have been buried in this city, within the last seven days; a mortality which is nearly double the general average among the population."[74] This deceit was practiced in other towns as well, and its motive was solely to protect commerce and business. If yellow fever were found to be "contagious" in New Orleans, town barricades would be erected, people would flee their homes, and all economic activity would completely stop. A thriving, bustling city or town could be turned into a deserted plain within hours of such an announcement.[75]

And for all the verity of Duffy's complaint we should ask whether such timeliness would have had an effect on curtailing disease in the Gulf South, when outbreaks occurred with extreme regularity, at least thirteen times in thirty years (1830, 1832, 1833, 1835, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1841, 1842, 1847, 1853, 1854, and 1858). It would be virtually impossible to document exactly when and where disease occurred, but it is safe to say that most towns and cities encountered at least minor outbreaks every other year. In particularly virulent epidemics, people died so fast that the notion of individual burial was quickly dismissed in favor of sanitation. Ditches were dug furiously and bodies were thrown in indiscriminately in the hope that rain or flooding would not disembowel the earth, raising up the dead in some unholy resurrection. No wonder that when people were warned of the presence of disease,

73. Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 95, 99. Also, Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840–1875* (Baton Rouge, 1939), 51–5.

74. *NR*, XXXIII (September 22, 1827), 50.

75. In 1832, the New Orleans *Journal of Commerce* quoted one who had arrived at the port in the middle of a yellow fever scourge *and* cholera outbreak, both of which had killed thousands. He said: "It may be termed a perfect Sirocco,—a sweeper of the plain. The division has been about equal between yellow fever, cold plague and cholera." *Journal of Commerce*, November 8, 1832, quoted in *NR*, XLIII (December 1, 1832), 225; King, *New Orleans*, 288; Raleigh A. Suarez, "Bargains, Bills, and Bankruptcies: Business Activity in Rural Antebellum Louisiana," *LH*, VII (1966), 193–4.

their first instinct was either to leave the city altogether or to simply stay put at home, in seclusion.[76]

In the fall of 1822, when yellow fever hit New Orleans and Pensacola, the cities became desolate. The federal court in New Orleans had to be closed because no one—not the lawyers, jurors, or witnesses—showed up. Natchez in 1823 resembled a ghost town; of the 200 people who dared to remain in its boundaries in November—the height of the disease's rampage—forty-nine more died of the fever. In 1824, one newspaper noted that "the brisk, bustling men of business" in New Orleans had deserted the city's streets altogether.[77] Those who stayed were wary of helping victims, believing that they too would become ill. One person remarked: "The sick frequently lie down and die without remedy, and not a soul to hand them even a cup of cold water!"[78] People tried various methods to dispel the atmospheric contagions. They burned tar, animal hides, hooves, or horns to displace infected air.[79] They tried various cures for the fever. In addition to bloodletting, a common remedy was quinine, which people could make into pills, using Castile soap, mortar, and water.[80] Some were able to escape the vagaries of Gulf South disease entirely by leaving the region, and vacationing in the North or in Europe. Most, however, got only as far as the Mississippi Gulf coast or Lake Pontchartrain, at places where it was thought disease could not thrive.[81]

One of the most egregious cases of malfeasance in the medical community arose in 1832, an exceptionally unhealthy year for the Gulf South. At the height of death in November,

76. In 1837 one Mobilian commented to a friend about the disease ravaged New Orleans: "The hearses are unable to carry off all the dead. They carry them of[f] by dray loads in many instances without coffins, not being able to procure them. It is said they are carried off in some instances in six hours from a state of apparent health." Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, September 13, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

77. *NR*, XXIII (October 12, November 23, 1822), 81, 192; XXV (September 27, 1823), 49; XXVII (October 16, 1824), 112. The disease in Natchez was attributed to the overflow of the Mississippi.

78. *NR*, XXV (October 11, 1823), 96.

79. Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 100; King, *New Orleans*, 286.

80. Weymouth T. Jordan (ed.), *Herbs, Hoecakes and Husbandry: The Daybook of a Planter in the Old South* (Tallahassee, 1960), 72.

81. Ruth Irene Jones, "Ante-Bellum Watering Places of the Mississippi Gulf Coast," *JMH*, XVIII (1956), 268–301; James P. Baughman, "A Southern Spa: Ante-Bellum Lake Pontchartrain," *LH*, III (1962), 5–32.

"sundry respectable persons" passed on information to a standing committee of New Orleans' city council, whose duty it was to investigate the epidemic's prevalence. The information concerned a Dr. McFarlane, a respected physician whose hospital had been receiving sufferers of cholera and the fever. The complaints were that the hospital was a cesspit of death—that whoever entered did not come out again. When committee members E. A. Canon, Felix Labatut, and Charles Lee entered the hospital on November 9th, they were horrified. Amid those few patients who were still alive (and who complained that they had been neglected "for a long time") were the bodies of cholera and fever victims, lying on top of one another. The committee discovered

> that in many apartments of the building [were] corpses, several of which had been a number of days in putrefaction; that thence they repaired to a chamber adjoining the kitchen where they found the body of a negro, which had been a long time dead, in a most offensive state. They finally went to another apartment opposite the kitchen, which was equally filthy with the other rooms, and that they there found many corpses of persons a long time dead, that in a bed, between others, they found a man dying stretched upon the body of a man many days dead.[82]

When the city charged McFarlane with gross negligence, he stated in his defense that he too had been ill with cholera, and that of his thirteen attendants, only three had survived to aid the sick. All the others had been weakened by fatigue because of the arrivals of the sick averaging about twenty each day, and quickly died themselves. Although censured by the city council, McFarlane received no punishment for a situation which simply had gotten out of his control. It is difficult to ascertain if warnings would have been enough to contain the twin epidemics that waged out of control late in 1832. More than often, however, physicians were highly praised for their efforts in combating those struck with disease.[83]

However much yellow fever frightened the local populace wherever it occurred, nothing inspired more horror and loathing than did the Asiatic cholera. The germ of cholera, the *cholera vibrio*, is a particularly invidious bacillus, capable of living in almost everything,

82. *NR*, XLIII (November 9, 1832), 225.
83. Carrigan, "Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever," 19.

including beer. Although usually spread through water tainted with the feces of cholera victims, the disease can be spread through the ingestion of meat, milk, cheese, or green vegetables. Infected clothing and flies transferred the *vibrio* from the hands and food to the mouth and stomach.[84] Once in the stomach, the *vibrio* attaches itself to the lining of the intestine, rendering the germ inviolate. The victim, in response, tries unsuccessfully to expel the bacillus by vomiting and diarrhea. Two remedies were used widely in the Gulf South to try to cure cholera. One was blood-letting, which was the same treatment used against yellow fever. The second treatment, used even more widely than the first, was calomel, the last treatment a patient suffering from dehydration would want, since it was a cathartic.[85] Medical treatments usually cured the disease but killed the patient.

Surprisingly, however, cholera is a very difficult disease to contract. Among healthy individuals, heavy exposure to and dosage of the *vibrio* may result in no effect whatsoever. The people who were felled by cholera were the unhealthy poor who lived in squalor, in badly ventilated, poorly sheltered, unsanitated shanties as "populous as bee hives," in which "whole families occup[ied] a single room."[86] Slaves and the urban poor in Gulf South port cities were first hit. In New Orleans, particularly, the effects of cholera were felt dramatically. Ten days after cholera entered the Crescent City in 1832, 1,800 people were dead. Four days after that, on November 9th, 200 more people died. One week later, when the disease had run its course, the Board of Health proclaimed that the demise of sickness had

84. The *vibrio*, for example, can live up to 16 days in an apple. R. J. Morris, *Cholera 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic* (New York, 1976), 14–6. It was only in 1883 that a German scientist identified the baccillus. The antebellum medical community did not understand the epidemiology or transmittal of the disease.

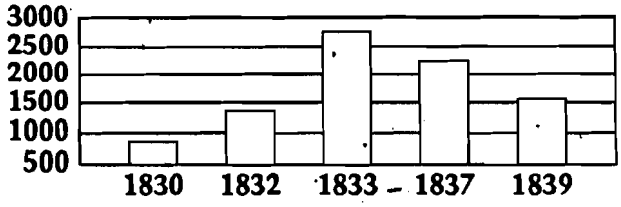
85. There were many medicines for cholera—paregoric elixir; prepared chalk; spirits of hartshorn and water; dried peaches; water in which salt beef or chicken had been boiled; tea made of sweet gum bark or black pepper; or spirits of lavender and laudanum. A familiar recipe for treating cholera is taken from an Alabama farmer's daybook: "Give Calomel 2 grs., Gum camphor 1 gr., & opium 1/2 to 1 grain—repeat—A mustard plaister should be applied to the abdomen, or pit of the stomach, or both. Or give a teaspoonful of Radways Ready Relief, & repeat if required." Calomel is a white, tasteless compound (Hg_2Cl_2) that was used as a purgative. Weymouth T. Jordan (ed.), *Herbs, Hoecakes and Husbandry: The Daybook of a Planter of the Old South* (Tallahassee, 1960), 80–1. Another treatment for cholera involved making a concoction of peppermint water or camphor mixture, nitrous acid and laudanum together, and while this was being administered, the patient was to eat finely strained gruel or tapioca.

86. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 40; Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 98.

come about only at the sacrifice of 5,000 lives.[87] More people died in New Orleans than died in any other city in the United States throughout the entire antebellum period.[88]

Disease hit the Gulf South almost every year in the 1830's—the decade of prosperity and deflation. Only 1831, 1834, and 1836 were exempt from an epidemic of disease. The graph on the next page illustrates the amount of people who died in the Gulf South's largest city.

Yellow Fever and Cholera Deaths in New Orleans
Numbers for Selected Years, 1830's*



*The figures for 1832 and 1839 reflect only the yellow fever casualties; the cholera victims are not included. If they added, for example, to the 1832 figure, the total number of deaths would rise to approximately 6,400. There is some discrepancy between Duffy's 1833 figure and the one given at the time—12,000. See footnote 93. In the epidemics of 1854, 1855, and 1858, about 19,000 New Orleanians died altogether. John Duffy (ed.), *The Rudolph Matas History of Medicine in Louisiana* (2 vols., Baton Rouge, 1962), II, 124. For 1853 and 1854 each, the mortality statistics for chole 7,200 and 7,300 respectively. 11,000 people died of cholera alone in 1855.

These figures become more horrifyingly profound because those resulting from yellow fever occurred in the space of approximately three months—September, October, and November. The social and economic impact of death was undoubtedly considerable. If a bulk of the urban poor in a city was decimated by disease, labor was definitely affected, since the onslaught of yellow fever, for example, coincided with the first months of cotton harvesting, ginning, baling, and shipping. Less populated areas could be affected as gravely by epidemics. Labor on plantations would have to be curtailed or stopped altogether if disease broke out, as it did usually, in the slaves' quarters. Deaths in smaller communities were more noticeable, quite probably, because the interdependency of people was much more crucial. Not only

87. Averaging 500 deaths a day. New Orleans *Emporium*, November 5, 1832; *Courier*, November 9, 1832; in Duffy, "Pestilence in New Orleans," 94; King, *New Orleans*, 284, correctly points out that these were, in fact, only the recorded deaths.

88. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 53; Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation* (3rd. ed., New York, 1975), 413.

could towns and plantations be disturbed internally, but also their connection to supplies and food via the port cities could be cut off in a regional epidemic.[89]

The numerical effects of disease on cities can be demonstrated. In the 1830's, Apalachicola, Florida was becoming an important cotton port in the Gulf South.[90] In 1835, the port city numbered about seventy people. During November, 34 Apalachicolans died of yellow fever. Half the city was dead in a few, short weeks. By the time the fever had run its course, "not more than five persons who remained there escaped disease."[91] In 1833, New Orleans had suffered through four attacks of disease—two outbreaks each of cholera and yellow fever. One magazine reported that the city had lost *"twelve thousand persons in one year*—say one-fourth of its population."[92] According to official reports in Havana, Cuba, the 1833 epidemic killed 30,000.[93]

In the cities, laborers (whites and free blacks) and immigrants were collectively known as the poor, and many pointed to them and their living habits as the source for disease. According to one New Orleans newcomer:

> the greater part of the victims are the Irish and the Dutch, who have just arrived from a country were the Climate is totally different to ours—And if you could accompany me thro' some parts of this place, & see the miserable, filthy, loathsome manner in which the lower orders live, you would not be at all surprised, that when a fever once broke out, that it should spread & become as malignant as it does here.[94]

There were plenty of people living in New Orleans who lived in squalid conditions. In an 1847 yellow fever epidemic, one observer noticed that "nine tenths of the funerals that have

89. Jo Ann Carrigan, "The Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever on Life in Louisiana," *LH*, IV (1963), 8.

90. Harry P. Owens, "Port of Apalachicola," *FHQ*, XLVIII (July, 1969), 1. By 1840 it would be the third largest cotton port in the Gulf South.

91. *Apalachicola Advertiser*, quoted in *NR*, XLIX (November 14, 1835), 170.

92. Richmond *Compiler*, November 9, 1833, quoted in *NR*, XLV (December 7, 1833), 226.

93. Of a total population of approximately 800,000. José García de Arboleys, *Manual de la isla de Cuba...* (Havana, 1859), 51, quoted in Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, 1970), 54. Knight is skeptical of this mortality figure, which he claims may be too high.

94. Isaac H. Charles to John Edward Siddall, September 18, 1847, Isaac H. Charles Letters, *LSUA*, in Carrigan, "Privilege, Prejudice, and the Strangers' Disease in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans," *JSH*, XXXVI (1970), 571.

been seen by the writer within a fortnight were *Irish*. These die as a matter of course."[95] An Irish writer, Richard H. Wilde, who had come to New Orleans in 1844, lived quite comfortably in one of the city's best neighborhoods. In fact, he wrote his brother, at the height of the 1847 yellow fever epidemic, that "clean people seldom take it, and [I] live in one of the cleanest & healthiest streets in the City." Thirty-seven days later, Wilde himself contracted yellow fever in his clean neighborhood and died the next morning.[96]

In attempting to assess the damage disease levied against social stability, this much seems to be clear: that yellow fever and cholera did much more damage to the social stability of people in a community than it did to its economic relations. The difference is one of timing. The period of the greatest economic activity in the Gulf South occurred in the months of January and February, when the majority of the region's cotton traveled by rail or water to be sold and shipped from the port cities of New Orleans, Mobile, Apalachicola, and Galveston. Only about one-fourth of the entire cotton crop would be sent for sale by the end of December. Even in the years cholera hit the coast and worked its way further inland (1832 and 1839), the fires of disease had burned out by late December. In Mobile during the fall of 1837, yellow fever broke out and claimed the lives of about 150 persons—slowly but efficiently enough to force the fleeing of thousands of citizens. Toward the end of October, only 2,000 were left. All other residents (including recent arrivals) had gone. One merchant, who had fled, wrote that although disease had brought the city to an abrupt standstill, it would not, however, adversely affect business, for he expected no major activity for at least another month.[97] Another example of the timing of disease is the year 1853, when in Liberty, Mississippi, the disease was most rampant in May. Those hit hardest were slaves, whose

95. Bartlett for Smith and Bro. to T. Smith & Co., August 12, 1847, T. Smith & Company Papers, *LSUA*, in Carrigan, "Privilege, Prejudice, and the Strangers' Disease," 572.

96. Richard Henry Wilde to John Walker Wilde, New Orleans, August 4, 1847, quoted in Edward L. Tucker, "Richard Henry Wilde in New Orleans: Selected Letters, 1844-1847," *LH*, VII (1966), 355. Wilde died on September 10, 1847.

97. Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, October 23, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

main occupation this month would be to plant small vegetable crops and cultivate corn.[98] However, in that same year in Mobile, during the famous cholera outbreak, one merchant decided that "owning to the Epidemic, very little business is doing."[99]

Some historians[100] have noticed a certain fatality and indifference to epidemic disease on the part of New Orleanians that they have not found in other American cities. Certainly, many were afraid of the disease and felt helpless to combat it. Others, in positions of economic importance in the community, felt compelled to deny the existence of disease altogether for fear of diminishing trade. Some believed that they had tendered all necessary help beforehand by warning the "unacclimated" to the tropical weather of the Gulf South. A few, no doubt, like Price Prospero in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death," secluded themselves in their fortresses, "happy and dauntless and sagacious," expecting that "the external world could take care of itself."[101] One newspaper editor noted that the acclimatized citizens "take the matter as cooly as if it was something expected annually, and about which it were idle to become alarmed."[102] In Mobile, one resident noted that those persons in the local population who continued to enjoy good health in the time of sickness were generally loathe to lend assistance to the sick. In 1837, he noted that he "never saw so much callousness & insensibility exibited [*sic*] as there is in this City. If a man dies here he is

98. F. H. Stephens to John Chamberlain, Liberty, Mississippi, May 28, 1853, Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Papers, *BTHCA*.

99. John L. H. Hinell to Robert Kirksey, Mobile, September 27, 1853, Foster M. Kirksey Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

100. Carrigan, "Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever," 5–35; John Duffy, "Nineteenth Century Public Health in New York and New Orleans: A Comparison," *LH*, XV (1974), 325–37; Gillson, "New Orleans' Public Health Ordeal," 88.

101. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Masque of the Red Death," in *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Tales* (New York, 1980), 147.

102. New Orleans *Daily Delta*, September 10, 1858, quoted in Carrigan, "Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever," 8. Later, Creoles like Charles Gayarre even believed that yellow fever was necessary because "it checked the tide of immigration which, otherwise, would have speedily rolled its waves over the old population, and swept away all those landmarks in legislation, customs, language and social habits to which they were fondly attached." Charles Gayarre, *History of Louisiana* (4th ed., 4 vols., New Orleans, 1903), IV, 636, quoted in Carrigan, "Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever," 7. But some contemporaries admitted the success that disease (specifically yellow fever) enjoyed in picking off even natives. One noted that for 1837 Mobile, "some of our oldest & most respectable inhabitants are taken off with but 3 or 4 days notice." Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, October 16, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

laid in his grave as soon as possible."[103] Wilkins should have blessed such treatment by Mobilians; New Orleans commonly could or would not expend even a grave for many of their own fallen dead. Mobile in 1839, which was attempting to fight or flee an outbreak of yellow fever even more deadly and virulent than ever the city had known, found the same resident commenting acrimoniously that "it is impossible to get nurses for love or money!"[104]

Although for the most part Gulf South cities and towns were reluctant or indifferent to admit their own insalubrity, organizations were devised to aid victims of the fever. As early as the 1820's, the mayor of New Orleans formed "a board of benevolence" in each district to remove victims to a common location and administer to their needs. By the 1830's, primarily because of the population explosion in the Gulf states, a benevolent society known as the Howard Association, which had branches all over the United States, was established in New Orleans.[105] Whereas the Association existed throughout most of the country primarily as a league of social reform advocating temperance, abolition, women's rights, and asylum reform, the Association in the Gulf South found its *raison d'etre* in public health.[106] The Mobilian who spoke so ascerbically against the apathy of the local populace toward the dying had to admit that, during the epidemic of 1839, an Alabama Samaritan society sent to Mobile a physician and seven or eight nurses to treat the sick, and that the city of Montgomery had donated $500 to aid the stricken.[107]

But in terms of the social vortex of the 1830's into which disease was drawn, yellow fever, cholera, and a host of other diseases[108] served only to underscore the transience of life to

103. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, October 16, 1837, Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

104. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, September 27, 1839, Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

105. Peggy Hildreth, "The Howard Association of Galveston: The 1850's, Their Peak Years," *ETHA*, XVII (1979), 33; idem, "Early Red Cross: The Howard Association of New Orleans, 1837–1878," *Social Science Review*, XLI (1967), 415; Carrigan, "Impact of Epidemic Yellow Fever," 25–28.

106. The operations of the Howard Association in the South, not to mention the Gulf South, has been largely ignored by historians.

107. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, September 27, 1839, Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

108. Hookworm, for example. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 52; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956).

Gulf South inhabitants. In this region, men quickly learned and told others about the transience of success; money could be made quickly, so it was said (and many times proven), and impecunious newcomers could become wealthy parvenus in a matter of months by gambling in the paper market of shinplasterers and speculators. At the same time, they learned that while one might score material success with cunning, it was nothing short of stupidity to flirt with death. Death by fever or the *vibrio* was quick and sure, and taught the region humility.[109]

In her description of antebellum New Orleans, Grace King captured a city at the mercy of an unknown, unseen, unrecognizable fiend against which it had no protection:

> Multitudes who began the day in perfect health were corpses before night; carpenters died on their benches; a man ordered a coffin for a friend and died before it was finished. A bride died the night of her marriage, and was buried in her veil and dress cast off a day in a few hours of one another. A family of nine supped together in perfect health; by the end of the next twenty-four hours eight had died. A boarding-house of thirteen inmates was absolutely emptied, no one left. Corpses were found all along the streets, particularly in the early morning.[110]

Natchez, Apalachicola, Mobile, and Pensacola were hit similarly with similar inexplicability. The hinterland communities were just as ravaged by cholera in the 1830's and 1850's. In Louisiana, families were sometimes wiped out by the cholera. A planter family in Catahoula parish, the Routons (John, Martha, and their twelve year old daughter Jemima) were killed in February, 1850.[111] Four members of the Le Clercy family of West Baton Rouge, Louisiana, all died in June and July of 1849. St. James parish, home to twenty-two people of the surname Le Bourgeoise, died throughout the year of 1849; most died of cholera and all were classified as having "00" occupation—none.[112]

109. There are various references in contemporary newspapers that remark on the flippancy of those who shrugged off warnings about the virulence of Gulf South diseases. With a tone of self-righteousness, these newspapers seem to suggest that whoever neglected to heed the warnings of good advice would scarcely live to regret their error.

110. King, *New Orleans*, 286. The scenes describe the 1832 yellow fever.

111. Ronald Vern Jackson (ed.), *Mortality Schedule: Louisiana, 1850* (Bountiful, Utah, 1979), 66.

112. Jackson (ed.), *Mortality Schedule*, 44–45.

The repeated onslaughts of disease in the Gulf South changed the way its people saw their world. The ease with which one could slide into the den of death reinforced the impermanence of life and the relative unimportance of the future. That which was now was important; the present was all that mattered. One traveler who was in New Orleans noted that "no sooner does the epidemic (yellow fever) cease, than fashionable people begin to flock in from all parts of the world, & every body seems to give themselves up entirely to enjoyment, as a recompense for their suffering & sickness during the summer."[113] This feeling became stronger as epidemics recurred. By 1840's one can imagine what kinds of sounds the Gulf South might have cried in the wake of the passing of disease. Might they have said, as did the poet Robert Herrick, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may... Tomorrow will be dying"?[114]

113. George S. Denison to Jim Denison, San Antonio, December 24, 1854, James A. Padgett (ed.), "Some Letters of George Stanton Denison, 1854–1866: Observations of a Yankee on Conditions in Louisiana and Texas," *SWHQ*, XXIII (1940), 1146.

114. Robert Herrick, "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," (1648), stanza 1, lines 1, 4.

3 *Gulf South Interest in the Texas Revolution*

At the same time that the Gulf South preoccupied itself with the prosperity and problems of fast, internal development, it constantly desired new territory in which to expand. Missouri had been a successful yet difficult territory to win for slavery; Texas, expansionists determined, would be the next acquisition. With the exception of Mexico's northernmost state, all the Gulf area was politically united as states under the American flag in 1835. Antebellum trade, however, was blind to territorial boundaries; it saw only the most convenient markets in which to swap goods for a mutual advantage. In 1835, Anglo-Americans and Mexicans traded cotton and lumber for goods in Mobile and New Orleans that they themselves could not manufacture or produce. Goods made their way into the Gulf hinterland to be consumed by planters, yeomen and their respective families.

It was an accident that Texas forged a close economic relationship with the Gulf states. Although Mexico took little interest in the fact that Texans were clearing and tilling their lands in order to grow cotton and raise livestock. Mexico never intended that goods produced by its northern state would make their way into the United States through New Orleans or Mobile. It assumed Texas' goods would be consumed within the state or sent into other Mexican states via Tampico or Matamoros. Only in the 1830's did Mexico note with trepidation that the now prosperous settlements were transacting business with the United States and not with themselves. In order to slow down the number of people coming into the

state, President Gómez Farías issued a decree on April 6, 1830, prohibiting all but two of his *empresarios* from selling Americans land in Texas. He set up a customs house in Galveston to check the passports of passengers. By curtailing the settlement of Americans, he believed he could force Texans to look inward economically and begin establishing trading links with Mexico.

But precedence, logistics, and the laws of supply and demand dashed Mexican hopes for a union of economic interests between the northern and southern states of the country. Anglo-American slaveowners and yeoman farmers established mutually practical and beneficial economic connections with New Orleans and Mobile. What to the Mexicans had been an accident was instead a simple, natural progression for the Anglo-American settlers. Logistically, the American markets were easier and faster to get to than the Mexican ports. Matagorda Bay was closer to New Orleans than it was to Matamoros. Supplies came to the Bay from New Orleans frequently, bringing passengers to Texas.[1] The demand for Texas cotton was sharp in the U.S.; many purchasers believed that Texas had the best quality cotton found anywhere.

This is not to suggest that the northern state of Texas-Coahuila had little economic contact with the southern states of Mexico. Precedence alone was not enough to explain why New Orleans and other ports in the Gulf South were preferred by Texans over those in Mexico. Until 1830, Texas did not own any shipping vessels; therefore, all trade had to be conducted overland. Using the Old San Antonio Road, traders in Texas would take goods to Mexico and bring back mules, horses, brood mares, and some money. Thomas McKinney, a commission merchant in Brazoria, frequently took cotton to Mexico in the overland trade. For a while, too, he engaged in the Santa Fé trade.[2] But the trade was dangerous, so in 1830 he

1. The traffic between Texas and New Orleans increased in the late 1830's and continued, steadily, throughout the remainder of the antebellum period. James E. Winston, "Notes on Commercial Relations Between New Orleans and Texan Ports, 1838–1839," *SWHQ*, XXXIV (1930), 91–105; Harriet Smither, "Diary of Adolphus Sterne, Part IX," *SWHQ*, XXXII (1928), 167.
2. *TH*, II, 117.

gave it up, preferring instead to purchase several keelboats and steamers to order to begin trading to and from New Orleans.[3]

One vexing complaint Texans had against the Mexican government was that its policy of taxes was unnecessarily burdensome. Mexico needed revenue to finance its military campaigns and expeditions, and the quickest and easiest way to raise money was to levy tariffs. In 1824 Mexico suspended all tariffs for six years; by 1830 they were reimposed. Texans reasoned that they had little to gain from its government's territorial feuds—why should they help finance them? As President of the Convention of 1832, Stephen F. Austin approved a series of resolutions that delegates, primarily composed of powerful planters, merchants, and lawyers (at which many men were at once all three), had adopted. Members demanded a three-year extension of tariff extension, judicial reform, and repeal of the April 6, 1830 decree, a decree designed to sharply curtail the Anglo-American settlement into Texas.[4] The man who was appointed to present Texan grievances to the Mexican government in 1832, a meeting that was eventually aborted, was William H. Wharton, who was also selected by the members to preside over the second convention in 1833.[5]

Texans convened in 1832 to complain that their commerce was being hurt by Mexican laws.[6] Of three charges they levied, two regarded the dispersal of land in Texas. The law of

3. Thomas McKinney once used a pig trough to transport goods when no boats were available. John Lauren Harr, "The Ante-Bellum Southwest, 1815–1861," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1941), 277.

4. David Vigness, *The Revolutionary Decades* (Austin, 1964), 121–4; Rupert N. Richardson, *Texas: The Lone Star State* (New York, 1943), 106–9; *TH*, I, 404.

5. Wharton, a lawyer, was son-in-law to Jared Groce, a slaveowner who came to Texas in 1821 with his family, an unspecified number of slaves, and fifty covered wagons. Groce's daughter, Sarah Ann, married Wharton in 1828. Wharton became a large cotton grower upon their union when he father gave him land and a large plantation near his own modest estate. Groce's son, Leonard, brought the first cotton gin to Texas and sold cotton in New Orleans. In 1830, Leonard and a brother joined merchant Thomas McKinney's commission firm in Matagorda Bay. *TH*, I, 738–9; *TH*, II, 889–90; Vigness, *The Revolutionary Decades*, 48–9. In 1831, the eldest Groce married Courtney Ann Fulton of Rapides, Louisiana, a town in Alexandria parish. Alexander Fulton, her father, was a wealthy sugar planter; her brother was governor of the state.

6. Only one of the four charges was unrelated to commerce or land settlement. Texans claimed that their "enemies" were misrepresenting the movements of those military garrisons in Texas. *Proceedings of the General Convention of Delegates Representing the Citizens and Inhabitants of Texas* (Brazoria, 1832), 6–7.

April, 1830, noted the official convention record, "paralized [*sic*] the advancement and prosperity of Texas." Another complaint against the government claimed that the land grant system remained in a "very unsettled and uncertain state" in the area east of Austin's Colony. The third protested that the tariff, newly-imposed, "operate[d] very injuriously against the agriculture and advancement of the infant settlements of Texas." Some of the land agents in Texas were participants in the convention—Stephen F. Austin, William H. Wharton, Jared Groce, and John Austin.[7] Stephen Austin considered Samuel M. Williams "like a brother"; the latter was a land agent with Wharton in Saltillo. Wharton's brother-in-law, Leonard, was another agent. Williams' business partner, Thomas F. McKinney, was yet another, granting land to settlers in the Nacogdoches region. In public meetings reassembled in 1833 after the 1832 failure, Branch T. Archer[8] pushed for a resolution asking the Mexican government for the right to set up a bank. Vigorous debate ensued, with the greatest opposition coming from Sam Houston, whose faction won out in the end.[9]

Foreign governments were relatively ineffective in curtailing or preventing merchants from trading their products in American ports. Emigrants from the United States continued to enter Texas and settle there, despite the April 6, 1830 decree. Just as in Cuba, where coffee and sugar planters were not deterred from continuing their trade with the United States despite high tariffs on their exports, merchants and planters in Texas maintained their connections with New Orleans and Mobile. Texans had, from 1830 on, sent virtually all their

7. *Proceedings*, 5–6; Malcolm D. McLean, *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony in Texas* (VII, Arlington, 1980), 49.

8. *TH*, I, 66; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, October 18, 1856.

9. The manuscript records of the proceedings of this convention, which met at San Felipe de Austin on April 1st, have been lost. There are conflicting reports about those who attended and what took place. The extant record of what was produced there lies in a pamphlet, the *Constitution or Form of Government of the State of Texas Made in General Convention in the Town of San Felipe de Austin, in the Month of April, 1833* (New Orleans, 1833). See also *TH*, I, 404; *The Nashville Republican and State Gazette*, May 29, 1833; *The Arkansas Gazette*, July 3, 1833; David B. Edward, *The History of Texas...* (Austin, 1967; originally publ. 1836), 196–205; John Henry Brown, *History of Texas, from 1685–1892* (2 vols., St. Louis, 1892), I, 227–9; E. W. Winkler, "Membership of the 1833 Convention of Texas," *SWHQ*, XLV (1941–42), 255–7; all in McLean, *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony*, VII, 433–6.

produce to New Orleans to be sold there or reshipped somewhere else. By 1833, Texas was almost exclusively dependent upon New Orleans for its basic foodstuffs. In 1831 Groce's cotton was being shipped to Matamoros for an incredible 62.5 cents per pound. Texans were anxious to develop closer relations with New Orleans than with Matamoros, because the Crescent City port was a storehouse of provisions that the Texas population needed. By 1832 Texas cotton was being sent to New Orleans, but to no great profit for its planters. Samuel St. John then ensured that the cotton factor in New Orleans, Elliott W. Gregory, would sell his Texan cotton at no lower than eleven cents per pound.[10] Texas schooners, most of them owned by the firm of McKinney and Williams, brought back necessary foodstuffs, hardware, and merchandise.[11] Most of the trade in and out of Texan ports was conducted with New Orleans. Asa Hoxey remarked to R. M. Williamson in 1833 that "the intercourse between New Orleans and Texas is verry [*sic*] considerable."[12] After the Revolution, planters in Texas almost exclusively relied on New Orleans as the ultimate receptacle for their cotton. J. P. Bolton took his cotton to Galveston by rail or to Matagorda Bay by wagon. In both cases, the cotton then would proceed to New Orleans. Rebecca McIntosh Hawkins Hagerty of Harrison

10. I would speculate that the 62.5 cents per pound pricing in Matamoros for 1831, compared to the 1832 New Orleans price of 11 cents plus, is due to the comparative shortage of cotton in Mexico as opposed to New Orleans. See also Abigail Curlee Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Antebellum Texas," *SWHQ*, LXXIII (1970), 433. Sam Williams and Gregory were known to each other, the former having used the latter's services to purchase goods for Williams' clients, like James Perry and Alexander Somervell, in Texas. Lastrapes & Desmure to Perry, New Orleans, July 21, 1834, December 8, 1835. Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

11. On an expanded marine intelligence list in the New Orleans *Picayune* for November 7, 1837, a Texas schooner brought back to Matagorda Bay these goods shipped from the port of New Orleans: hardware, furniture, tobacco, sugar, nails, soap, crackers, butter, lead, coffee, tea, wine, brandy, flour, rum, whiskey, pork, hams, farming utensils, lime, bricks, molasses, window sashes, rope, mackerel, vinegar, gin, rice, tea, sperm candles, raisins, starch, mustard, sardines, window glass, white lead, linseed oil, peas, beans, salt, cherries, buckwheat, pepper, cider, cigars, loaf sugar, bread, pepper sauce, stoves, bacon, grapes, onions, lard, starch, potatoes, shoes, hats, cranberries, medicines, and merchandise.

12. Asa Hoxey to Robert M. Williamson, Montgomery, March 9, 1833, Edward Hanrick Papers, *BTHCA*, in McLean (ed.), *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony*, VII, 418. This trade continued despite a cholera epidemic in Texas, 1833–34, which hit Brazoria, killing 80 and passing quickly. It nearly depopulated Velasco and Matagorda, as settlers fled to escape death. Stephen F. Austin reported that cholera had killed 18,000 in Mexico City. J. Villasana Haggard, "Epidemic Cholera in Texas, 1833–1834," *SWHQ*, XL (1937), 216–30.

County, Texas, shipped her goods down the Red River, into the Mississippi, and down into New Orleans; her cotton and cattle hides were sold there as well.[13]

Eugene Barker vociferously has denied one contemporary's assertion that Texas was either colonized for the purpose of instituting slavery or revolutionized for its maintenance.[14] He argues that although the Mexican government allowed the introduction of slavery into its northernmost state, it was nevertheless unfriendly to the institution; that slaveholders who immigrated to Texas naturally opposed any mention of abolition and resisted the government's attempts to prevent the further introduction of slaves; that no evidence exists to prove the hypothesis that Americans desired the political americanization of Texas in order to enlarge the Southern slaveholding area or to protect their own material interests in the state; and that anxiety over the preservation of slavery in Texas played no "appreciable" part in producing the Texas Revolution.[15] It is certainly true that Mexicans looked unfavorably at the institution of slavery, primarily because it signaled the seemingly ineluctable American imposition into its territory. One certainly would not deny that American emigrant slaveholders nervously noted Mexican pronouncements on the slavery issue.

Given the fact that many colonists who came to Texas were planters from another part of the South, they arrived in their new homeland with some of the tools and equipment necessary to farm the land. Much of the Gulf South in the 1820's, especially the western Gulf South, was seriously lacking an adequate supply of labor. Slaves were obviously the most precious property to a planter, and the various antislavery measures passed by the Mexican

13. Bolton Papers, Hagerty Papers, *BTHCA*. Hagerty was the only woman planter in Texas who held over 100 slaves by 1860; she was of Creek Indian descent.

14. Benjamin Lundy, *The War in Texas; a Review of Facts and Circumstances, showing that this Contest is the Result of a long Premeditated Crusade against the Government set one foot by Slaveholders, Land Speculators, etc., with the View of Re-establishing, Extending and Perpetuating the System of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Republic of Mexico* (Philadelphia, 1836); Eugene C. Barker, "The Influence of Slavery in the Colonization of Texas," *SWHQ*, XXVIII (1924), 1–33; idem, "Land Speculation in the Texas Revolution," *QTSHA*, X (1906), 76–95; idem, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin, Founder of Texas, 1793–1836, A Chapter in the Westward Movement of the Anglo-American People* (Nashville, 1925), 257.

15. Barker, "Influence of Slavery," 32–3.

Congress failed to crest the black tide from entering the state.[16] But many people, American and Texans alike, recognized that if Texas were wrested from the Mexicans, the South would be able to boast of a huge, fertile expanse of land capable of sustaining the growth of cotton and the Southern way of life. Stephen F. Austin maintained in mid-1835 that with a great influx of Americans into the country would come a natural break with Mexico. Americans settling in Texas would be planters. They would grow cotton and the state would be "a slave country. It is no longer a matter of doubt. The interest of Louisiana requires that it should be."[17] In 1835, Robert J. Walker spoke of the rich addition to the Union Texas would make. Texas, he said, "would give the South and Southwest six additional slave States."[18] Texas' cotton production increased about 600 percent between 1829 and 1835.[19] The promise of new, perhaps more fertile, land for cotton production was a powerful incentive for many to move into the area. The slaveowning Gulf South knew that the destiny of that area was critical to the strength of the Southern economy. Americans wanted to populate Texas in order to enlarge the Southern slaveholding area.

But even if one were to agree with Barker that slavery played no "appreciable" part in producing the Texas Revolution, one cannot argue the same about land speculation. Barker has stated that Lundy's arguments on this point are a red herring designed to misrepresent the true intentions of those who favored independence, reasons that were grounded in liberty and freedom from oppression. To the extent that Texans fought for liberty and freedom, Barker is certainly correct. Americans sincerely believed in the need to free Texas from Mexican oppression. Presiding over a public meeting in Natchez, Mississippi, John A.

16. Paul D. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," *SWHQ*, LXXXIX (1985), 183–5.

17. Austin to Mary Austin Holley, New Orleans, August 21, 1835, in *PTR*, I, 359; Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," 183.

18. James. E. Winston, "Texas Annexation Sentiment in Mississippi, 1835–1844," *SWHQ*, XXIII (1919), 2. Speaking in Raymond, Mississippi, Walker was in welcome territory. Raymond was the homesite of the wealthy Dabney planter family, and was a local hang-out for filibusters such as Governor Albert Gallatin Brown, and Senators Henry Stuart Foote and Pierre Soulé. Fletcher Green (ed.), *Memorials of a Southern Planter*, by Susan Dabney Smedes (New York, 1965), 153.

19. In 1829, production amounted to 500 bales; by 1835, the amount grew to somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 bales. *DBR*, VI (1849), 153.

Quitman helped pass resolutions that emphasized the similarity between the Texan cause and the cause of freedom throughout the world. In a letter to his brother in October, 1835, he declared that "freemen who are struggling their their violated rights should not be left to the struggle unaided."[20] Like many propagandists of U.S. support for Texas independence, Quitman wanted his fellow Mississippians to note that Texan independence shared characteristics with American independence. Both Texas and the colonies were territories that were far removed from the central government; both had been allowed to develop local institutions; both had become prosperous; and both became exorbitantly taxed by governments in desperate need of revenue.[21] With the memory of the American Revolution came the figures of heroism and liberty and within the minds of the Gulf South, too, came the hope of the greater prosperity that Texas would offer for the American future. The past and the future bound together the reasons Gulf Southerners were so quick to lend money, men, and munitions to the Revolution. With the declaration by the Van Buren administration that it opposed supporting the Texas Revolution came unequivocal support from Southern Democrats. In Natchez, the *Weekly Courier and Journal* gave its support to Texas agents who were recruiting in town.[22]

Quitman was a transplanted Northerner who by the early 1830's was a man wholly committed to maintaining the system of slavery. Although he extended his support to Texas for patriotic reasons, Quitman was, like many other Southerners who lived in the Gulf South, particularly sensitive to any potential threats made against the system to which he belonged. Quitman had heard reports circulating in Mississippi that upon victory, Santa Anna planned to free all slaves in Texas. Rumor had it that the Mexican troops heading for Texas were planning to recruit Indians and get the slaves to revolt, letting them "loose upon

20. James H. McLendon, "John A. Quitman in the Texas Revolution," *SWHQ*, LII (1948), 163–165.
21. T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (New York, 1968, 174–75; Eugene C. Barker, "Public Opinion In Texas Preceding The Revolution," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, I (1911), 219–220; idem, "The Texan Declaration of Causes for Taking Up Arms Against Mexico," *QTSHA*, XV (1912), 173–85.
22. McLendon, "John A. Quitman in the Texas Revolution," 163–65.

their [Anglo-Texan] families."[23] Two slave revolts had taken place by the spring of 1836. In Brazoria, Texas, a group of slaves staged an uprising in October. According to a Goliad official, the slaves planned to turn the tables on their masters by taking over the Texas-New Orleans cotton trade. They also planned to force planters to serve as *their* slaves. These rebels and their fantastical plans were cruelly quashed as Goliad troops of the Mexican army descended upon the town, rounding up about 100 slaves, whipping and hanging the obdurate. The second incident happened on the Trinity River in March, 1836. Some slave rebels reportedly had sought the assistance and alliance of the Coushatta Indians and Mexicans to help them kill local Anglo-Texans. Some soldiers had to be dispatched to ensure order in the area.[24]

Although not one Anglo-Texan life was lost, these two instances of insurrection were enough to send Quitman into action. Against his wife's wishes, he organized a group of men to leave for Texas in early April, believing that if Santa Anna were not stopped, his momentum might be enough to invade and conquer Louisiana and liberate its slaves.[25] Quitman's wife wrote to him when he was in Texas:

> O how deeply I regret not having firmly opposed your going upon that wild expedition I did not understand it and now my eyes have been opened alas too late; and poor Eliza is wretched. ...Whilst you were absent at the Legislature I had often formed plans for our future happiness and thought they were about to be realized, when that *snake in the grass Felix Huston* stept [*sic*] into our paridise [*sic*] and banished all.[26]

Instead of coming straight home from Jackson, where the state legislature had just finished its business in March, Quitman rode out to Texas at the urging of the future commander-in-chief of the Texas army, Felix Huston.

23. *PTR*, I, 378, 517; *AP*, III, 107, 108, quoted in Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," 189.
24. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," 190–3.
25. Robert E. May, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, 1985), 49, 78; James P. Shenton, *Robert John Walker: A Politician from Jackson to Lincoln* (New York, 1961), 22–23.
26. Eliza Quitman to John Quitman, Monmouth, April 11, 1836, Quitman Family Papers, *UNCSHC*. This would set a theme in Eliza's future writings to both her husband and her son Henry, forever cautioning them against taking up with "Fillibusters."

The rumor about Santa Anna drove Quitman mad with worry. He had just purchased land in Texas at the end of March, land that would be useless to a slaveowner if Mexico won and made good its threats to emancipate all slaves within its boundaries. It is unclear where his landholdings were; his biographer speculates they were near the Sabine or Galveston Bay, and that they were held by his friend and former law student, land agent Daniel Kaufman, who lived in Texas. But his proprietary interest in Texas went beyond mere self-advancement. He had persuaded his brother Henry to purchase land in Texas, and he had handled legal transactions on land for Felix Huston, Samuel M. Williams, and others.[27] In light of this considerable interest in Texas, Quitman hurried to Texas in April, 1836, as a mother would run to protect her child, leading about forty mounted volunteers. He came, unfortunately, two days after the Battle of San Jacinto.[28] He and his men stayed in Texas to assist others in evacuating women and children who were fleeing their homes before the line of Mexican invaders. Quitman was shocked by the impact that war had made on average citizens. While camping near Nacogdoches, Texas, he observed that over a two-day period, the road has been literally thronged by men, women & children flying from all [over] this country to the Sabine. We have met at least one thousand upon arriving 8 miles from this place... ."[29]

27. May, *John A. Quitman*, 388. After Kaufman's death in early 1850, Quitman asked Felix Huston to present Kaufman's widow and her representatives with his title papers for review, this when Huston was recruiting men in Texas for Quitman's expedition to Cuba. Quitman to A. Alderson, December 1, 1852, University of the South archives. Quitman and Robert J. Walker, another land speculator in Texas, were business partners. In 1829 they formed a land speculation business. Other Mississippians such as William Gwin and John F. H. Claiborne, both quite friendly with Quitman and Walker, would form a land speculating company in 1839 that would buy 600,000 acres of land around the mouth of the Trinity River. R. J. Walker to Claiborne, Natchez, October 7, 1839, John F. H. Claiborne Papers, *LC*. D. Clayton James estimated that Quitman owned 40,000 acres in Texas. *Antebellum Natchez* (Baton Rouge, 1968), 149. Quitman owned, either outright or indirectly through his father-in-law, many tracts of land in Mississippi, throughout both Adams and Warren counties. Land Agreement between H. and F. L. Turner to Robert Y. Wood, *QPBTHCA*.

28. San Felipe was burned completely. Only four persons were left in the town of Matagorda. Most of the women and children evacuated on the brig *Tensaw*, which landed in Mobile on April 12, 1836. Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot*, April 12, 1836. A benefit at a local theater was performed for the "Texan exiles" who evacuated to Mobile from Matagorda. *Commercial Register and Patriot*, April 26, 1836.

29. John Quitman to Eliza Quitman, Nacogdoches, Texas, April 14, 1836, Quitman Family Papers, *UNCSHC*.

When the situation was no longer dangerous to the innocent, Quitman rode off to tour the countryside. He wrote many letters to his wife, describing to her the natural beauty of the Republic. In one, he remarked very lightheartedly:

> The country is very beautiful. The eye cannot behold anything more so. Extensive rolling plains covered with beautiful green sod enlivened with herds of thousands of fat cattle and here and there interspersed with beautiful groves and clumps of trees give it the appearance of park scenery. I will not attempt to describe it. I have purchased but 13,000 acres and will look a little further.[30]

Texas proved to be a very expensive trip for Quitman. In all, he spent almost $20,000—$13,000 for land and about $6,000 in outfitting a group of Mississippians to accompany him to Texas; the latter amount throws some speculation on Quitman's 1843 declaration that those forty volunteers joined him "as friends, not mercenaries."[31] Although he finally returned to Mississippi, most of his men stayed in Texas to settle.[32] Quitman's relationship with Texas would continue, when, fourteen years later, both would become involved with the movement to acquire Cuba.

Walker, like Quitman before him, had personal motives for urging the annexation of Texas. His brother, Duncan, moved to Texas in 1834 when the tales of wealth in that Mexican state permanently stirred his fancy. He bought several large land grants near San Antonio. Duncan turned these lands over to his brother, but died soon afterwards in Cuba, his health having been broken in a Mexican jail. He was arrested for participating in the Texas revolution. One historian notes with emphasis: "His acquisition of Texas lands and his

30. John Quitman to Eliza Quitman, Camp on San Jacinto, Texas, April 29, 1836, Quitman Family Papers, *UNCSHC*.

31. May, *John A. Quitman*, 386.

32. One of these men was Mark B. Lewis, who later participated in the one of the many Indian frontier battles that the Republic fought under Lamar's administration. Leading a company of 180 volunteers in the spring of 1841, he successfully drove back a group of Indians into the San Saba region. Lewis was killed in 1843, after friends of a man Lewis killed in a duel assassinated him. *TH*, II, 52.

keen interest in promoting Texas independence arose almost simultaneously. This can hardly be viewed as a mere coincidence."[33]

In the spring of 1835 the commercial relations between Texas and Mexico were in danger of being severed when the Mexican government began its program of impounding foreign vessels bound for the Texas shores. In May, the schooner *Martha* arrived from New Orleans only to be seized by the *Montezuma* and stripped of all her goods. Several passengers were imprisoned as well. Actions such as this infuriated New Orleanians and Anglo-American residents of Texas alike and compounded their fears that the government would attempt to cut off all economic ties they shared. A recruiting officer for the Texan army, William B. Travis, wrote to David C. Burnet, who was then only a planter and lawyer, that "nothing has ever occurred ... [that] has so effectively aroused the indignation & resentment of the whole people."[34] Meetings were organized in Columbia, San Felipe, Anahuac, and Nacogdoches in order to call attention to the public of the constitutional abuses and usurpations Mexico levied against them.

The outcry over Mexican treatment of Texan vessels was no small clamor. The reverberations were felt throughout the Gulf. Placing duties on goods that left or arrived at Texas ports was one thing; directly obstructing commercial traffic was intolerable. The Texans had only to ask for their neighbors and business associates in the United States for help. If Stephen F. Austin looked to Louisiana to supply his homeland with settlers, he also expected them to provide him with soldiers as well. Louisianians apparently agreed, for they

33. Magdalen Eichert, "Some Implications Arising From Robert J. Walker's Participation in Land Ventures," *JMH*, XIII (January, 1951), 4, 5; Shenton, *Robert J. Walker*, 22; H. Donaldson Jordan, "A Political of Expansion: Robert J. Walker," *MVHR*, XIX (1932–33), 362–81. Another Mississippian, on the other hand, Sergeant S. Prentiss, absolutely refused to speculate in Texas lands, believing that they were an "uncertain" venture. He preferred to speculate within the boundaries of his own state. Dallas C. Dickey, *Sergeant S. Prentiss: Whig Orator of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1945), 81. Consult Eichert and Shenton for their handling of Walker's involvement in the Chocchuma land sales of the 1830's. See also the Chocchuma Land Company Account Book, 1833, *MDAH*. Robert J. Walker was one of the commissioners who had full power to bid for any lands at the public sales that commenced on October 21, 1833 at Chocchuma and that continued for a two-week period. Among the subscribers who pledged amounts of money for land were Harding D. Runnels, Franklin E. Plummer, and Patrick Sharkey.

34. *PTR*, I, 108, 121.

supplied the bulk of American support during the revolution. In early October, meetings were organized in the Bank's Arcade in New Orleans, a location in the heart of the city's business section. Merchants composed a majority of the committee that formed to raise money and supplies for a Texas revolution. William Christy[35] was an alderman in New Orleans before he was elected to chair the Texas committee. A fearless soldier in the War of 1812, Christy once outran an Indian cross-fire so he could warn the main body of American troops at Fort Meigs there that Tecumseh was organizing an attack. The Hero of Fort Meigs settled in New Orleans as a tobacco merchant but was financially levelled in 1818 through the malfeasance of a business partner. By 1835 Christy had re-established himself as a factor and was widely respected in the city. With J. H. Bryan and J. H. Caldwell as appointed secretaries, he petitioned other Louisiana merchants and planters to raise money and men for Texas. Surely his motivations were based partly on a commonality of spirit with the Texan revolutionaries who were fighting for their freedom. Doubtless, too, Christy wanted to protect his property, since he had recently purchased a plantation for $40,000.[36]

Austin soon received a response to the effort Christy's committee made in deciding New Orleans' role in the revolution. The past two years certainly had seen him riding on Fortune's merry-go-round. For all of 1834 and much of 1835 he lay in a prison cell, knowing nothing of the events in Mexico or in Texas, let alone the nation. Many days he sat in solitary confinement, hearing nothing but the squeaks of mice and reading nothing but the books Texas-Coahuila Congressman Victor Blanco sent him periodically. Jailed by the commandant general of Saltillo, Vicent Filisola, Austin was charged with advising Texas to separate from Coahuila. Austin was passing through Saltillo on his way home from successfully winning

35. Walter P. Webb et al., *TH*, I (Austin, 1952), 345; *NCAB*, XI, 456; *Telegraph and Texas Register*, November 14, 1835; Mobile *Register*, October 17, 1835; *LP*, I, 550; James E. Winston, "New Orleans and the Texas Revolution," *LHQ*, X (1927), 317–54. By 1856, Christy was a notary public and surveyor of customs at the port of New Orleans. One agent of Dun & Company remarked: "Runs a fair business, lives high, has slaves assessed at 3,000, is a popular public man." Louisiana Vol. 9, p. 173, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration.

36. Christy sold this plantation in 1837 for $70,000. New Orleans *Picayune*, March 1, 1837.

from Santa Anna, among other things, better mail service within the state. He had been unable to achieve the same with Santa Anna's predecessor, Gómez Farías, who rebuffed him. Ironically, Austin was arrested after Saltillo officials intercepted a long-overdue letter mailed to a friend in Texas in which Austin, frustrated by Gómez Farías' inflexibility, had advocated disunion.[37]

But Austin was not given to overreaction; he was a careful negotiator who wanted nothing but peaceful co-existence with Mexico. Now freed, back in Texas, and convinced that Mexico would not budge from its original position, Austin believed Texas had to free itself from Mexico. In October, 1835, he received a letter from a friend in New Orleans that filled him with joy. "Your cause," wrote James Ramage, a coordinator of Texas aid in the Crescent City, "must and will succeed because all feel you are in the Right—There are men engaged in your cause here, who by their power, wealth and influence can do almost anything—The excitement is still at its height—hundreds of applications are daily asking to join the Rank."[38] Christy had recruited over one hundred men and had furnished one vessel for Texas' use. Such a strong affirmation of support from his neighbors to the east spurred Austin to urge the provisional government to devise a military strategy for capturing eastern Texas. Austin sent their instructions to Christy, laying out how the government wanted the men and money used. Christy's followed Austin's instructions. He declared that fifty men[39] of those he recruited were to enter Nacogdoches by the Red River and sixty-five others were to travel to Brazoria on the vessel *Columbus*. In addition to those men, he had gathered thirty men from Mobile who were to follow those traveling to Brazoria. Finally, one hundred

37. David M. Vigness, *The Revolutionary Decades* (Austin, 1965), 147–9; Rupert N. Richardson, *Texas, The Lone Star State* (New York, 1943), 109. Texas was attached to the state of Coahuila from 1824 to 1836.

38. James Ramage to Austin, New Orleans, October 21, 1835, in Eugene C. Barker, *AP* (3 vols., Austin, 1929), III, 197–8. Ramage preferred men who were "genteel in appearance"; ones who would "do honor to themselves." He had procured many such men, who had, according to him, "left respectable situations of $1,200 to $1,500 a year in Counting houses here."

39. J[ohnson]. H. Alford to James F. Perry, New Orleans, October 19, 1835, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*: "A company of 50 volunteers will leave on the Columbus to assist your country in your present difficulty. God grant that you may be successful."

and fifty men from New Orleans volunteered to join General Mexia to Tampico. These men called themselves "The Greys," for they "had ransacked the tailors' shops for grey clothing, such being the color best suited to the prairie."[40]

About this same time in New Orleans, José Antonio Mexia was in his cottage, writing but pausing frequently to ruminate over the last few days, which had concluded in his expulsion from Mexico and exile into the United States. This act by Mexico had raised the ire of many private citizens and the indifference of the Mexican government that had earned him the respect of the Texan people. Beleaguered by his own homeland, he felt strangely comfortable in the Crescent City, a city animated with the spirit of revolution. Texas was taking up arms against Mexico, it was rumored, and there seemed to him no citizenry in the United States that could compete with New Orleans for the delight with which it welcomed rebellion. When he arrived in the Crescent City, his good friend George Fisher spoke of the throng of supporters who had come to the Bank's Arcade not more than two weeks beforehand to offer themselves and their money to support any insurrection.

While in Cuba as a boy, Mexia yearned for a military career. Spain did not welcome Cubans into positions of political power, so he moved to Mexico in 1823 and became first a colonel in the Mexican Army in 1829 and then a brigadier general in 1832. He had found social prominence, too, as a member of the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company, in which he had acted as an *empresario*, granting land to families who wished to settle in Texas. He knew many influential men in Texas and the United States—Stephen Austin, William Christy, Sam Houston, Samuel M. Williams, Thomas McKinney, and David C. Burnet. They were Anglo-American merchants and lawyers and politicians; he was a Cuban general in the Mexican army. Yet these men shared similar experiences, having lived under the same government, having ventured together to find settlers for east Texas land, and now having spoken out in favor of political change for Texas. Mexia knew he would not stay in New

40. Mayne Reid, *The Wild Life* (New York, 1856), 366.

Orleans very long. His mind was preoccupied with the faces of men on whom he would be supported in a quest to overthrow Santa Anna's dictatorship.

He had Federalist friends in Tampico, and with their help, he was sanguine about their chances of success. But Stephen Austin favored a descent upon Matamoros, believing that should it be conquered, "Bexar would fall as a matter of course, for all supplies of funds or Troops would be cut off." Bexar was the center of Mexican government in Texas, but Mexia was less sure about whether the local citizens there would ally behind the filibusters.[41] Mexia remembered reading that one hundred and fifteen men had pledged their assistance to the cause at a pro-Texas meeting in New Orleans. Of the ability of tapping further into New Orleans' reserves of the young and adventurous, Mexia did not doubt. If he were full of hope about his chances of raising an army, he also was committed to the principle of revolution on his own terms.

One of the letters he finished writing was directed to Mr. Thomas McKinney at Quintana, the merchant mentioned earlier as having traded with Mexico until such exchange became too dangerous. McKinney was, by 1835, an agent of the provisional government and had power to receive invitations of help from all who had manpower and money to help the insurrectionists. Mexia wanted McKinney to announce to the government his plans for attacking the coast of Mexico at Tampico, saying that "the interior public sentiment is generally in our favor ... the people are only waiting for an opportunity to throw off the yoke that the servile party had made so heavy on their necks."[42] Mexia was a revolutionary committed to the federal cause and the prominent role he played in it; he wanted to keep the Mexican government that believed in and maintained the constitution of 1824, which created a republican form of government, complete with state and national legislatures.

41. Fisher's *Memorials*, 11, Archives of Texas, C, File 28, No. 16; Austin to Provisional Government, November 5, 1835, File 1, Diplomatic Correspondence, in Eugene C. Barker, "The Tampico Expedition," *QTSHA*, VI (1903), 170, 172; *AP*, III, 240. The word *filibuster* comes from the Spanish *filibustero* and the French *flibustier*, meaning freebooter. A freebooter is a pirate, and that word comes from the Dutch *vrijbuiter*.

42. Mexia to the Gentlemen Directors of Public Affairs in Texas, October 29, 1835. Diplomatic Correspondence, *BTHCA*, in Barker, "The Tampico Expedition," 173.

In late October, 1835, Mexia was on board the schooner *Mary Jane* at the port of New Orleans, ready to embark for Tampico.[43] With him were a total of one hundred and fifty "emigrants," all armed with guns and money from Mexia's own pocket. They sailed into the Gulf from the Passes and along the coast down to Tampico. Deciding to wait until dark to enter the fort, Mexia forgot about the hazardous sandbar off the port's coast—an odd mistake for a former customs collector—that ran his vessel aground and forced his troops to make the rest of the way to shore by foot. The garrison in Tampico was friendly to the general, and allowed him to establish his base there. This was the only success Mexia would enjoy. The next night, accompanied by a group of Tampicans, Mexia and his men were attacked by an organized group of two to three hundred men stationed on the rooftops of houses. Having limited ammunition for such a formidable enemy, Mexia ordered his men not to waste their bullets, but instead to charge on the opposing forces with their bayonets. This apparent suicidal mission nevertheless achieved the capture of two cannons, an exploit that forced their opponents to retreat into nearby houses, from which they continued their attack on the filibusters. Unable to sustain such a long exchange of fire, Mexia's weakened group of men, minus thirty-nine, floundered back to the garrison near the shore.[44] Apparently, Mexia had overestimated the federalist base in Tampico.

The remaining men and Mexia returned to the United States on the third of December to regroup and plan another attack. When none of Mexia's former supporters offered further support, supplies ran out and the men disbanded. Anglo-Texan leaders never had agreed with Mexia that Tampico should be an initial target; when he ignored their advice and planned the attack, they considered him to be more interested in personal glory than political emancipation. Perhaps it was also too difficult logistically to dispatch men and munitions to

43. *PTR*, II, 314.

44. Barker, "The Tampico Expedition," 175–7. Lewis M. H. Washington, "Eulogy on the Life, Character, and Achievements of Commodore Charles Hawkins, Late of the Texian Army," Washington Family Papers, *BTHCA*, for a brief account of one of the men who accompanied Mexia and survived the expedition. Eight were killed, and thirty-one deserted. Of the thirty-one, three later died, and the rest were court-martialed and executed.

a location 550 miles south of Matagorda Bay, Texas, than it would have been to have sent provisions to Matamoros. At any rate, by this time in Quintana, McKinney was coordinating efforts with Samuel Williams to organize men from Mobile and New Orleans into position in Texas to fight Santa Anna there.

By the time Mexia arrived safely on the Brazos in Texas, thirty-one men he left behind still were being held as prisoners in Tampico. These men, many of whom were French and German youths who had lived in New Orleans, prepared a statement on the last two days of their lives. They stated they had joined Mexico in New Orleans with the understanding that the schooner would debark in Texas first, and from there they either could choose to settle in Texas or fight for its independence. They understood themselves to be "emigrants," in the literal sense of the word. It is true that all filibusters had to disguise themselves as "emigrants" to port authorities for fear of being arrested for violating United States neutrality laws. But did these men know they were in route to battle? Were they attempting a free passage to a new land in which they could settle? Given the nature of the statement, its timing and purpose, we can assume these men did understand they were going to defend "the cause of Texas." The New Orleans *Bee* and *Picayune* were replete with editorials on the need for United States citizens to come to the defense of another group of Americans who were fighting for liberty and democracy. The newspapers had to be careful not to state outright the intentions of privately organized bands of men who were working for the liberation of a territory within a foreign country. The United States neutrality laws forbade its citizens from involving themselves in the political affairs of foreign countries. Perhaps an ambiguity in the terms under which succor for Texans was publicized led to misunderstandings on the part of some men who eventually made their way aboard the *Mary Jane* and to their deaths.

If, however, we are to take the statement made by these doomed men at face value, then we can conclude that reaching Texas was their first priority and settling on it was their ultimate goal. And yet the fare was too expensive for them to pay themselves. If they wanted to settle in Texas, somebody else would have to pay their passage. Enter Mexia, who offered

an exchange of services—his money for their assistance. Surely the men must have wondered what they would have to give in exchange for a free passage. Perhaps some thought they were going to land first in Texas to fight; after all, the newspapers talked only about what was being fought for, not where or how it was to be fought. A group of men daring enough to venture on a vessel destined for unknown parts constituted a group of adventurers—a young, vigorous group of young men, many perhaps in their late teens, who wanted to travel to a foreign country and start a new life, either as settlers or as frontiersmen. That this age group was more than adequately represented in the total number of those who volunteered did not escape the attention of contemporaries. One Mississippian noted that

> [t]he great rage here is the cause of Independence in Texas. A great many young men are going from this country, in expectation of acquiring money and wealth in the cause[.] the government of Texas offered large bounty in land for soldiers, and their lands I am assured by gentlemen who have visited the country are not surpassed by any in our Southern country for the culture of cotton, sugar &c.[45]

Meanwhile, Mexia sat on the Brazos in Texas. He did not remain there for long, believing that his duty to Texas was incomplete until he had staged a successful invasion of Mexico. Perhaps realizing that his first attempt was foiled by the sheer distance Tampico lay from the upper Texas coast, he acknowledged the wisdom of Austin's earlier advice and planned the invasion of Matamoros. He also asked the provisional government for $10,000 to lead another expedition. If Mexia's interest lay in the political future of Texas, his men were no less concerned about their own future in it. One filibuster who joined Mexia on the general's proposed invasion of Matamoros said as much in a letter to his wife: "My object of Goin on this Exposishen was for you my Self and Son and all my femaley hearaftor. in the first place as soon as [I] took up arms in defence of Texes I became a Sitisan which by the Laws entiteld me as a man of famaley to one lease of Land Square which is three miles or fore thousen, fore hundred acers of Land which when things are seteled will be worth Six thousen Dollars."[46]

45. William Harwood Letter, Louisville, Mississippi, December 8, 1835, *LSUA*.
46. Dedrick to Dedrick, February 22, 1836, "New Light on the Tampico Expedition," *QTHSA*, XI (1907), 160 Elgin Williams, *The Animating Pursuits of Speculation* (New York, 1949), 66.

Mr. Dedrick's interest in Texan independence was pecuniary, not ideological; he was attracted to the vast expanse of land that would be his after serving a short period of time in the Texas army. Texas was his means of economic mobility. He differed from other volunteers in the army in no significant manner; most men who came to Texas from the United States came to settle there. The medieval notion of giving land to those who agreed to fight was actually modern because those who obtained land were masters of it, not fiefs to someone else. Land was the bait the provisional government held in front of young, landless men in the Gulf South. The General Council realized how powerful an enticement soil was to those men. In early December, Wyatt Hanks, Chairman of the Council, declared: "Successful resistance, then, is our only hope.—Hence the importance of holding out every inducement to Volunteers from abroad. There are doubtless many young men in the United States who would gladly embrace the opportunity of enlisting into the service of Texas, provided they could obtain appointments, suited in some degree to their qualifications. Texas now presents a fine field for those who desire military fame."[47]

By mid-December, 1835, despite the Tampico debacle, volunteers from New Orleans continued to swell into the port, determined to sail out to Texas, win its independence, and settle there as citizens.[48] Philip Dimmitt wrote Stephen F. Austin to tell him that the movements of men against Santa Anna had inspired even more support in Mobile and New Orleans.[49] Sam Houston, then the Major General of the Texas Army, sent Amasa Turner, a Mobile native, to recruit in the Gulf. Turner found over one hundred in New Orleans. These men stayed in service for two years.[50]

47. *Journal of the Proceedings of the General Council of the Republic of Texas*, December 5; 1835 (Houston, 1839), 85.

48. Eugene C. Barker, *The Life of Stephen F. Austin*, 499; idem, "The United States and Mexico, 1835–1837," *MVHR*, I (1914), 3–10.

49. Letter from Philip Dimmitt to Austin, November 6 1835, Fort of Goliad, *AP*, III, 244.

50. One company stayed as regulars, the other as permanent volunteers. Frances Harwood, "Colonel Amasa Turner's Reminiscences of Galveston," *SWHQ*, III (1966), 44. Houston himself capitalized on his personal connections with Alabama, since his wife's family lived in Mobile. When he needed Alabama support for defense on the frontier, he received money from her relatives. Joan M. Hartwell, "Margaret Lea of Alabama, Mrs. Sam Houston," *AR*, XVII (1964), 271–9; *TH*, I, 845–7.

Even though annexation to the Union would not come for eight more years, most Southerners could not complain. The Republic represented Anglo-American political leadership in a predominantly Anglo-American culture. More importantly, the constitution of Texas sanctioned slavery, and for that, men like John Hutchins of Natchez, Mississippi, a powerful river planter, donated a sum of one hundred dollars to the cause.[51]

Alabama was closely linked to Texas economically, and gave an enormous amount of money, men, and provisions to support Texas' war for independence. Several members of the state were deeply interested in Texas lands as early as 1832. The connection lay between a former Alabamian resident and some of his friends who still lived there. When he learned that Mexican eleven-league grants could be purchased in Texas, Robert McAlpin Williamson, representing the *empresarios* Stephen F. Austin and Samuel M. Williams, wrote to his friend, Dr. Asa Hoxey, in Mobile, to invite him to consider the availability of land and to pass on his information to other friends still in Alabama. Hoxey replied that he and several others were interested in buying four eleven-league grants at one thousand dollars each. In that letter, he also remarked that "the Spirit for emigration to [Texas] is very great and thousands would go but for the terrors of a Mexican government," referring to the recent political battles fought between Mexican strongmen General Mexia and Bustámente in Vera Cruz. In early 1833 Williamson replied to Hoxey, declaring that because of the severe competition from Louisiana and Mississippi planters who had placed equal amounts toward the same land, the limit set down on each league had increased to two thousand dollars each. They agreed, and in April 1833, they signed an agreement with Williamson for the four eleven-league grants.

51. *Proceedings of the General Council of the Republic of Texas, 1835* (November 14, 1835), 57; Jack D. L. Homes, "A Spanish Province, 1779–1798," in Richard Aubrey McLemore (ed.) *A History of Mississippi* (2 vols., Jackson, 1973), I, 186.

But because they were not Mexican citizens, legally they could not own the land; so Williamson offered to held their land until they could move to Texas.[52]

The economic advantages to be gained from freeing Texas from Mexican control were strong incentives allying action in the Gulf South. Naturally, much of Alabama's economic backing for the revolution came from those who stood to benefit the most. Samuel St. John, a wealthy cotton factor and brother-in-law to Samuel M. Williams, donated $5,000 to Texas in February 1836. Although he undoubtedly believed he was aiding Texans "in their present struggle for Liberty—a struggle to free them from the shackles of usurpation & lawless tyranny—," he was just as concerned for the financial future of their country for he was a landowner in Texas. In 1832 Sam Williams sold him the Tomàs de la Vega Grant, near present-day Waco. During his visit to Texas in that year, St. John at once was struck with the "mines of wealth embodied in her soil," and endeavored "to stimulate the settlers to a rivalry in good cultivation & preparation of that article by offering Premiums for the best crops of cotton procuring the best Cotton Gins &c &c."[53] St. John knew that the Texan territory would become the fastest populated area once Americans discovered its fertile, cheap land. Of the Mobile merchant, Thomas McKinney, Williams' business partner, wrote: "Get his pride and ambitions and sympathies aroused and we will not want money."[54] McKinney himself was instrumental in getting the firm of Toby and Brother of New Orleans installed as Texas agents in 1836. Up to May, 1836, William Bryan and Edward Hall had been acting as agents to the government. They were in charge of recruiting men, money, and munitions for the revolutionary effort; Bryan himself had given Texas $80,000 of his own money and was

52. McLean, *Papers of Robertson's Colony*, VII, 48–49; Asa Hoxey to Robert H. Williamson, Montgomery, December 2, 1832, 356; Robert M. Williamson to Asa Hoxey, Brazoria, February 2, 1833, 397; Agreement between Robert M. Williamson and Hooper W. Coffey, April 13, 1833, 440; all in McLean, *Papers of Robertson's Colony*, VII. Hoxey moved to Texas soon afterward, and with Thomas Grey and John W. Hall, he organized the Washington Townsite Company to promote the town of Washington-on-the-Brazos. Hoxey represented Washington County in the Consultation of 1835 where he served on the General Council, and he participated in the siege of Bexar.

53. Samuel St. John, Jr., to Henry Smith, Mobile, February 22, 1836, in McLean, *Papers Concerning Robertson's Colony*, XIII, 496, 93–4; VII, 565–69; XII, 471; Eugene C. Barker, "Finances of the Texas Revolution," *Political Science Quarterly*, XIX (1904), 521.

54. McKinney to David Burnet and Cabinet, Quintana, March 1836, in *PTR*, VI, 217.

known as a capable official. But on May 24, 1836, the president of the provisional government, David G. Burnet, appointed the New Orleans firm to the position of "General Agent of Texas." It appears that McKinney promised forty thousand dollars of credit the Republic could use—and possibly more in the future—if he, McKinney, whose own business affairs in the U.S. were conducted by Toby and Brother, could be repaid, by deposit in the firm, the $10,000 the Texas government owed him.[55]

The town of Opelousas, Louisiana also recognized the economic benefits of Texas' independence from Mexico. The town petitioned the U. S. government to formally recognize the independence of Texas. It stated: "Our commercial relations with her are already extensive, and becoming daily more important. The wealth of our citizens, from one end of the union to the other, is invested in her soil." Since Opelousas was near Texas, it was, in the words of its citizens, "endeared to us by all the ties of relationship." Presumably many kinsmen had gone to Texas to settle, or live temporarily, and the economic ties between Texas and Louisiana were proved again by the relationship between smaller towns nears Opelousas and the town itself.[56]

Interestingly, support for the Texans did not manifest itself in ideological terms; the *Commercial Register and Patriot* aimed at its readers' gut: "[The Revolution] kindles the enthusiasm of the young and adventurous; and the affinity of the colonists to ourselves, as near neighbors, countrymen and kindred in fact—*who speak our language*—are allied to us in blood and sentiment, and who struggle to assert principles in which we claim a common interest,—produces a universal feeling of sympathy, throughout all ages and classes." The

55. This $10,000 deposit into the firm of Toby and Brother was the first monetary transaction made by Burnet in the Texas Republic. Mary Whatley Clarke, *David G. Burnet* (Austin, 1969), 70–71, 153; Joseph M. Nance, *After San Jacinto* (Austin, 1963), 199ff; William Bryan to S. F. Austin, New Orleans, June 28, 1836, *AP*, III, 375; Williams, *The Animating Pursuits of Speculation*, 89–90. Toby and Brother held its position until December 28, 1838, when Bryan was reinstated by President Lamar.

56. *Cong. Globe*, 24th Cong., 1st session, 416–7; "Memorial of Sundry Inhabitants of Opelousas, Louisiana, In Favor of Acknowledging the Independence of Texas, presented to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States," June 24, 1836, *LSUA*.

common bond between Texans and the Gulf Southerners, the paper asserted, was that of men, labor, and land.[57]

At the moment Sam Williams accepted the $5,000 that St. John offered him for the "cause," one of his own clients in Texas had decided that he could no longer watch from the sidelines and simply wait for the Mexicans to come and destroy his land. Writing to his friend and business partner, James Perry of Brazoria, Andrew Somervell wrote hurriedly that "we have just learned that Santa Anna is coming in great force and as I cannot remain quiet at home when my country is invaded." He asked Perry to make sure that he would be sent his double-barreled shotgun, pistols, and rifle. Although Somervell knew he would be separated from all of his "Gulf Prairie friends," his duty was to protect country and home. Somervell would not return to the eastern coast for two years.[58]

"The Texas Revolution didn't happen because of the Alamo," so says one biographer, "it happened because Sam Williams put up the money for it."[59] Although certainly not singlehandedly, Williams was responsible for generating a great deal of the publicity, arsenal, and money for the Texas project. By 1835, Williams was an established and well-connected merchant throughout the Gulf. In the spring of 1835, he was charged by the provisional government to raise up to one hundred thousand dollars for the effort.[60] Williams relied on his business connections in Mobile for help. He raised over seven thousand dollars in subscriptions and benefit concerts. The money was deposited in his brother's firm.[61] But as early as October, 1835, his business partner, Thomas McKinney, wrote him from Quintana:

57. Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot*, October 17, 1835. The author's emphasis.

58. Alexander Somervell to Perry, Villa de Austin, February 13, 1836, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

59. Gordon Blocker, film on the life of Samuel M. Williams, Williams House, Galveston.

60. Margaret Swett Henson, *Samuel May Williams: Early Texas Entrepreneur* (College Station, Texas, 1976), 21, 84–85; Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Texas," 435.

61. One important contributor to the Texas Revolution was Mobile merchant David White, who was already authorized by Texas to sell scrip, and to whom Michel Menard, the founder of Galveston, would mortgage, in late 1836, his Galveston quit claim when he had difficulty paying the fifty thousand dollars. Henson, *Samuel May Williams*, 136–7; William O. Scroggs, "Alabama and Territorial Expansion Before 1860," *Gulf States Historical Magazine*, II (1903), 173. White was killed in a duel in 1850. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, April 8, 1350. In all, Alabama contributed almost $40,000; *PTR*, II, 367; IX, 99.

"A man of war is all important to us and I hope you will loose [*sic*] no time in getting one to us for re[al]ly we are all united in opposition to the Central Govt and the convention will give such authority as may be asked for the Vessel. Zalla[,] Grayson[,] and Col. Austin are buisily [*sic*] employed in writing modeling and for our New Gov[ernmen]t all every body is hot for war I write to day to Toby on the subject of getting money from N Orleans Much advantage will result to us from an arrangement to that end."[62] It was in Mobile that Williams later would buy, repair, and armor the steamer *Emmeline* for use in the war.[63] Williams soon left Mobile for New Orleans. He soon found himself in a throng of other Texas agents petitioning for support in the Crescent City.

But the rallying cry for help that Williams sent out resounded throughout the city even after he had left. It was picked up by other citizens who had their own motives for participation in Texas emancipation. Physician Percy Walker[64], son of Congressman John W. Walker, offered his professional services as a "lover of liberty [and an] ... opposer of tyranny." At the end of October in Mobile, a church meeting was "crowded to overflowing" by those who supported Texans in their "constitutional struggle." But many Gulf Southerners fought for material compensation in the form of land. In a letter to the Texas convention, the volunteers stated: "We consider ourselves as citizen soldiers having a common interest with every citizen of Texas. We are equally anxious for its prosperity[.] Many of us have fought and aided in repelling the mercinary [*sic*] troops of the enemy from its border & have received the

62. Thomas McKinney to Samuel M. Williams, October 5, 1835. Williams Papers, Rosenberg Library, Galveston. The schooner *Columbus* was in use during that month by the volunteer divisions from Louisiana. Later, the *Columbus* would be bought by Colonel Ephraim McLean, nephew of McKinney, for mercantile use between Galveston and New Orleans. It was the first merchant vessel that sailed under a Texas Republic registry. See Ruth Evelyn Kelly, "'Twixt failure and success: The Port of Galveston in the 19th century" [unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Houston, 1975], 10. McLean would later relocate to Corpus Christi, where he organized a force for defense against the Mexicans in that disputed territory, and with the assistance of Henry Kinney and others, he began to conduct heavy trade with the Mexicans. See Charles W. Hayes, *Galveston: History of the Island and the City* [2 vols., Austin, 1974], II, 694–5.

63. Henson, *Samuel May Williams*, 84–5.

64. Walker was a Mobile physician who operated an apothecary. Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* [4 vols., Chicago, 1921], IV, 1718; and Hugh C. Bailey, *John Williams Walker: A Study in the Political, Social, and Cultural Life of the Old Southwest* [University, Alabama, 1964], 208–9; Willie D. Halsell, "Leroy Pope Walker's Mississippi Interlude," 77–8.

certificates of Citizenship... ." This letter was signed by, among others, the captains of volunteers from Mobile and Huntsville. The concession of land for military service in Texas was publicized in Mobile. The leading newspaper disseminated a letter by the inspector general of the Texas army, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, who offered 1,280 acres of land to those who served in the army for the entire war, 640 acres to volunteers who put in a terms of more than six months, and 320 to those who served three months or more.[65]

Jane McManus, who in the 1850's would organize plans with her husband and Henry Kinney to colonize Nicaragua, wrote Williams as soon as she heard about what "some factious demoagogues [*sic*]" in Texas said of him: "I heard with a glow of pride," she said, "of the exertions made by her citizens, here, to supply her with men and arms, and none was named in such terms as the "proud cold-hearted Empresario Williams." Although McManus by her own admission was given to fanciful expression, she had great admiration for him, and entrusted him to buy land for her in Texas. So great was her respect for Williams that she offered to raise money for the Texan cause. McManus' trust in the Texan was exceeded only perhaps by her own business sagacity. She knew that if Texas were to lose its battle with Mexico, Texans would lose their holdings. McManus believed that

> [t]he war with Mexico will probably end in the independence of Texas, but in the interim every texan will be called on to yield his utmost assistance to the cause of freedom and justice. As a female I cannot bear arms for my

65. *PTR*, II, 174, 237; IV, 473–4; 526; Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot*, April 13, 1836; *Proceedings of the General Council of the Republic of Texas, 1835*, December 8, 1835, 90. One of the recipients of a Texas land grant was Lewis M. H. Washington, who served two terms in the army and was eligible for two separate land grants. Washington did not serve in the army for the entirety of the war; in fact, he served just under six months. The Texas government awarded him one grant for 1280 acres for that term (from December 15, 1835 to June 2, 1836) as well as another grant for 320 acres, which rewarded service of three months (June 26, 1836 to September 26, 1836). Republic of Texas certificates, approved May 10, 1840, July 8, 1840. Washington Family Papers, *BTHCA*. Another was John M. Shreve, who served for three months as a private in Captain William S. Fisher's company and received 320 acres of land in a military bounty. David Clark, a Texas filibuster whose brother lived in Mobile, also received 320 acres of land for 3 months of service. But according to his brother, he bought two soldiers' land rights, making the total amount of land in his name 2,441 acres. From the Theophilus Clark Papers. C. S. Ives to Emily Clark, Mobile, November 10, 1836, Theophilus Clark Papers, *DA*. In addition, Louis Lalouetti, Gaitano Braga, F. J. Reygnaid, John Francis Girad, Alexander Brazagou, John Charles Thiac, Adolph Roussatt, and Charles N. Theustedt composed a group of New Orleanians who received 640 acres each for their service to the Revolution. Their surnames suggest that these men were mostly foreigners. Certificates (for Shreve) from William S. Fisher and James D. Owen; A List of Land Certificates (for the New Orleanians), Brazoria, December 5, 1836, Grayson Family Papers, *BTHCA*.

> adopted country but if the interest I possess in her soil, will be a guarantee for any money, I will with joy contribute my mite to purchase arms for her brave defenders.

Even though she felt confident about the future of Texas as an independent country, there always was an element of risk, and she wanted to make sure that whatever the outcome she had done all she could.

Ben S. Grayson and his business partner John Shreve[66], along with Toby and Brother Company of New Orleans, were part owners of the *Thomas Toby*, a steamship used extensively during the Revolution. His brother, Thomas Wigg Grayson, was active in the steamship business and the Revolution as well, and he recruited from Alabama many volunteers in late 1835, whom he brought to Texas along with a cargo of musket balls, flints, and bar lead for the war. Again in 1836 Thomas Grayson commanded a steamship, the *Ocean*, which was bought and donated to the Republic of Texas by citizens in Mobile, Alabama. On board were many supplies brought for the use of the soldiers.[67]

Madison County, Alabama gave generously of its men during the Revolution. Madisonians began migrating to Texas in 1830, by traveling to New Orleans in flatboats and then in steamers to the Texas coast, landing in Galveston.[68] In 1832, members of the Nimmos and Davis families died of cholera while attempting to move to Texas. When the county heard of the Texan defeats at the Alamo and Goliad, many were stirred into action. Taylor notes that "several of our old citizens lost friends and relatives either at the Alamo or Goliad." Circulars were issued locally to promote the Texan cause by raising money and recruiting volunteers. Those who contributed included businessmen Elkanah Echols, Reuben Shotwell, Thomas Miller, William B. Miller, and Parhem N. Baker.[69] Captain Peyton S.

66. See footnote above.
67. *TH*, I, 725; *TH*, II, 299.
68. Judge Thomas Jones Taylor, *A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732–1840* eds. W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole (University, 1976), 102. No Anglo-Americans lived in Galveston before 1836.
69. Elkanah Echols married Reuben's sister, Louisa J. Shotwell, on June 4, 1834. Marriage Records, Madison County, Alabama, volume 4 (November 5, 1831—November 20, 1843), 193, *ADAH*. Thomas Miller was at one time state senator of Alabama from Huntsville (1825).

Wyatt took a company of men with him when he entered Texas in the spring of 1836, but like Quitman's company, they arrived after the Battle of San Jacinto. They nevertheless assisted Texans in relocating women and children to positions of safety, as well as ensuring the cooperation of Mexican forces as they retreated from Texas. One of the volunteers, Peter Daniels, a free black, remained in the service of the Texan army and participated in the frontier battles against the Mexicans. He was captured soon after and executed, preferring death over enlistment into the Mexican army. Two brothers from Huntsville stayed in Texas to establish Huntsville, Texas.[70]

Some men who wanted to help Texas free herself from Mexican domination were Gulf volunteers who participated in battles against the Florida Seminoles. The *Commercial Register and Patriot* in Mobile reported that some New Orleans volunteers who were in Florida in April decided to collect their pay on May 3rd and leave immediately to sail to Harrisburg, Texas and offer their services in the army.[71] Perhaps they were responding to a letter published in that paper urging volunteers in Florida to "take vessels and steamers," and embark for Texas. Or perhaps they grew bored from inactivity; there in Florida, they had to wait for the company to be raised, the officers to be elected, and the government to accept their services. Until then, the daily activities consisted of company inspection, which was completed before noon. During their wait, they lived on plantations at the consent of the owner, who no doubt was so grateful for their protection that "there was no lack of champagne, brandy, and cigars."[72] Such immediate gratification may have tired some quickly, and pressed them on to Texas, where the rewards for service were even greater.

70. Taylor, *History of Madison County*, 103–4; William H. Jenkins, "The Red Rovers of Alabama," *AR*, XVIII (April, 1965), 107; Margetta P. Jung, "Red Rovers of Alabama Lauded for Aid Given in Texas Independence," Jack Shackelford Collection, *ADAH*; Harry F. Estill, "The old Town of Huntsville," *QTSHA*, III (1900), 265; Andrew J. Arnold, "The Attitude of the Southwest Towards the Texas Question and the Mexican War," (unpubl. M. A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1931), 16.

71. Mobile *Commercial Register and Patriot*, April 21; May 2, 1836. James W. Newton to Col. Thomas E. Blackshear, Secretary for the Brunswick and Florida Railroad Company, June 19, 1836, Thomas Edward Blackshear Papers, *BTHCA*, on the Creek war.

72. Mayne Reid, *Osceola the Seminole* (New York, 1858), 278–9.

The officers in the Texas army were men of wealth and influence. Felix Huston, commander-in-chief of the army, was also a lawyer who gave over $40,000 to his government to raise and equip an army. He also was thick in the land speculation that entangled many of his Mississippian friends, such as Robert J. Walker, William Gwin, and John A. Quitman. A Mississippian friend of one of Huston's men in the Texas army wrote to him late in 1836 with some business to discuss:

> I purchased of Mr. Goodin his San Jacinto claim on condition of its being confirmed... I have also bought from the Quartermaster Genl. [illegible] Huston, ten sections of Government Scrip (6400 acres) with the right of [illegible]ation on six and twelve months credit. I wish you to locate both for me, and should like to join you in the salt scheme. If that cannot be effected please locate them for me where they will *most readily come into market*, and be valuable.[73]

Mr. Ross appears to have been on quite friendly terms with Huston, and a pecuniary interest may suggest why some citizens of Natchez, such as this gentleman, were so eager to support the rebellious Texans against the Mexicans.

Texas army officers formed a tight merchant and planter group. They had a particular stake in joining the Revolution: the preservation of their property. Thomas Jefferson Rusk, inspector general of the Texas army, was a lawyer who operated a land speculating business. Robert Williamson, captain of the Texas Rangers, was a planter and editor of the *Texas Gazette* and the *Mexican Citizen*. Another member of the Texas Rangers who fought in the war was John H. Moore, a colonel in the army. He was also a planter from LaGrange who built a fort on his land to protect his property and family from the Indians. William H. Wharton was a fabulously wealthy planter who as early as 1832 wrote the petition of Texan grievances at the convention.[74] In 1835 he was chosen judge advocate of the army. His father-in-law, Jared Groce, did not directly participate in the Revolution because both his hands were crippled. But he provided provisions for the army, gave them a constant supply of food produced by his plantation, and established a hospital for the soldiers.

73. J. M. Ross to Felix Huston, Natchez, Mississippi, November 14, 1836, Felix Huston Papers, *MDAH*.

74. See footnote five, this chapter.

The Mexican government wanted its Texan colonists to divorce themselves from any economic relations with the United States. They had wanted Texas to be a buffer state, protecting Mexicans from Americans. But the plan was doomed to fail. Anglo-Texans were part and parcel members of the Gulf South, in every way save the political. Texan merchants had developed an important economic connection with New Orleans.

Then men these officers led, however, were not from their stock. They were young, probably in their late teens or early twenties. They were poor; most of their earthly possessions were on their bodies when they set out for Texas. As one astute observer described: "The men were mostly of the poorer class of white settlers— small renting planters—... who managed to eke out a precarious subsistence partly by the use of their axes, and partly from the product of their rifles."[75] They were also militarily inexperienced. The troops formed a motley group more respectable "in numbers than appearance." Some of the officers wore uniforms, others wore a half-uniform. Like snowflakes, no two men looked or dressed alike. Many wore blanket-coasts of red, blue, or green; some wore red flannel shirts or deer-skin hunting-shirts; a few preferred their leggins, moccasins, or boots made of horse or alligator; others were fond of brogans and linen jackets. Some wore hats—raccoon, palmetto leaf, straw, felt, wool, or cloth. They carried single- or double-barrelled shot-guns; small pocket-pistols in huge, studded holsters; and tomahawks or knives of all sizes and shapes. On their waists they toted shot-belts and powder-horns, bullet-pouches and other sporting gear known to fighting men. The volunteers did not march according to the West Point style. The young ones especially "could not be restrained from occasionally falling out of the lines—to help themselves to a pull out of some odd-looking flask; ...or of getting a shot at a deer or turkey [they] had caught a glimpse of through the trees." Perhaps their only uniformity, as Mayne Reid put it, was a "burning for a fight with the hated savages."[76] Another could be added—the quest for a new life with boundless economic opportunities.

75. *TH*, II, 869, 917; Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers* (Austin, 1935), 39; Reid, *Osceola*, 278; *NCAB*, XXII, 278.

76. Reid, *Osceola*, 287–89, 304.

The filibusters were violent. For example, a large group of Texan filibusters came from Montgomery, Alabama, a town whose reputation, in one historian's opinion, "suffered on account of the lawlessness that was allowed to prevail."[77] The town was under siege by a group of the "sporting gentry," who picked fights almost daily in the streets outside the "Montgomery Exchange," the local saloon and gambling den. Law-abiding citizens were insulted or even attacked by these local bullies when they aired their opinions on the lawless bunch. None of the town's officials had any power to protect the people or their property. When Col. John H. Thorington tried to "check" the violence of the group, his property was damaged. Either they were run off, or for lack of better diversion, this "dangerous class" of young men left with Capt. Isaac Ticknor, who had been one of their ringleaders, to fight the Mexicans in the Texas Revolution. They left in December, 1835, but they met their match a few months later in the form of the Mexican army, and all were killed in the Goliad massacre of March, 1836.[78]

The Revolution had been a brutal one for many of the inhabitants of Texas. For instance, many civilians were wrested from their homes in order to escape the intruding armies that burned their fields and ransacked their property. San Felipe was burned to the ground. Many citizens commenced what was known as the "Runaway Scrape," fleeing from Santa Anna and the Mexican army in March, 1836. Dilue Rose Harris recalled that month in a diary she kept as an eleven-year-old girl melting lead in a pot and molding bullets with a spoon while her mother stayed up all night sewing clothes for her uncle to wear in the army.[79] She noted

77. Matthew Powers Blue, "Ticknor's Company, First Regiment, Alabama Volunteers for Texas Revolution," excerpted from his *Brief History of Montgomery*, *AHQ*, XIX (1957), 413; Jenkins, "The Red Rovers of Alabama," 107.

78. The officers in Ticknor's Company were Memory B. Tatum, William A. Smith, Edmond Patterson, Nicholas B. Waters, Richard Rutledge, Samuel C. Pitman, Joseph B. Tatum, James C. Jack, Perry Reese, Thomas Rieves, and Thomas Weston. The privates included D. Greene, Hezekiah Fist, Samuel Wood, William Comstock, William L. Alison, Evans M. Thomas, Henry Hasty, Levin Allen, Seaborn A. Mills, William P. B. Dubose, Edward Wingate, Edward Fitzsimmons, David Johnson, D. F. Leverett, Isaac N. Wright, Charles Lantz, Stephen Baker, G. W. Carlisle, Cornelius Rooney, Swords Williams, James O. Young, John McGowan, C. F. Hick, W. Welsh, John O'Daniel, Washington Mitchell, A. M. Lynch, James A. Bradford, Jesse Harris, and Cullen Conrad.

79. "The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris," *QTSHA*, IV (1900), 85–127; 155–89; *QTSHA*, VII (1904), 214–22, in Jo Ella Powell Exley (ed.), *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women* (College Station, Texas, 1985), 55.

that "every family in our neighborhood was preparing to go to the United States," and that "wagons and other vehicles were scarce." When her parents heard of the fall of the Alamo, they joined five thousand other people who were making their way to Louisiana. After more than a month traveling to safer areas, the fleeing Texans were told go head back by an ebullient young man, who shouted: "Turn back! The Texas army has whipped the Mexican army and the Mexican army are prisoners. No danger! No danger! Turn back!" The weary mass of people sighed heavily and began their long trip back to what was left of their homes.[80]

Even though Texas won her independence from Mexico on April 2, 1836, the volunteer armies were still needed to lead Texans safely back home and to settle in the Republic. For the major figures in the Revolution, their fight was over and monetary rewards promised to be great. Sam Williams continued selling Toby land scrip in the United States. He came back home through Mobile, where he and his brother, Nat, talked with their brothers-in-law George Dobson and Samuel St. John about going to Texas together and forming a business partnership there.[81] John Quitman returned to Mississippi, where he resumed his plantation duties and accepted the appointment of brigadier-general to the Mississippi militia. Robert J. Walker began petitioning Congress for Texas' immediate annexation into the Union. Abner Lipscomb, an outspoken Mobilian supporter of the Revolution, moved to Texas in 1839. Both filibusters and financiers looked to their own respective duties. These duties, as chapter four will detail, were chiefly related to economic retrenchment, both locally and personally, as the cataclysmic deflation that began in 1837 and took hold of the Gulf South in 1839 threatened their stability and very existence.

80. Exley (ed.), *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, 60.
81. Henson, *Samuel May Williams*, 91.

4 *Flush-Out Times in the Gulf South*

> Some say well I suppose we will have better times directly if you elect Harrison I tell them no for our country is in such a deranged situation it will take perhaps seven years to get it in as good & prosperous a situation as it was when Genl Jackson came into power.[1]
>
> I feel as though I would give up every dollar in the world to be clear of debt & return into my original state worth nothing.[2]

I.

"I discovered this morning," wrote Charles W. Tait of Columbus, Texas, to his father, James Asbury Tait, "that I have the regular Cotton Catterpillar in my cotton. I am afraid that with the rains in the spring the drouth in the summer & the catterpillars in the fall, together with the sickness among the negroes, that my chance for cotton will be slim."[3] If only caterpillars were all Tait would have to worry about in 1839. The Gulf South was on the brink of a lengthy, demoralizing deflation that would last for much of the 1840's.

1. William Hack to C. A. Hack, Pontotoc, Mississippi, November 8, 1840, William Hack Papers, *MDAH*.
2. Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, December 27, 1836, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.
3. Charles William Tait to James A. Tait, Columbus, Texas, September 21, 1839, *BTHCA*. Tait's father lived in Wilcox County, Alabama. J. P. Cochran, "James Asbury Tait and His Plantations" (unpubl. M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1951), 4, 14–5.

Inconstancy was the rule by which people lived in the Gulf South. Nothing brought this home so powerfully as the economic deflation of the 1840's. As demand for cotton decreased, cotton prices plummeted. At the same time cotton prices dropped, desperate banks and creditors demanded specie from hapless debtors in towns all over the region, all the while realizing that trying to take currency from people was like trying to squeeze water from a stone. For most of the deflationary period, the American and European Atlantic was not in much competitive demand for cotton; prices fell and hovered at humiliating levels. Economic hard times forced planters to live more frugally, consume more efficiently, and grow crops more deliberately than ever before. A calamitous economic event was the catalyst that quickened a process that already had commenced in the Gulf South, that of attaining self-sufficiency and crop diversification.

Gulf Southerners did not placidly accept the disaster that struck the region. The Panic of 1837 was just that—a panic, and many people were terrified of losing their property. One Mobilian remarked: "There is a perfect panic... So many people have failed here that the people in the Country are afraid to send their cotton down lest they loose it."[4] He continued later: "The Country people have an idea that 1/2 of the people have stopped payment & do not know who to send their Cotton to & consequently leave their debts here unpaid untill they come down themselves so that we have to await their movements to pay our debts."[5] Commission firms were stuck[6], having no power to make decisions affecting their own material survival. The same Mobile commission merchant exclaimed: "Our facilities now for raising money are all cut off & all we have to depend on are our collections. I would give up every dollar we have in the world to be clear."[7] At one point he became quite bitter toward

4. Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, December 27, 1836, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

5. Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, January 4, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

6. Almost all commercial houses "of any importance" in Mobile had failed by the spring of 1837. Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, March 20, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

7. Agricola Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, December 27, 1836. At another point, he said: "our times are not in our own hands..." Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, March 20, 1837, Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, March 20, 1837, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

these "country people" by saying that "those very planters who are the largest debtors to the City are the loudest in their abuse of the Commission Merchants who have made the largest advances to them [but] consequently [are] the very last men to whom they will ship their cotton and the result is failure upon failure."[8] By the end of the cotton season of 1836–1837, Wilkins expected a financial failure in suspended debts amounting to $50,000 or $60,000.[9] At times he was driven to the depths of despair, saying to his Northern friend: "I feel as though I should be satisfied if I could get clear of debt with the clothes on my back & thus end just where I commenced [here in Mobile]—in poverty—I calculate to drag out a miserable existence."[10]

By May 12, 1837 all banks in Mobile had suspended specie payments.[11] Some blamed hard times on state legislatures. A member of one of Mississippi's more prominent planting families railed against "a reckless and desperate legislature [that has] endeavored by a war upon the banks to throw off the burden of the people's debt to them."[12] Another Mississippian spoke of the legislature with much disdain: "I have sold out and am out of business I am trying to collect and close up but find it very difficult for this state is in a more depressed condition than any state in the Union caused in a great measure by the unwise and reckless course pursued by our Locofoco Legislature." Another said:

> Owing to the mal-administration of our Government in crushing institutions which have for years furnished the people of this country with a sound, and healthy currency and regular exchanges, and introducing at the same time experiment upon experiment, they have parallized the prosperity of the people, and in many instances, substituted penury and famine, and in short, the *ne plus ultra* of human distress, for what *was* peace, plenty and happiness.[13]

8. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, January 20, 1837, the Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.
9. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, February 28, 1837, the Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.
10. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, February 28, 1837, the Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.
11. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, May 12, 1837, the Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*; Edward Hall to Adden Lewis, MS., Mobile, March 10, 1837: "Matters remain much the same as when I hast wrote you, I believe all [banks] have failed (or suspended as they call it here)...." *WSHSCLUA*.
12. Horatio Eustis to Abram Eustis, Natchez, Mississippi, March 5, 1840, Eustis Family Papers, *MDAH*.
13. L. N. Hitchcock to Gideon Seeger, Jr., MS., Mobile, August 14, 1838, *WSHSCLUA*.

Others put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the spending habits of the people themselves. Writing to his brother, one Alabamian stated boldly:

> Many of us here believe that the hardness or tightness of the times, may in a great measure be referred to our own extravagance & to the extensive speculations, & *excessive issues of bank papers* rather than to any act of the administration or course of policy adopted by it. When the apparent prosperity of the country, shall again be based on a flood of irredeemable paper for its circulation, a general fluctuation in prices, may be expected, & the result of such a state of things is (naturally) a revulsion, a crash, like that of 1837 the effects of which we are still labouring under. Our country has been scourged by millions of nominal paper currency, almost as worthless as the rags out of which it was manufactured and beneficial only to the privileged corporations who issued it, & to their favorites.[14]

To talk about monetary or material deprivation is one thing; to live through it, another. Many were afraid that the starving years were imminent, that another cotton season would prove more fatal than the previous, and that the fiber of hope in all would snap. Agricola Wilkins feared for the material comfort of his port city, saying that Mobile, and the entire state of Alabama, for that matter, "depends on New Orleans for provisions." But the problem with getting supplies from the Crescent City port, as he put it, was impossible, for "at that place they will not touch our money now at any price."[15]

The Gulf South engaged in no filibustering movements throughout the late 1830's and most of the 1840's. No threat to slavery resided in the areas in which it existed in the Gulf region, including Cuba.[16] This period, 1839–1849, was a time of economic deflation and contraction, and the financial support of filibustering depended upon prosperity. The Gulf South was crippled by financial crisis throughout this period, and the money and incentive for any widespread political adventurousness disappeared. The flush times in the Gulf South

14. A. Saltmarsh to John Saltmarsh, Cahaba, Dallas County, Alabama, May 19, 1840, Iverson L. Brooks Collection, *WSHSCLUA*.

15. Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, May 12, 1837, Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

16. Texans did join Federalists in northern Mexico in trying to organize a Republic of the Rio Grande in 1840. In addition, some Gulf Southerners joined Texans sporadically in fighting frontier battles with the Mexicans. See David M. Vigness, "A Texas Expedition into Mexico, 1840," *SWHQ*, LXI (1958), 18–28; Joseph Milton Nance, *After San Jacinto, The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836–1841* (Austin, 1963); idem, *Attack and Counter-Attack: The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1842* (Austin, 1964). Narcisso López, of course, did engage in his first filibustering expedition to Cuba in 1848; that story will be covered in chapter six.

died a slow death in a space of time whose deflation took three years to enter and almost a decade more to fully recover.

The best reflection of the deflation lay in cotton prices, which began to decline in 1840 particularly because British demand for the material dropped abruptly in that year. English textile manufacturers had dumped cotton products onto the market at such a rate that many mills could not maintain production costs and were forced to close. Prices picked up in 1838 and 1839 after a decline in 1837, so that beginning in 1836 and ending in 1839, respectively, per pound prices were twenty-one, thirteen, fourteen, and finally, eighteen cents. The New Orleans' prices, moreover, were much higher than Mobile's, the latter averaging a mere eight cents per pound.[17]

The 1840's did not augur well for cotton prices either. Prices continued to decline steadily and many Gulf South planters were bankrupted when their meager profits could not meet their expenses. In 1842, the same lands which had formerly sold for $50 per acre brought only $1 to $10 per acre after the Panic.[18] The practice in economics of scale in antebellum Southern agriculture included heavy mortgages to creditors in order to expand production still further and maintain a high standard of living. Often, when planters profited on the sale of their staple crop, they spent their money not on repaying outstanding plantation debts but on extending their areas of production. Buying more land or slaves and expanding their operations was emphasized in a society in which ostentatious standards of living and ever-increasing sizes of plantations were signs of commercial success.[19]

17. John Hebron Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, 1971; orig. publ. 1958), 71; *DBR*, XX (1856), 445.

18. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, 643; Merk, *Westward Movement*, 237; Mark E. Nackman, *A Nation Within a Nation: The Rise of Texas Nationalism* (Port Washington, 1975), 38–40; Peter Temin, *The Jacksonian Economy* (New York, 1969), 174. The turbulence of a portion of the Gulf South is vividly described in Joseph G. Baldwin, *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi* (New York, 1853).

19. J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753–1950* (Lexington, 1953), 72.

Flush-out times affected some counties and corners in the Gulf South dramatically.[20] In Jasper County, Mississippi, population plummeted in the 1840's. Jasper's population was 6,661 by 1840; slaves outnumbered whites 3,958 to 2,701. Stunningly, by the end of the next decade, in 1850, slave population had declined by about 50%, to a total of 1,887.[21] It was only by the next decade that the county could regain a slave labor population; in 1860, the county numbered 6,454 whites and 4,549 slaves. Although one writer[22] notes in puzzlement that the "reasons for this decrease are not readily known," it is plausible that the town's farmers or planters, whose town they had ostensibly built from nothing in a short period of time, relied too heavily on the ubiquitous paper notes of worthless money. In the time of financial atonement, property was taken or voluntarily sold to repay debts; hence, slaves were either sold or seized.

In nearby Copiah County, S. H. Aby was living in Gallatin during the first year of flush-out times. Periodically he would write home to his parents and describe to them the economy of his local environs. In 1840's, he marveled at the high cost of living in Gallatin. According to him, it cost his family $1,500 per year to live. But, he quickly added, "this year it is not so much, as provisions of all kinds are much lower, and besides I don't live as extravagantly as I used to." The economic deflation that had gripped the region had put an end to luxury for many. As Aby put it: "Economy is the order of the day in Missi. ... There is not near the extravagance amongst the people that formerly has been, we are all trying to get out of debt & buying as little as we can do without." Aby could not even call himself one of the fortunates who escaped hard times, for although he still had a job selling "goods," he remarked that the stock in his store was almost all gone. He had learned a hard lesson, for his

20. Thomas P. Kettell, *Southern Wealth and Northern Profits* (New York, 1860), 55, on general economic deflation, 1840–1850.

21. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census of Population, 1840* (Washington, D.C., 1841); U.S. Census Office, *Seventh Census of Population, 1850* (Washington, D.C., 1851); both quoted in Marvel Lang, "Population Trends in Jasper County, Mississippi, 1833–1970: A Historical Geographical Perspective," *JMH*, XLIII (1981), 295–6.

22. Lang, "Population Trends in Jasper County," 295.

livelihood was almost ruined. He vowed that were he ever to sell goods again, he would only accept cash in payment, adding that "this credit sistem [*sic*] has done me great injury."[23]

James Wilkins, the wily Natchez cotton planter and land speculator, who in 1835 had bought lands in Mississippi and elsewhere[24], found himself unable to pay his debts in 1837. The Planters' Bank, upon whose board he served as president, suspended its specie payments in that year as well.[25] His brother-in-law, William J. Minor, agreed to assume Wilkins' $142,000 debt in exchange for the ownership of Wilkins' various properties in Adams County, properties that amounted to about 840 acres of land. Minor also took possession of property that Wilkins held in partnership with Thomas Hall that amounted to 5,000 acres on Coles Creek, 167 slaves, livestock, equipment, furniture, and crops.[26]

In Warren County, Mississippi, John and Mary Hutchison felt keenly the financial vice that slowly was tightening around Vicksburg. In the fall of 1838, Mary wrote to one of her brothers in Pennsylvania that he must be aware of "the difficulty now days of making exchanges." But, she added, "The Union Bank in this place will go into operation some time soon, and then I hope it will be a little easier."[27] Her husband wrote Gurley's father Henry the next month. He apparently owed his father-in-law some money, but was reluctant to pay him in Mississippi currency, which was embarrassingly devaluated. Hutchison tried to "procure" Northern funds but could not, and had no choice but to send Gurley money in Mississippi currency. "I presume," Hutchison stated, "you will not loose more than 5 or 8

23. S. H. Aby to Parents, Gallatin, Mississippi, November 18, 1840, Aby Family Papers, *MDAH*.

24. He also bought lands in Arkansas with A. B. Reading, Isaac Adair, and William Ferriday. Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*.

25. All Mississippi banks had suspended specie payments by May of 1837. William Hack to C. A. Hack, Pontotoc, Mississippi, May 21, 1837, William Hack Papers, *MDAH*. Hack wrote: "We are in a most doleful pickle as respects money matters Our Banks have all suspended specie payments which I fear will result in the total failure of some of them... So much for Gen Jacksons Experiment on the currency... ."

26. Inventory of the Wilkins Papers, *BTHCA*.

27. Mary E. Hutchison to John Gurley, Vicksburg, Mississippi, September 19, 1838, Gurley Family Papers, *TUA*.

per cent on it. Perhaps if you are urgent & firm, you may succeed in passing it off in payment of debts, *at par*."[28]

Next door, in Alabama, worsening economic conditions began in 1838. In Mobile, one resident wrote his friend in Texas: "Affairs in Mobile are still in a disturbed condition; want and distress is felt and seen in every house, among all classes, and in no small degree. The Banks are affording but little relief to the people."[29] In 1839 a merchant from Mobile exclaimed: "I have never seen any thing like the scarcity of money that exists in Alabama particularly Mobile."[30] Another said: "There is not enough money in circulation in Mobile to furnish families with *market money*... At this moment I have between $25 and $30,000 upon my books and I can't collect $100 for any purposes. You can't possibly have the least idea of the distress in this community... ."[31] Things were not to get much better, however, during the early 1840's. At that time, Samuel Curtis went to Mobile to do some mercantile business, but found everything economically desolate. He and his wife wrote continuously about how rough were the times, how dull was the business activity, and how cantankerous were the people, complaining as they did about the scarcity of money.[32] In Eufaula, Alabama, one resident wrote in his journal: "Business in this place is dull, we see few wagons in the street, and no activity among the merchants."[33]

Some Alabamians were hurt by the depression less than others. Not all immigrants to Alabama were cotton planters who came to find the richest river bottoms to settle and grow their staple. Those settlers with little capital or property gravitated to counties that offered

28. John Hutchison to Henry Gurley, Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 8, 1838, Gurley Family Papers, *TUA*.

29. Letter to Ashbel Smith, Mobile, May 14, 1838, Ashbel Smith Papers, *BTHCA*.

30. Durant H. Daves to Smith, Mobile, May 10, 1839, Ashbel Smith Papers, *BTHCA*.

31. Henry Levert to Francis Levert, Mobile, May 1, 1839, Levert Family Papers, *UNCSHC*.

32. Sarah Curtis to Mrs. Thomas C. Story, Mobile, March 7, 1842: "Business is bad here for merchants." Samuel Curtis to Sarah Curtis, Mobile, February 19, 1843: "Times here are *pinching* indeed... Business here is very dull—every body complaining of hard times and scarcity of money." Sarah M. Curtis Papers, *DA*.

33. John Cochran's Journal (1840–1846), vol.1, Eufaula, November 26, 1845, Cochran Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

them a variety of ways to make a living. Walker County, in northwest Alabama, was primarily made up of coal producers, not cotton producers. It therefore did not suffer as much as cotton counties during the economic depression of 1839–49; in fact, one historian believes that the greatest harm done to the county by the crisis was in disrupting immigration into its boundaries. Created in 1823, Walker County attracted settlers who grew grain and raised livestock to export them with lumber and coal down flatboats into Tuscaloosa for sale there or to the Mobile market for transshipment. James Cain, considered to be the first coal operator in Alabama, operated a grist mill, stave plant, and cotton gin. In addition, he was a stock raiser. Regardless of occupation, however, the same pattern of economic networking that we have noticed in predominantly cotton counties took place in these economically diversified ones. James Cain had a number of daughters. Nancy Cain married Samuel Monroe Sanders on September 10, 1848. Sanders was a coal miner in the vicinity of Cordova. Elizabeth Cain was married to Francis A. Musgrove on January 6, 1853. Musgrove was one of the early coal operators of the county. With a partner, he mined coal in Bull Bottom, near Cane Creek. The son of Richard L. Chilton, Sylvester, married Cain's youngest daughter Joyce. The elder [illegible]smith, miller, and farmer. He and Cain obtained a contract from the government to improve Squaw Shoals, on the Warrior River, in order to make safe the passage. Much of the county's coal traveled on the Shoals, and the job was necessary. But the work was not successful, for flatboats continued to battle the rough waters rather precariously throughout the antebellum period.[34]

Bibb County, near the center of the state, lies just north of the Cotton Belt counties. In 1840, like Walker County, its agricultural production was not primarily nor solely concerned with cotton production. Several sawmills were in operation in the late 1830's. Later in the period William Oakley opened a brick factory. Although the cotton mill industry outproduced all other manufactures, the iron industry in the county, which predated

34. But by the early 1850's, the Mobile and Ohio railroad transported much of their coal. John Martin Dombhart, *History of Walker County: Its Towns and Its People* (Thornton, Ark., 1937), *passim*.

Birmingham's famed enterprise by several decades, had three forges by 1840 that produced 45 tons of bar iron, employed 15 men, and had $5,500 in capital invested.[35] In 1830 Daniel Hillman of New Jersey erected the first of several forges around the county. He was later joined in iron manufacturing by Jonathan Ware, his son Horace, and William P. Browne, all of New England. These men used white labor in the operation of the forges; slave labor was used in building the factories themselves.[36]

Yet those living in Bibb who engaged in cotton production suffered as much as those living in predominantly cotton counties. For example, John E. Green, a cotton grower, lamented to his brother that "our cotton netted us 5 3/4 cents. from 5 1/2 cents is what the people has generally got for cotton and we had to give it almost all for baling and roops. baling was 45 cents and roops 20 and there is so many that is not able to pay off these bank debts that it is almost impossible to make a note that will [not] be discounted...the only chance I see is for people to live on their own resources and not make any debt that they can help."[37] Green died in Alabama in 1843, and did not survive to see cotton prices rebound in the late fifties. Others did not wait to find out if prices would recover; they migrated to other places in the South—Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

Henry County, lying on the southeasternmost corner of Alabama, resembled Bibb County in its diversified economy. One of the pioneer settlers, John D. Fordham, immigrated to Henry in 1819 from Durham, North Carolina. He had slaves who cleared land, built their own cabins, and constructed the Fordham family home as well. By the 1830's, established landowners like the Fordhams, Millers, and Pertermans produced more cotton as more land was cleared. Most of this cotton was hauled to the Chattahoochee river, and was shipped by boat to Pensacola or New Orleans. Some of the units of agricultural production resembled

35. Rhoda Coleman Ellison, *Bibb County, Alabama: The First Hundred Years, 1818–1918* (University, 1984), 99; *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States...* (Washington, D.C., 1841), 214.

36. Ellison, *Bibb County, Alabama*, 101; Virginia Knapp, "William Phineas Browne, Business Man and Pioneer Mine Operator of Alabama," *AR*, III (1950), 108–122.

37. Ellison, *Bibb County, Alabama*, 93.

those situated in the Cotton Belt counties. The economic livelihoods of newcomers who settled away from alluvial riverbottoms varied accordingly. Land located on the western portion of the county was suited to the raising of livestock and to lumbering or brickmaking. Sawmills were erected and oxen teams were used to transport logs to their destinations near the water streams. Families supplemented their diets with wild game, which lived nearby in the woods. The Indians, whom many in Henry considered friendly, taught the American settlers how to use various roots and herbs as medicine.

Historians call those who lived along the Gulf Coast as the Piney Woods people, whose counterparts in other Gulf states lived in southern Mississippi, western Florida, southeastern Louisiana, and south and central Texas.[38] One traveler in the Piney Woods of eastern Mississippi characterized the people as being:

> destitute of [a Yankee's] morals, education, and reverence for religion... destitute of [a Kentuckian's] intelligence, and the humour which tempers and renders amusing his very vices. They are in general uneducated, and their apparel consists of a coarse linsey-woolsey, of a dingy yellow or blue, with broad-brimmed hats; though they usually follow their teams barefooted and bareheaded, with their long locks hanging over their eyes and shoulders, giving them a wild appearance. Accost them as they pass you ... and their replies will generally be sullen or insulting ... They have a decided aversion to a broadcloth coat, and this antipathy is transferred to the wearer ... At home they live in log-houses on partially cleared land, labour hard in their fields, sometimes owning a few slaves, but more generally with but one or none.[39]

These rough frontiersmen, famous in the popular literature of the day[40], created a mythology about these people that became incorporated into the nation's consciousness, which often associated all peoples living on the frontier as being one and the same.

38. Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture* (Tuscaloosa, 1986); idem, "Antebellum Piney Woods Culture: Continuity over Time and Place," in Noel Polk (ed.), *Mississippi's Piney Woods: A Human Perspective* (Jackson, 1986), 40–58; Forrest McDonald and McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," *JSH*, XLI (1975), 147–66; idem, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," *AHR*, LXXXV (1980), 1095–1118; John D. W. Guice, "Cattle Raisers of the Old Southwest: A Reinterpretation," *Western Historical Quarterly*, VIII (1977), 167–87; Terry G. Jordan, *Trails to Texas: Southern Roots of Western Cattle Ranching* (Lincoln, 1981), 25–58.

39. Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West: By a Yankee* (2 vols., New York, 1835), II, 171–2, quoted in James Roger Sharp, *The Jacksonians versus the Banks: Politics in the States After the Panic of 1837* (New York, 1970), 100.

40. Mrs. Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (New York, 1949, orig. publ. 1832); Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (Philadelphia, 1833); Walter Brownlow Posey (ed.), *Alabama in the 1830s as Recorded by British Travellers* (Birmingham, 1938).

The southern Alabama counties of Baldwin, Conecuh, Covington, Coffee, Dale, Clarke, Monroe, and Choctaw, were settled by people who possessed large herds of livestock, primarily in cattle and hogs.[41] The Southern Pine Hills district of Alabama was suited for grazing cattle, as well as for the growth of cotton along rivers. The Piney Woods area was dominated by yeoman farmers. The topography was more hilly, less fertile, and more wooded than the planter regions.[42] Washington County was one of these counties, and it complemented the economic production of its Piney Woods cousin, Henry County. For the northern and central portions of the county, raising livestock was the chief economic vocation of its people. Since the livestock grazed on an open range, identification of one person's property as opposed to another's immediately became a problem. Branding laws were passed as early as 1803. When Washington county became more populous in the late 1840's, a stricter law was passed in 1854, requiring drovers to re-register their marks or brands. When it came time to market their livestock, livestock owners drove their herds along trails into Mobile. But Washington's wealth came from growing cotton, which they transported down to Mobile; by 1840, 49 per cent of the county's population was enslaved.[43]

One historian has pointed out that about three-fourths of all Piney Woods counties in Mississippi contained more than four times as many cattle and hogs as it did people.[44] These people were almost entirely self-sufficient economically, growing and raising all their own daily food.[45] What they did not produce themselves, they hunted in the forests. Fish were caught from the small streams nearby, and a variety of wild game abounded in the woods.

41. John Mitchell Allman, "Yeoman Regions in the Antebellum Deep South: Settlement and Economy in Northern Alabama, 1815–1860," [unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1979], 50.

42. Allman, "Yeoman Regions," 60.

43. Matte, *The History of Washington County*, 66; Davis, *Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, appendix A, 194.

44. McWhiney, "Antebellum Piney Woods Culture," 44. The figures are comparable for the Piney Woods counties of east Texas. In 1840, one county in the thirty-two coastal prairie counties of Texas contained a ratio of 6:1, cattle to people. Three counties contained a 5:1 ratio. By 1850, six of these counties had ratios of at least 10:1. Jordan, *Trails to Texas*, maps, 68, 126.

45. The diversified agriculture of the pine Hill district was documented by travelers' accounts. Kenneth R. Wesson, "Travelers' Accounts of the Southern Character: Antebellum and Early Postbellum Period," *SS*, XVII [1978], 305–18.

They bought coffee, whiskey, or leather from small country stores. In Mississippi, a typical Piney Woods country store in Fordville (Marion County) sold merchandise hauled by wagon from Gainesville up the Pearl River a few miles north to the town. Hardly any food was available for purchase; it was believed that the farmer who did not growth his own food was lazy and shiftless.[46]

To what extent were the Gulf South Piney Woods people hurt by the 1840–1847 financial hardship? To the extent that the crisis and subsequent deflation bankrupted those who needed heavy amounts of money on credit to finance themselves or their clients, as in the respective case of planters and factors, the people living among the pines of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and western Florida were largely undisturbed. A look at the debt pattern in Marion County in the 1830's[47] illustrates that only twelve loans were recorded in the court records from 1829–1837, valued at $528.39. A predominantly yeoman county could not have suffered much during the Panic and resultant deflation because of its lack of reliance on banks and credit to finance its local economy.

But to the extent that the economic deflation of the period caused a drop in commodity prices[48] generally, yeoman farmers and their families were drawn into the thick of the economic downward spiral because their "crop," livestock, consistently dropped in value throughout this period. Franklin E. Plummer, the self-appointed spokesman of the Piney Woods people in the 1830's who united the poorer East Mississippi counties against the aristocratic river counties, himself succumbed to the temptations of flush times by investing in lands and becoming the paper-happy President of the Bank of Grenada. When deflation

46. S. G. Thigpen, *Next Door to Heaven* (Kingsport, Tenn., 1965), 86.

47. Allman, "Yeoman Regions," 233 (table 15, source: Manuscript *Trail Record Docket for the County Court of Marion County*, Alabama).

48. Arthur H. Cole, *Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700–1861* (Cambridge, MA, 1938), 71, 74–5.

occurred, Plummer was heavily in debt and died in Jackson in 1850, a dissipated man of forty-seven.[49]

While it is certainly true that some invested unwisely, those hit hardest by the economic deflation were those involved in the production and marketing of cotton. Planters paid dearly for the scale of living they enjoyed. A North Carolinian who had been traveling through Mississippi in 1840 thought that the Magnolia state was the hardest hit by the financial crisis. It was noted in the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* that a Mississippi planter, "whose hopes ran high in 1836," had to sell three of his best slaves for $850 in order to buy pork and corn. He had actually paid $3,200 for them. His plight was not uncommon. Throughout Mississippi cotton counties, many slaves were seized as property and taken off by the sheriff, leaving hundreds of acres of land untilled.[50] Some slaveholders, however, did win one small victory when they petitioned the state courts to declare void those notes they have given to speculators to purchase slave labor on credit.[51] Even the state finances were in poor condition. In 1838 the receipts of the treasury amounted to $196,000 while expenditures totalled $350,000. In total, Governor Alexander G. McNutt estimated the indebtedness of the state by 1840 to be $7.5 million.[52]

Louisiana suffered as greatly as any other part of the Gulf South during the flush-out times. New Orleans was the prime ingredient in the dull times of the state. In 1837 one wrote with extreme uneasiness: "The largest houses in this place have stopped and some of

49. Miles, "Franklin E. Plummer," *JMH*, XVI (1952), 31; Frank E. Smith (ed.), *The Yazoo River* (New York, 1954), 78; J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens* (2 vols., Jackson, 1880), I, 427.

50. Reginald Charles McGregg, *The Panic of 1837: Some Financial Problems of the Jacksonian Era* (New York, 1965), 117–8; Leftwich, *Two Hundred Years at Muscle Shoals*, 109, talks about the necessity of selling slaves in Muscle Shoals during economic hard times. Robert Jemison, Jr. verified the same happening in Tuscaloosa: "We have in our County in the present times to resort to all honest shifts in making collections & otherwise protecting our interests. I frequently find it not only safest but shortest and cheapest to take property particularly negroe property in payment." Jemison to Thomas C. Miller, Tuscaloosa, February 1, 1845, Jemison Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

51. The importation of slaves into Mississippi by speculators was declared unconstitutional by the state constitution of 1832, providing planters with a legal loophole. Charles S. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi* (New York, 1933), 166; Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York, 1956), 255.

52. Rowland, *History of Mississippi*, I, 611, 614.

the Banks are looked upon with a suspicious eye at this time and the Banks of Mississippi i think many of them will have to suspend specie payments. Our county at this time is in a very unhealthy condition there is no knowing where this Breaking will stop."[53] In 1838 another friend wrote: "Our market is exceedingly dull and the cause is obvious *scarcity of money*, and this I ascribe mainly to the tardiness of our State Legislature in regard to the suspension of the Banks[.] it is confidently anticipated that they will soon have some decision on this all important subject, and I feel assured that the course adopted will enable the Banks to relieve the community to a great extent."[54] For most of the 1840's prices hovered at deflated levels and business had slowed considerably. One commission merchant repeatedly complained about the stultification of the local market.[55] Of the New Orleans' economy in 1844, another said: "The business is falling ... as fast as the River is rising."[56]

Not only were Louisiana and Alabama centers of prolific agricultural production in the Gulf South, their port cities handled most of the marketing as well. In the financial deflation at the end of this period, Louisiana and Alabama farmers lost money and, consequently, their factors were forced out of business. The economic deflations in 1837 and 1839 seeped their way into Louisiana's agricultural and commercial economy like the progression of a slow paralysis. By September, 1839, all banks had suspended specie payments. By 1842, the state had repudiated all its debts.[57] By 1843, the full effects of the general crisis could be seen clearly, as nearly 3,000 foreclosure suits, representing the period 1837–43, had been introduced in the parish of Orleans alone. Most cotton factors or commission merchants had failed.[58] And like Louisiana, Alabama witnessed the ruin of many merchants and entrepreneurs. A Democrat wrote Governor Clay: "House after house of large means, and of

53. Thomas Baldwin to James F. Perry, New Orleans, April 22, 1837, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.
54. Nathaniel Townsend to James F. Perry, New Orleans, January 30, 1838, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.
55. A. Ledoux, of Ledoux & Co. to S. W. Newport, New Orleans, January 4, 1840, January 25, 1840, February 8, 1840, July 1, 1840, Dutton Papers, *BTHCA*.
56. A. Bronsema to Judge Dutton, New Orleans, June 27, 1844, Dutton Papers, *BTHCA*.
57. Merle Reed, "Boom or Bust—Louisiana's Economy During the 1830s," *LH*, IV (1963), 53.
58. Edwin Adams Davis, *The Story of Louisiana* (2 vols., New Orleans, 1960), I, 210.

resources hitherto considered unbounded has been prostrated and scarcely anything is left but one general scene of devastation and ruin." In early 1837, Henry Hitchcock, one of the state's most successful businessmen, was worth more than one million dollars. By April, he had lost all his money and owed $620,530.96 to the Bank of the United States. He wrote his wife a half-jesting, pitiable note:

> I was informed last night by a passenger who got into the stage at Tuskegee & who lives here, that among other failures in Mobile, Judge Hitchcock, who was supposed to be worth a million of dollars[,] had failed. I informed the gentleman that I could vouch for the truth of it, as I was the person in question.[59]

Planters and factors gathered in Mobile during 1840 to discuss methods of relief, owing to the low cotton prices and the scarcity of money. They attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade the Bank of Alabama in Mobile to extend credit to planters against shipments of their cotton. The Bank directors had a history of making unsound financial arrangements with planters.[60]

As in southern Alabama and Mississippi, some parishes in Louisiana suffered less from the effects of the economic crisis during the 1840's because their agriculture was more diversified. The parishes in the Piney Woods area of Louisiana cultivated corn, not cotton, and raised cattle for market.[61] Calcasieu Parish produced, in 1840, only 111 bales of cotton as opposed to 16,870 bushels of corn. In that year, Calcasieu residents numbered 2,057; this number included 1,349 whites, 492 slaves, and 226 free blacks. Livestock outnumbered people fifteen to one.[62] Like their Piney Woods cousins in the rest of the Gulf South,

59. Henry Hitchcock to his wife, Montgomery, April 30, 1837, Hitchcock Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

60. Thaddeus Sanford to Clement Comer Clay, April 22, 1837, in Governors' Correspondence: Clay, *WSHSCLUA*, in J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge, 1978), 78–9, 111; Charles S. Davis, *The Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, 84–5, 156; William H. Brantley, Jr., "Henry Hitchcock of Mobile, 1816–1839," *AR*, V (1952), 25–6; Eugene Levert to Francis J. Levert, Greensboro, Alabama, September 20, 1837, Levert Family Papers, *UNCSHC*. In 1836, Hitchcock was the chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. Elected to the state legislature in 1839, he died later that year in Mobile of yellow fever. Henry S. Marks, *Who Was Who in Alabama* (Huntsville, 1972), 86.

61. Grace Ulmer, "Economic and Social Development of Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana," *LHQ*, XXXII (1949), 519–630.

62. Ulmer, "Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana," 524. In the 1840 census, there were 11,594 horses and mules, 13,577 cattle, 552 sheep, and 5,564 swine listed, for a total of 31,287.

Louisiana Pineys constructed their homes from the wood of pine trees. Chimneys were made of mud and the spaces between the logs of houses were filled in with mud and straw.

The most striking political response to the period of economic crisis in the American Gulf South was an overwhelming skepticism of the banking establishment and the Whigs. In Louisiana, the state debt incurred in Whig administrations and the economic policies of the party caused people to discredit the Whigs. Economic retrenchment in Louisiana meant, among other things, that support for railroads disappeared as Democratic leadership demanded the separation of business from government. This sentiment was institutionalized in the mid-1840's as Louisianians voted to append certain "laissez faire" provisions into the state constitution that limited grants of monopoly to twenty years and prohibited state subscriptions for railroad stock.[63]

In Mississippi, many Democrats were wary of the absolute power wielded by the state banks. The editor of the well-known Democratic *Mississippian* argued in favor of bank reform that would force institutions to operate under a sound specie basis.[64] He blamed financial ruin on river county Whigs, who had "poured like so many Goths and Vandals into the halls and lobbies of the legislature, clamoring for banks." Alexander G. McNutt was elected governor in 1833 on a policy of correcting the present "corrupt system of banking." In his tenure (1838–1842), McNutt represented those people who resented the apparent monopoly over state economic affairs, which was held by the Whigs and their banking establishment. Politicians like Robert J. Walker craftily emulated McNutt's ability to capture the anti-banking sentiments of the Mississippi people. Walker considered "the whole paper system [to be] destructive to the morals, dangerous to the liberties, and ruinous to the true interests of the American people."[65]

63. Reed, *New Orleans and the Railroads*, 58–9. By the end of the 1830's, the debt of Louisiana was approximately $23,935,000.

64. Volney E. Howard, Jackson *Mississippian*, May 5, 19, 1837; June 9, 13, 1837; and August 18, 1837, in Sharp, *The Jacksonians versus the Banks*, 60, 121–2. Sharp correctly points out how deeply both parties, Democrats and Whigs, were caught up in the extension of banks and credit.

65. Sharp, *The Jacksonians versus the Banks*, 61–4, 67.

Another Gulf Southerner who pronounced himself to be an anti-banking Whig was L. K. Montgomery of Natchez, Mississippi. Writing to William Sharkey, who was in 1847 elected to the Mississippi Supreme Court by Hinds County, he stated: "I have taken no part whatever in the election of a Judge of the Supreme Court, although I am free to declare that had I resided within the district I should have noted against your election upon *principle*. I am a Whig, an anti-Bank Whig, and deny that there is any necessary connection or affiliation between whigism and Bankism, or that party politics should have any influence in the election of Judicial Officers."[66]

One historian has shown how lenient Mississippi and Alabama were in treating their debtors.[67] As opposed to Kentucky and Tennessee, the cotton states of the Gulf South had looser banking practices than their Southwestern counterparts[68], practices that allowed debtors to claim a vast number of exemptions in order to escape foreclosure on their properties. By 1845 in Alabama, for example, executions on property could not be made against debtors owning forty acres of land whose value did not exceed four hundred dollars. Mississippi allowed even more generous exemptions. It exempted one hundred sixty acres of land outside a village, town or city, and/or fifteen hundred dollars worth of land inside a city, excluding buildings. Personal property could be exempted as well in Mississippi. Attorneys and physicians were allowed an exemption of $250 on books, and farmers were given the crops they were growing on their land.[69] This apparent unrepentance irritated Louisiana Whigs such as Alexander Porter, who scoffed at those who were not willing to pick up the

66. L. K. Montgomery to William L. Sharkey, Adams County, Mississippi, November 5, 1847, Sharkey Papers, *BTHCA*.

67. Gary L. Browne, "Eastern Merchants and Their Southwestern Collections During the Panic and Deflation, 1837–1843," *SS*, XIX (1980), 315–30.

68. Larry Schweikart, *Banking in the Southwest* (Baton Rouge, 1989), includes most of what I call the Gulf South with Kentucky and Tennessee into "the Southwest," and argues that all these states shared common banking practices. Generally, he is correct. The distinction made between the Gulf South and Kentucky and Tennessee is in regard to debtors' rights.

69. Browne, "Eastern Merchants and Their Southwestern Collections," 328–9.

pieces of the shattered economy. "All the people," he said, "do not seem in the least cured of their folly by their sufferings."[70]

Porter summed up quite well the Gulf South's first reaction to economic crisis after 1837. In one sense, men's hands were tied. Banks in the Gulf states could not force people to pay for their debts immediately, nor could they be forced to make specie payments. The Alabama legislature in 1837 operated logically by legalizing the state bank's suspension of specie payments and ex[illegible]ng the time debtors had to pay their banking debts. The legislature also passed a rather half-baked plan to raise $5 million in specie by selling state bonds at a time when there was little specie in circulation, and those who claimed possession of it were reluctant to part with it in exchange for worthless bonds.[71] But in another sense, legislators did no favors for the economic development of the state when they prevented competition from the state bank by liquidating branch banks. The state bank was the only option planters had to arrange loans; it was therefore removed from the vicissitudes of a market economy. This, according to one historian, eliminated Alabama's chance of financing industry and of having any "options to slavery."[72]

Two measures planters took to combat the deflation of cotton prices was to strive for self-sufficiency and the diversification of agricultural crops. Certainly, contemporaries believed that if they were to stay in the American Gulf South, they and their families had to find ways to vary their agricultural pursuits in order to compensate for the drop in cotton prices. In an attempt to limit spending, many began cutting down on the amount of money that they disbursed in imports of foodstuffs and manufactured goods. Indeed, all farmers were expected to raise their own foodstuffs; buying corn or meat in 1840 was considered to be

70. Wendell Homes Stephenson, *Alexander Porter: Whig Planter of Old Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1934), 103.

71. Larry Schweikart, "Alabama's Antebellum Banks: New Interpretations, New Evidence," *AR*, XXXVIII (1985), 205.

72. Schweikart, "Alabama's Antebellum Banks," 221.

prodigal.[73] In Tuscaloosa, Robert Jemison, Jr., lectured his overseer: "I cannot raise 4 cts cotton & buy corn, meat, negroe clothes or any thing which by any possibility may be made on the plantation."[74] Jemison was in debt and could not pay many of his creditors, one of whom was Newton St. John of Mobile, whose firm was St. John, Powers, & Co., and whose kinsman was Samuel St. John.[75]

Stunned by the rapidity of financial disaster, a reform movement swept the Gulf South states of Mississippi and Alabama during this period. Mississippi, the Gulf state that had been hardest hit by the fall in cotton prices, made a dramatic effort to achieve agricultural stability in the wake of plummeting cotton prices. But the change was not welcomed in the beginning. Cotton planters' first response to the drop in cotton prices was to produce more cotton in order to minimize the losses they incurred. Even in 1837, agricultural journalist and reformer Thomas Affleck argued that in order to save themselves from utter ruin, planters had to grow cotton merely as a surplus crop. Everything else, he maintained, should be produced at home. Only then could the South alleviate its economic problems, which centered upon the oversaturation of the cotton market. But Mississippi planters feared losing international markets by cutting down their production, so they decided to both increase their cotton production as well as to commence growing their own foodstuffs.[76] At Log Hall, Dr. Martin W. Philips grew peas, not only as a source of food but also as a way to replenish the soil with nutrients. He also grew other foodstuffs, but cotton continued to occupy the largest area of cultivation on his plantation. He grew twice as much cotton as oats and corn,

73. Franklin L. Riley, "Diary of a Mississippi Planter, 1 January 1840, to April 1863," *PMHS*, X (1909), 318; Moore, *Agriculture in Antebellum Mississippi*, 73.

74. Robert Jemison, Jr. to Jason S. Bryant (Jemison's overseer at Frogtown), Tuscaloosa, January 21, 1845, Jemison Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

75. Jemison wrote: "I am making every exertion to meet by acceptance [financial obligation] held by St. John, Powers & Co. & hope by the *Tuskaloosa* shall be enabled to remit you an amt. with what my cotton & the too little drfts. will make to pay the acceptance." Jemison owed St. John, Powers & Co. $5,000. Robert Jemison, Jr. to John O. Cummins, Tuscaloosa, February 11, 1845, Jemison Papers, *WSHSCLUA*.

76. Thomas Affleck, "What Shall The Cotton Farmers Do To Save Himself From Utter Ruin?," typescript, Thomas Affleck Papers, Rosenberg Library, Galveston; Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, 163.

and with the remainder of tilled area, he planted vegetables, fruits, and legumes. Philips raised and slaughtered pigs, cattle, and lambs.[77]

That diversification of crops and attempts at self-sufficiency were more pronounced during the depression is quite accurate. But it is just as true that many Gulf South planters always had tried to cut down on their costs by producing their own food. In other parts of the Gulf states other than in Mississippi, self-sufficiency in the production of foodstuffs was a fairly common practice.[78] Andrew McCollam of Louisiana was, as most planters were wont to be, perennially short of cash. Given the rather large expenses of sugar cultivation, in terms of the machinery and labor, McCollam realized that in every other aspect the plantation would have to maintain itself. His slaves, therefore, planted a variety of vegetables and fruits. They raised pigs and chickens. Slave clothing was sewn at home. The only products the McCollams bought were dairy products, coffee, and flour. These were purchased in New Orleans, where most of his sugar was marketed.[79] Such diversification on a sugar plantation was almost unheard of in Louisiana; such plantations had to be quite specialized in order to produce large numbers of hogsheads that many did not even raise enough corn and pork to feed their slaves.

Rachel O'Connor, owner of the "Evergreen Plantation" in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, was an adept horticulturalist and planter. Cotton was her cash crop, and she grew corn, vegetables, and fruits to maintain herself and her slaves year-round. In various letters, she educated members of her extended family the proper ways to grow leeks, periwinkles, and Jerusalem cherry bushes. Many of her letters are filled with news of the progress of her crops. For the most part, the plantation was able to raise enough food to sustain itself. Only in times before a killing, for instance, would she resort to buying meat. In May, 1834, when

77. Riley, "Diary of a Mississippi Planter," *passim*.

78. Andrew W. Foshee, "Slave Hiring in Rural Louisiana," *LH*, XXVI (1985), 63–73, points out "plantations in the Louisiana sugar sector attained food self-sufficiency with the exception of meat produced in conjunction with neighboring small farms," but he concentrates more on the period 1850–1860.

79. J. Carlyle Sitterson, "The McCollams: A Planter Family of the Old and New South," *JSH*, VI (1940), 348, 350; Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, 50–1.

her supplies of corn were running low, she grew "frightened" about having to buy a few barrels from the market in New Orleans.[80]

Ferdinand Lawrence Steel, a nonslaveholding farmer in Carroll County, Mississippi, bought a 170-acre farm in the Choctaw Purchase in 1839.[81] In that year, the farm was a self-sufficient enterprise: it produced five bales of cotton, 250 bushels of corn, 25 bushels of potatoes, and unspecified amounts of oats, wheat, peas, watermelons, muskmelons, and other vegetables and fruits. The family raised chickens, ducks, swine, cows, and horses. Cotton was the cash crop, and although the amount Steel's farm produced was small, their outside needs were minor; probably the only products they bought were coffee or medicine.[82]

South of Carroll County, In Hinds, Patrick Sharkey was also determined to make his lands become a self-sustaining economic unit.[83] The plantation in Leake county grew wheat, corn, oats, barley, and potatoes. Its livestock included horses, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and pea fowls. The Sharkeys cultivated fruit in their orchard, from wagons and buggies upon which produce or people rode from place to place. These vehicles were composed of oak and hickory wood that was cut from trees on the plantation and then dried. The slaves forged crude iron that Sharkey bought into usable products. Women made mattresses from goose feathers. Sharkey made his own molasses. Once he was asked by a friend: "Don't you think you could buy cheap molasses cheaper than you can make sorghum syrup." "Yes, much cheaper," he replied, "but the negroes would get less [syrup that way]." Apparently Sharkey had no strong desire to sell any of his produce; he was hospitable enough to allow passersby to pick as much fruit as they wanted.[84]

80. Allie Bayne Windham Webb, *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation: Rachel O'Connor's Legacy of Letters, 1823–1845* (Albany, 1983), *passim*.

81. Edward M. Steel, Jr., "A Pioneer Farmer in the Choctaw Purchase," *JMH*, XVI (1954), 229–241.

82. Steel, "A Pioneer Farmer in the Choctaw Purchase," 234–5.

83. George C. Osborn, "Plantation Life in Central Mississippi As Revealed in the Clay Sharkey Papers," *JMH*, III (1941), 277–88. He was the cousin of Judge William Sharkey.

84. Osborn, "Plantation Life in Central Mississippi," 281.

One "scientific" farmer who seems to have begun his method of diversified agriculture without regard to the economic misadventures of the Gulf South was John Carmichael Jenkins, a resident of Adams County, Mississippi. Jenkins was like most of his Natchez neighbors, a cotton planter; his staple crop grossed between 500 and 1500 bales per season.[85] He experimented with growing sugar cane, but found it to be too expensive when cultivated along with other crops on one plantation. At Elgin, his plantation, Jenkins also cultivated corn, millet, tobacco, hay, livestock, and oats in order to provide for his family and slaves; very little of what was raised was sold for profit. Besides cotton, the production that Jenkins hoped would be marketed in New Orleans was fruit. Like John Hebron, Jenkins set out to prove that the cultivation of fruits could be an economically viable Southern enterprise. Jenkins pioneered Southern cultivation of hybrid apples, creating the Elgin Harvest, the Elgin, the Elgin Pippin, the Forest Pippin, and others. He cultivated grapes, cherries, apricots, figs, strawberries, plums, and raspberries.[86]

Across the Mississippi river into Louisiana, plantation owner John McDonogh's principal source of income came not from sugar or cotton, but from vegetables. He owned "hundreds" of slaves, yet the profit gained from growing vegetables, from $400 to $700 per week, was ostensibly greater than what he could receive selling cotton.[87] His plantation, northwest of New Orleans, resembled a miniature village. In one area all the labor was performed. Another area was exclusively for brickmaking. There was even a carpenter's shop on the grounds.

85. Albert Garrel Seal, "John Carmichael Jenkins: Scientific Planter of the Natchez District," *JMH*, I (1939), 24–5.

86. Seal, "John Carmichael Jenkins," 24.

87. Lane Carter Kendall, "John McDonogh—Slave Owner," *LHQ*,XV (1932), 653.

II.

It is said that there were three questions which were neither prudent nor polite to ask of a stranger in Texas, namely:
Why did you leave home?
Where did you come from?
Where did you get your horse?[88]

If If they had sunk deep enough into the quagmire of debt, American Gulf Southerners had one other option—immigrate to Texas. The choice was expedient but risky. The massive exodus into the Republic began as early as 1837.[89] One Mississippian traveling to Texas wrote his wife from Natchez that "the roads are crowded with emigrants to Texas."[90] Some merchants and planters of the Gulf South who had suffered during the financial misfortune of the late 1830's put out the word that they were "G[one]. T[o]. T[exas]." The Republic of Texas had no policies of expatriation with the United States; in fact, it encouraged those financially ruined to relocate within its boundaries. A British traveler in 1839 noted that "so bent are [Texans] on having Emigrants—no matter of what kind—that I have repeatedly seen articles calling on debtors in the U. States hiding from their creditors, to take refuge in Texas, where they will find sympathy in their sufferings."[91] He noted that the number of people who had G.T.T. was "not only very considerable but daily increasing." In order to escape the foreclosure of their properties, plantation owners frequently had to leave in the dead of the night—taking with them slaves and other transportable property—or on Sundays, when impunity would allow them time to leave unmolested.[92] Early in 1840 the Galveston

88. Thomas Frank Dobie, *The Flavor of Texas* (1936), 53, quoted in John Lauren Harr, "The Ante-Bellum Southwest, 1815–1861" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1941), 67.

89. In this same way, many New Englanders immigrated to the Midwest after the 1819 and 1837 Panics.

90. William R. Pope to Lesey Jane Pope, Natchez, February 12, 1837, the Pope-Carter Family Papers, *DA*. Later he wrote her excitedly: "[L]and [around San Augustine] is rising verry [*sic*] fast, the people are comeing [*sic*] to Texas in droves; it is generally believed that the difficulties of this country are over." William R. Pope to Lesey Jane Pope, Near Fort Jessup, March 1, 1837.

91. Willis W. Pratt (ed.), *Galveston Island or, A Few Months Off the Coast of Texas. The Journal of Francis C. Sheridan, 1839–1840* (Austin, 1954), 96; Smithwick, *Evolution of a State*, 82.

92. Pratt (ed.), *Galveston Island*, 105–6.

Gazette observed that in the period of three days, fifteen "large" vessels had brought 1,200 people who wanted to settle in Texas, many of them "agriculturists."[93]

Aaron Shannon, a resident of Pickens County, Alabama, left his home for the Republic of Texas in or before 1842 when he bought land on credit from Alva Woods in 1837. Woods sued Shannon for payment of two or three tracts that remained unpaid. It is unlikely whether Mr. Woods received proper remuneration from Shannon.[94] In March 1840, Martin W. Philips, a planter in Hinds County, Mississippi, moaned: "The times seem so hard, that no one could think would be worse; the ablest men in the land cannot raise money; a vast number broke; many are running off with their negroes. *The State is bankrupt*; never was there a time when insolvency was more general. *The Shylocks are only safe.*"[95] Agricola Wilkins' business partner made plans to leave the economically devastated city of Mobile for Texas in 1837. Wilkins himself approved of his partner's plans, adding, "I do not know but I had better go with him & get out of trouble."[96]

Another traveler in the Gulf South noted the same secrecy that marked the stealthy emigration of many Mississippians.[97] He recalled that the residents on defunct plantations, who were intent on leaving, were careful not to arouse suspicion about their imminent plans for removal. If found out, the potential existed that sheriffs would make haste to force an execution on their property. Therefore:

> ...on the evening before abandonment those plantations would present no unusual appearance. The stock would be in the stables, properly attended to; the cows would be in the cowpen; the hogs would be called and fed; the sheep would be herded; the plantation negroes would be in their proper places, and

93. Galveston *Gazette*, January 7, 1840, quoted in *NR*, LVII (January 25, 1840), 337.

94. Marilyn Davis Barefield and Garr Byron Barefield, *Pickens County, Alabama, 1841–1861* (Montgomery, 1984), 11.

95. Riley, "Diary of a Mississippi Planter," 317–8.

96. Wilkins to N. Denton, Mobile, August 7, 1837, Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*. Wilkins instead opted to stay in Mobile and try to collect money on the debts owed him from various clients throughout Alabama and Mississippi. But he opined again in the spring of 1839: "I feel as though I was tied here for the ballance of my life. I know of no way of getting rid of [my trials & difficulties] except by going to Texas... ." Wilkins to Denton, Mobile, May 28, 1839, *WSHSCLUA*.

97. J. A. Orr, "A Trip from Houston to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1845," in *PMHS*, IX (1906), 175–6, quoted in Sharp, *The Jacksonians versus the Banks*, 79.

> over all the hush of evening and the stillness of night would fall. On the morning following the smoke would curl from the chimneys, from residence and quarters, the cows would be lowing in the pen, the sheep bleating in the fold, the hogs in their place; not a wagon gone, not a vehicle missing; the meat left in the smokehouse, the poultry raising their usual disturbance—and not a human being, nor horse, nor mule, nor saddle, nor bridle on the whole place. Every negro, every horse, every mule spirited away in the darkness of the night ... all, all in a double quick march for Texas.

Stealing away in the night provided the only assurance that planters could escape the heavy burden of debt. Those who had lost the most were those who took the drastic measure of leaving the country.

Julien S. Devereux left Alabama in 1842, after writing that he had "reconsidered the matter [of removal], declined making a crawfish of myself, and finally came to Texas." He had been a justice of the peace in Macon County, Alabama, and completed a year of federal military service during 1836–1837.[98] On a page in a notebook he eulogized his Alabama life, now forever gone:

Built it
Occupied it &
left it and
gone to Texas
fool move.[99]

Apparently not so foolish, since Devereux had gained a wife and numerous debts in Macon County, neither of which seemed to please him. Once removed to Texas, Devereux got ride of his debts, and in 1843, he got ride of his wife, too, divorcing her and marrying a sixteen-year-old, Sarah Ann Landrum, three months later. By 1850, Devereux was a successful planter, owning about ten thousand acres and eighty slaves.

98. *TH*, I, 494; Abigail Curlee, "A Study of Texas Slave Plantations, 1822 to 1865," (unpubl. Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin), 82.

99. Dorman Winfrey, "Julien Sidney Devereux and His Monte Verdi, Texas, Plantation," *ETHA*, V [October, 1967], 85.

Another Gulf Southerner who immigrated to Texas in 1842 was Hiram Runnels, a Mississippi congressman from Hinds County.[100] Adolphus Sterne[101] noted in his diary that "ninety negroes passed trough to day belong to a Mr Runnels of Mississippi probably the Ex governor." Although incorrect about his professional capacity, Sterne was correct about the size of Runnels' property; a large planter in the cotton belt of Mississippi, Runnels became a successful Brazos planter.[102] Later that same year, Sterne recorded that "a Mr Lewis from Alabamo who passed trough here for the west sometime ago with 60 Slaves— returned to day wanting to hire the most of them till October next & cultivate a small farm, provided he can get Provisions etc— Land and inclosed Plantations plenty but no provisions."[103]

One resident of Texas who had been a citizen of the former Mexican state also lost most of his money and property in 1837. John Rice Jones wrote a letter to James F. Perry, the brother-in-law of the late Stephen F. Austin, asking for help in securing him a position with the government of the Republic. By 1838 Jones was himself close to the Austin family and was almost penniless. Although he did not, as Sterne had, rue the pecuniary support he had given to Texas during her fight for independence, he did think of that support as a sort of bargaining chip for which he might trade for a political favor. He had been a resident of Texas for eight years, and during that time he had saved and gone without the comforts he might have taken for granted in the United States so that he could build his own business in Texas. And yet eight years later, he had no money to show for his time and labor spent, no money to open a mercantile firm, and no money to purchase slaves to work his land. A job was what he needed. Jones noted that the fact that he invested money in the Government "should be considered & have some weight with Pres. Lamar." Although he pointed out that two influential men of Texas, Thomas McKinney and Dr. Everette, were his friends, he needed

100. *TH*, II, 515.

101. A former New Orleans agent of the Texas provisional government in 1835 who recruited and equipped a company of the New Orleans Greys, which was sent to Texas via the Natchitoches. *TH*, II, 670.

102. Harriet Smither (ed.), "Diary of Adolphus Sterne, Part XIII," *SWHQ*, XXXIII (1929), 161.

103. Smither, "Diary of Adolphus Sterne, Part XIV," *SWHQ*, XXXIII (1930), 231.

Perry's support to help him get some position. Helpless and even unable to feed his family, Jones was at a loss to tell Perry anything else but that "I am really poor & unhappy... What am I to do." Jones was appointed postmaster general by Lamar five days later, on December 14, 1839.[104]

Devereux, Runnels, Lewis, and other planters found on their removal to the Republic the scarcity of money, provisions, and much worse—Indian raiding on white settlements and frontier battles with the Mexicans. As Sterne noted: "Times have never been so hard in Texas, like they are now, I have never known the want of two bits untill now.—!!!"[105] Beginning in 1836 and continuing through the Lamar administration, Indians raided towns and settlements, which were poorly protected.[106] The Cherokee policy in Texas was to prey on the helpless and feed on the innocent for the crimes of the guilty. Until 1842, Texans fought Mexicans in a series of battles to win the 325-mile Rio Grande border as the southern boundary of Texas.[107] In terms of social stability, Texas certainly was not the promised land its newcomers expected. This economic precariousness particularly troubled Sterne, who had remembered flush times in the mid-1830's and the amount of money ($820) he loaned the Texas government for the Revolution:

> to day we are without Sugar, flour and nearly out of Coffee, and no monay to purchase those articles of Luxury, but having had them ever since I have been in Texas and since I have had a family, they have become rather necessaries, the Luxuries of life—if I had the monay I expended in 1835 to recruit troops in New Orleans to bring me and Family to the glorious State of Liberty? in which we now are, I would at least [have kept] a *little* to purchase the necessaries of life... [Then, I] would [have] sacrifice[d] my life in sustaining the government which I assisted in rearing, but knowing what I know if the same

104. John Rice Jones to James F. Perry, Columbia, December 9, 1838, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*; *TH*, I, 925; Gayle Talbot, "John Rice Jones," *SWHQ*, XXXV (1931), 147–8.

105. Smither, "Diary of Adolphus Sterne, Part XIV," *SWHQ*, XXXIII (1930), 231.

106. Marilyn McAdams Sibley, "The Texas-Cherokee War of 1839," *ETHA*, III (1965), 18–32, gives a brief account of Texas-Cherokee relations under the Houston and Lamar administrations.

107. Joseph Milton Nance, *After San Jacinto, The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836–1841* (Austin, 1963). Texans were threatened not only by Indians and Mexicans, but also by civilians, ruffians who were merely bandits and who killed each other and innocent people to accumulate treasure. Eph[raim] M. Daggett, "Recollections of the War of the Moderators and Regulators," copy of the original manuscript, since destroyed by fire, ca. 1837–42, *TUA*.

> thing had to be gone over again god knows I would not spend *one cent to bring my family to want* and to make *great men out of Trash*[.][108]

In desperation, Sterne lashed out against the place that had brought him much happiness—Texas, the state in which he had met his future wife, raised his family, and helped direct Texas to political independence. Having been able to play the lead in determining Texas' political future, what frustrated him and others so entirely was their feelings of helplessness in the face of Texas' impoverishment.

C. H. Fisher, a resident of Smith County, Mississippi, had heard from Ashbel Smith that the economic condition in Texas was much better than anywhere in the United States. He complained about the depreciation and worthlessness of "trash," his nickname for money. Because Mississippi was hit so hard by the deflation, there were only a few reputable houses with which to do business. Fisher wanted to visit to Texas as soon as possible, perhaps with an eye toward seeing for himself whether Smith were correct—that Texas might not be as depressed economically as his current state of residence.[109] By 1840 Smith declared that: "Money is excessively scarce among us, as I believe is the case every where. I spend most of my time on my plantation. A monotonous life it's true but I do not find it dull." Texas, however pleasing to Smith, was not so to Fisher, and this letter was enough to keep him in the United States.[110]

For Texas, the scarcity of money was not primarily a result of the economic deflation, but more a product of the nascent banking system in the Republic combined with the general slowdown in business throughout the South. Thomas McKinney noted that "the War brought all farmers much behind... many with small Capital have [been] broken ... through the dishonesty of Debtors who owe them and will not pay[.]" His own firm, McKinney and Williams, was almost bankrupt by 1842. One merchant wrote: "McKinney & Williams' drafts on N. O. were again protested while I was in N. O. I would touch their money with

108. Smither, "Diary of Sterne, Part XIV," 233.
109. C. H. Fisher to Smith, Smith County, Mississippi, June 10 1840, Ashbel Smith Papers, *BTHCA*.
110. Ashbel Smith to George Hockley, Houston, December 22, 1840, Ashbel Smith Papers, *BTHCA*.

caution. I do not believe it can be good long."[111] McKinney's brother, James, had come to Texas from Missouri in the 1830's. He was so disheartened because of the tight and limited economy that he remarked that were it not for the fact that his brother was one of the most respected and recognized men in the Republic, he would abandon Texas altogether and go back to Missouri.

Joseph George, a cotton planter in Brazoria, Texas, was at his wit's end by the spring of 1844. He had grown no cotton in two years, and the harvest of 1841 was so small that he was able to salvage half a crop only. Everything, he maintained, was conspiring against the Texas cotton planter. Worms had eaten a fair amount of his cotton. What they could not destroy Mother Nature had rotted out by flooding his land with heavy rains. And if low prices and infestation were not problems enough, Indian wars fought by the Texan army were devastating the countryside, burning his plowed fields. He remarked bitterly: "I have become disgusted with this Country as a Cotton Country there is more things in this Country to distroy [*sic*] the Cotton than any other place in the world." George decided that he would buy more land in order to give his cotton-growing venture one more try. But he could not get his hands on any money whatsoever, and he was forced to purchase additional land on credit. Texas lands, he said, were the cheapest to find in the world, but not even greener pastures could halt George's downward spiral into deep debt. Less than one year later, he was forced to sell both his plantation and slaves.[112]

111. James McKinney to Mrs. Elvira McKinney, September 2, 1840, James McKinney Papers, *RLG*. McKinney's brother James wrote in 1840: "You will not be surprised when I say that at this time Texas is by no means a good place for any person to begin merchandising." James McKinney to Mrs. Eleanor McKinney, Galveston, September 2, 1840, McKinney Papers, *BTHCA*. Morgan L. Smith to John Adriance, June 25, 1842, Adriance Papers, *BTHCA*, quoted in Abigail Curlee Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Antebellum Texas," *SWHQ*, LXXIII (April, 1970), 440–42.

112. Joseph J. George to Lunsford R. Cherry, Brazoria, Texas, May 13, 1844; Joseph J. George to [his sister] Mary Ann Cherry, Columbia, Texas, February 2, 1845, Lunsford R. Cherry Papers, *DA*. George Hammeken, a New Orleanian who was trying to sell Andrew Somervell's lands in 1846, wrote to James Perry that "the impression here I find with regard to Texas lands, is, that as there is a large quantity to be sold for a long time the prices will not rise. I sold my own land to a friend, who I believe purchased only to aid me, not for speculation. I told him so, he smiled & said, perhaps both." George L. Hammeken to James . Perry, New Orleans, March 30, 1846, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

Money was so scarce that it was not the main unit of commercial exchange. One person stated that "money is scarser here than the mind of a rational man is capable of imagining."[113] Texans had used Mexican money before the Revolution; afterwards, they minted their own currency. But even this currency was worthless since it was not backed by specie. The economic history of Texas was a history of bartering. When men were needed to fight with Texans in their revolution against Mexico, land was offered in exchange. When economic deflation lingered in the Republic throughout the 1840's, many planters and merchants accepted and meted out payment for goods in commodities. For example, the firm of Smith & Adriance bought a plantation in Texas to house the livestock offered to them by its clients as payment for their debts.[114] One immigrant to Texas, Cayton Erhard, recalled that, in 1843, cotton planters floated their bales down the Colorado River into Matagorda Bay on pine rafts, and then sold those rafts to people who needed the pine to build their houses. The planters were paid—not in cash, but in goods and sugar. Erhard, who was employed himself in one of the rafting jobs, was paid in sugar for his wages.[115]

Like members of a medieval economy, Texans knew the monetary value of certain goods. No one trusted the value of Texan currency. Texas currency was only worth fifty cents on the dollar. A cow, so they believed, was less likely to fluctuate in price than would any Texan denomination. Erhard knew the price of a cow or calf—five dollars. James Nicholson, of

113.W. W. Holman to the Honorable Isaac Van Zandt, San Augustine, January 20, 1843, Van Zandt Papers, *BTHCA*. Texas, of course, had no monopoly on the phrase nor on the phenomenon. Scores of correspondence throughout the region attest to the same occurrence. Edwin C. Bolton to Richard Bolton, Panola, Mississippi, March 5, 1840; Edwin C. Bolton to Richard Bolton, Panola, Mississippi, October 14, 1840; both in the Edwin C. Bolton Papers, *MDAH*: "Money is very scarce I cannot get any." "Times are so hard that I cannot get any money at all I have not even seen $20 in good money in two months... ." Agricola Wilkins to Nehemiah Denton, Mobile, December 7, 1836; February 12, 1839; October 26, 1839, the Agricola Wilkins Papers, *WSHSCLUA*: "Money is very scarse here now. Last Saturday is said to have been the hardest day Mobile ever saw in money matters." "Money is so scarse here now that there have been very few sales of real estate." "Money is very scarce here, & almost impossible to be obtained." "Money is extremely scarse here."

114.Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Texas," 443. A similar phenomenon occurred throughout the American Gulf South. In Holly Springs, Mississippi in the early 1840's, one editor requested food in payment of debts rather than money. Stone, "The Economic Development of Holly Springs," 347.

115.Bill Moore, *Bastrop County* (rev. ed., Wichita Falls, 1977), 52–3. The sugar was cultivated locally, in Caney, Texas. Thomas McKinney once used a pig trough to transport goods when no boats were available. John Lauren Harr, "The Ante-Bellum Southwest, 1815–1861" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1941), 277.

Bastrop County, threw a ball in Christmas 1843—the admission fee was ten dollars, payable by cow and calf. Horses were also considered legal tender, but because they were favorite acquisitions of Indian thieves, they became scarce as currency, and this left the cow as the most reliable form of payment.[116] Slaves, more explicably, were also considered adequate payment for land or goods.[117] John Rice Jones, who operated a plantation near Cummins Creek in Fayette County, owed $155 to a Mr. Blandin who would not accept payment by cotton or by horse. Jones suggested that he settle with "the man who is building [Blandin's] house in this place," perhaps signifying that he might offer supplies or even labor in exchange. But Blandin turned him down. Jones concluded that he was "a little hard to be satisfied." Blandin, he found out, wanted to be paid only in currency, and then only in hard money or in Louisiana notes—anything but Texas money.[118]

In other ways, Texas was not an ideal place to relocate. The idea of federally-sponsored internal improvements was absurd. The transportation system was archaic. Roads were nonexistent at worst, rough and dangerous at best for most of the country. Steamboats were almost unseen for most of the early 1840's because owners could not repair them. Consequently, out of eight or ten vessels that had plied the rivers of Texas in the early days of the Republic, only one was in operation by 1844.[119] Merchants and planters had returned to the use of rafts or keelboats. Nevertheless, many Gulf Southerners came to Texas after the bottom fell out of their own local economies. Dilue Rose Harris noted that a number of Mississippians "had been put out of the State of Mississippi." These were "gamblers," she

116. Alfred E. Menn, *In the Shadow of the Lost Pines: A History of Bastrop County and its People* (Austin, 1889), 10; Noah Smithwick, *Evolution of a State* (Austin, 1900), 234, both quoted in Moore, *Bastrop County*, 53.

117. K. K. Koontz to James Perry, Richmond [on the Brazos], June 26, 1839: "I told you of a man by the name of Tratter who wished to purchase land and pay for it in negroes." Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

118. John Rice Jones to James F. Perry, Marion, May 29, 1838, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

119. Holbrook, "Cotton Marketing in Texas," 445; Dilue Rose Harris, "The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris," *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, IV (1900), 85–127; 155–89; VII (1904), 214–22, in Jo Ella Powell Exley, *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women* (College Station, 1985), 65–6.

qualified, not to be confused with the "planters" from Mississippi who, with their slaves, had settled along the Brazos river.[120]

Silas Dinsmore, on the other hand, thought Texas was a very profitable place to relocate. He wrote Robert L. Crawford, a businessman from Mobile who was interested in moving to the Republic, that the land around East Texas "is one of the loveliest countries in the world. It is hill-prairie of the richest sort." The land of which he spoke was located up the Labaca River from Matagorda Bay, in Gonzalez county. The land was owned in partnership with other Mobilians [General Everitt, Mr. Townsend, C. A. Henry, and A. W. Harrell.][121] He made no mention of the deflated times in the region, nor of the barter economy in Texas. Perhaps he knew that Crawford, a Mobilian, knew about the depressed economic conditions and needed not state the obvious.

Some who came to Texas from the American Gulf South were young men who, where they lived, saw little room for social advancement. These men were all too willing to move to Texas and try their hand at luck and fortune on the frontier in 1838–1842. The conservative atmosphere in the United States following the Panic of 1837 had left a pall over the economic affairs of many in the states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Seeing perhaps little chance to advance economically in their own towns, they looked to Texas as a golden opportunity to make the fortune that should have existed in America. Money and land were enough inducements for William B. Trotter to write President Lamar and offer himself and "a Parsel of able boded active and dareing young men" from Mississippi to assist Texans in defending the Texas-Mexican frontier.[122] The Texas government pledged land for military service for all members of the Texas army. These men, however strong their antipathy toward the Indians and Mexicans, did believe that Texas held the only chance they

120. Harris, "Reminiscences," in Exley, *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine*, 68.
121. Dinsmore to Crawford, Well Point, Texas, October 5, 1844, Dinsmore Letters, 1844, *BTHCA*.
122. *LP*, I, 90–1, 208.

had for economic mobility. Felix Huston, for example, once the commander-in-chief of Texas' revolutionary army, planned a return to Texas in late 1839 to serve in the army again.

The problem that arose for many of these young, restless men was that in 1836 Houston vociferously demanded an end to the wars with the Mexicans and Indians. What were the bored to do? Some did what many found horrific, namely, the joined the Comanche Indians in raids on "defenseless" civilians living on the frontier. The New Orleans *Picayune* reported that:

> [The Indians] are said to number 5000 warriors, and to be led on by *painted white men*, who are disappointed and dissatisfied Texians. The Indians had murdered several families in the neighborhood of Washington, and taken and sacked the town of Nashville. Nearly all the efficient men in the Texas army had been furloughed by president Houston, and the men are represented to be in a state of confusion and dissatisfaction. The disbanding of the army by the president of the Republic has given great dissatisfaction to the people of the whole country. The army became discontented because President Houston had refused to gratify their wishes in an attack upon Matamoras.[123]

The Boston *Atlas* called the members of the Texas army "vagabonds" who composed the "scum and off-scouring of New Orleans and the South." The Republic's citizens, it continued, "subjected themselves to the arbitrary control of an armed rabble, whom they will not find it very easy to get rid of."[124] The advent of Mirabeau B. Lamar as the Republic's next president proved that Texans did not have to get rid of their dangerous human herds. Lamar reinstituted war on the frontiers. But there were other wars to be fought in the Gulf South in the 1840's, namely, in Cuba; campaigns to capture that island as a slave territory for the Gulf South are the subject of chapter six.

123. New Orleans *Picayune*, June 24, 1837.

124. Boston *Atlas*, quoted in the New Orleans *Picayune*, July 2, 1837. James McKinney noted in 1840 that "since the termination of active operations against the Mexicans so many young men have come in here from the United States that all branches of business are filled to overflowing and here and few situations in the country." McKinney to Mrs. Eleanor McKinney, Galveston, September 2, 1840, McKinney Papers, *BTHCA*.

5 *Gulf South Interest in Texas Annexation*

The next major step for the Gulf states was to bring Texas into the political fold of the United States. The widespread Gulf sentiment in favor of Texas annexation reflected the interest in unifying politically what it had such close ties to economically and socially. Many advocated annexation because they believed that Texas shared with the South a common design—a social, economic, and political bond that was "closely entwined and so completely enfibered."[1] The threads that wove together the interests of the Gulf states with Texas were slavery, cotton, and the symbiotic trade. One congressman from Alabama stated without reservation that as a member of the "sunny South," he favored annexation because he had "the warmest solicitude for [Southern] prosperity."[2]

Yet the Gulf South had another pressing concern to speed up congressional action to annex Texas. Just as it had funded the Texas Revolution to protect the Southern way of life in that territory, and would presently undertake to annex Cuba before it believed Spain had the chance to abolish slavery there, it sought to politically unify the Lone Star state. It feared

1. James E. Winston, "Texas Annexation Sentiment in Mississippi, 1835–1844," *SWHQ*, XXIII (July, 1919), 7.
2. James E. Belser, Alabama, quoted in *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., App., 41.

Britain's presence in Texas and its advocacy of abolitionism there.[3] Britain had established diplomatic relations with Texas and sent an envoy, Captain Charles Elliot, to act as chargé d'affaires in Texas in August, 1841.[4] Elliot's plan was for Britain to actively participate in the economic growth of Texas, thus assuring permanent British presence there. His definition for economic growth included the abolition of slavery. Several British officials in Texas made clear this position:

> The number of Slaves already in Texas is...not large, and it is generally believed that her Government would readily entertain any feasible plan by which this blighting section of her laws might be for ever expelled from her judicial Code. —The friends of abolition are numerous and powerful even in that Republic. —The persons in Authority at present are also disposed to get rid of Slavery and would gladly listen to the propôsal if accompanied with a treaty of Commerce from Great Britain.[5]
>
> It is my thorough Conviction that is essentially the interest of Texas to link herself closely with England, and, as a natural incident of the connexion, to substitute free for compulsory labour. The arguments I should offer for the relinquishment of domestic Slavery would be based on this Conviction.[6]
>
> My scheme supposes another Convention in this Country. Slavery to be abolished, the entire abolition of political disabilities upon people of Colour, *perfectly free trade* to be declared to be a fundamental principle...[7]

When Elliot learned in 1842 that the United States was interested in annexation, he anxiously suggested to Aberdeen, the foreign secretary, that adoption of his "scheme" was

3. Justin H. Smith, *Annexation of Texas* (New York, 1911), 30. Smith dismisses the abolitionist interpretation as a "plot" devised by the South. Any answer, of course, turns on how one evaluates the reasons given by Southerners in favor of annexation. I believe Southerners, especially those in the Gulf South, genuinely feared the implications of British presence in Texas. Seymour V. Connor, *Adventure in Glory: The Saga of Texas, 1836–1849* (Austin, 1965), 226; Harriet Smith, "English Abolitionism and the Annexation of Texas," *SWHQ*, XXXII (1929), 193–205.

4. Elliot was discredited in Britain during the late 1830's when his actions in the "Opium War" with China resulted in his recall by the British government. Ephraim Douglass Adams, *British Interests and Activities in Texas, 1838–1846* (Baltimore, 1910), 108, states that the Elliot appointment to Texas after his China debacle indicates the importance of Texas to Britain.

5. James Hook to Viscount Palmerston, April 30, 1841, in Ephraim Douglass Adams (ed.), *British Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Republic of Texas, 1838–1846* (Austin, 1912–1917), 37.

6. William Kennedy to the Earl of Aberdeen, November 6, 1841, quoted in Adams (ed.), *British Diplomatic Correspondence*, 47.

7. Charles Elliot to H. U. Addington, November 15, 1842, quoted in Adams (ed.), *British Diplomatic Correspondence*, 128.

necessary. Aberdeen, however, felt confident that rumors of annexation were merely that, and as such, were not to be taken seriously.[8]

Gulf South interest in Texas annexation arose from its knowledge of Britain's preference for free labor, and the large Gulf slaveholders became anxious over England's desire to secure Mexico's recognition of Texan independence in exchange for Texan nonannexation to the United Sates. This interest was intensified by May, 1843 when news of the London Abolition Meeting reached its ears. A group of Texans and Britons had met to discuss the abolition of slavery in the Republic. The New Orleans *Bee* attacked both Houston and Elliot for their supposed "abolition plots."[9]

The Mississippi Democrats, led by John A. Quitman, Robert J. Walker, Jefferson Davis, Henry S. Foote, Felix Huston, and Albert Gallatin Brown, were virulently anti-British, and wasted no space in partisan newspapers like the *Mississippi Free Trader* and the *Vicksburg Sentinel* pointing out the potential dangers of British influence in Texas and urging Texas' immediate annexation. Reverting to his experiences in the movement to free Texas from Mexico, Quitman urged his fellow Mississippians to hold public meetings upon the subject of annexation. Especially telling was his belief that the "United States have not only the right, but are in duty bound by a just, wise, and rational exercise of their influence and power to interpose in the dissensions and wars of their neighbors, when these have a tendency to disturb the peace and security of our frontier, or threaten to destroy the happiness, prosperity, and safety of any portion of our country."[10] Here was a man who articulated brilliantly one of the reasons for filibustering, namely, that Americans have a moral obligation to protect their interests by working to achieve stability in neighboring states. The translation in Southern terms was that any measure was justified if it would protect *slave* interests.

8. Adams, *British Interests in Texas*, 119–20.
9. Adams, *British Interests in Texas*, 138–9.
10. James E. Winston, "The Annexation of Texas and the Mississippi Democrats," *SWHQ*, XXV (1921), 13.

On a practical level, Texas planters knew one thing clearly: that their livelihood was handicapped by the duty they had to pay on cotton shipped to the United States.[11] Some Texans, however, feared annexation for precisely the same reasons that many others lobbied for it: economics. Gail Borden, then the customs collector at Galveston, wrote: "Some one thousand passengers arrived here in one day this week. Indeed it looks like this *annexation* business is going to ruin the country by bringing in so many people to eat up our bread and meat. The next thing they will want [will be] to occupy half of our lands."[12] But men such as Isaac Van Zandt believed that "the object of England is to place Texas in such [a] situation as to force her to abandon definitely the annexation."[13]

Whigs and Democrats in the Gulf South generally supported the annexation of Texas.[14] As early as 1842, the Mississippi Senate unanimously adopted a resolution favoring the immediate annexation of Texas; many Whigs added their names and support to the resolution.[15] One Whig paper in Huntsville asked: "Would there be more danger to the Union by remaining as we are, the South to become at no distant day a prey to the iron and steady encroachments of Northern bigotry and fanaticism, or by adding to our territory, to secure ourselves such a balance of power as will teach moderation to our persecutors and disarm a false philanthropy of its incendiary effects?"[16] In Louisiana during the spring of

11. Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1933), II, 906.

12. Gail Borden to James F. Perry, Galveston, November 28, 1845, Perry Papers, *BTHCA*.

13. Fragment of a letter from Isaac Van Zandt to J. H. Brower, September 1844, Van Zandt Papers, *BTHCA*.

14. James E. Winston, "Louisiana and the Annexation of Texas," *LHQ* XIX (1936), 89–118; idem, "Texas Annexation Sentiment in Mississippi," *SWHQ*, XXIII (1919), 1–19; idem, "The Annexation of Texas and the Mississippi Democrats," *SWHQ*, XXV (1921), 1–25; idem, "Mississippi Whigs and the Annexation of Texas," *SWHQ*, XXIX (1926), 161–180; William H. Adams, *The Whig Party of Louisiana* (Lafayette, Louisiana, 1973), 130.

15. Some of these Whigs were John J. Guion, Andrew Knox, Garret Keirn, R. G. Humphrey, Dr. Metcalf, and Robert Montgomery, all of them hailed from either Madison or Yazoo county. Winston, "Texas Annexation Sentiment in Mississippi," 12. Winston points out that the Whig support shows that annexation had not yet become a party measure. The 1844 election returns for the two counties (Yazoo—530 Polk, 578 Clay; Madison—486 Polk, 612 Clay) show that they were roughly divided on the candidates [table 2].

16. The *Southern Advocate*, quoted in Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama* (University, 1937), 188.

1844, a public meeting was organized at the Banks Arcade to demonstrate the city's loyalty to the Republic. A large crowd gathered to hear addresses given in favor of the subject by Judge Clark Woodruff, Charles Derbigny, Governor Alexandre Mouton, Alexander Bullitt (editor of the New Orleans *Bee*), and Bernard Marigny. The New Orleans *Picayune* stated: "They speak—we state it without exaggeration—the feelings of nine-tenths of our population."[17]

Henry Clay personally did not object to the annexation of Texas.[18] As a presidential candidate, however, he opposed it because he did not think a peaceful annexation was possible. As long as it was done without having to go to war with Mexico and with the consent of the individual states, he maintained, annexation was acceptable. Gulf South Whigs had a bevy of issues that they wanted to see passed under a Whig administration. They wanted ~~federa~~l support for internal improvements, the reinstitution of the U.S. Bank, and an adoption of Clay's American System. In the so-called "Raleigh Letter," Clay pronounced himself against the idea of annexation. Gulf South Whigs were left scrambling, having to adjust their own political views to that of their candidate.[19] They decided to accept the Clay package regardless of the party's position on annexation. One newspaper proclaimed: "*We go for Henry Clay, Texas or no Texas.*"[20] All of this led Mississippi's *Woodville Republican* to query: "Will the cotton planter take a hint? or plunge headlong into ruin to gratify the vaulting ambition of a party favorite?"[21] Such a pronunciation was not surprising. The most anticipated event of 1844 was the presidential election. Whigs were willing to compromise their personal proclivities in favor of a greater good—a Whig president.

One fierce opponent of Texas annexation came from R. Graham, a resident of Carrollton, Mississippi. Describing his town as "wealthy" and "improving rapidly," he honestly had to

17. Adams, *The Whig Party of Louisiana*, 130.

18. Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay* (Boston, 1937), 358–78; Adams, *The Whig Party of Louisiana*, 131; Arthur C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South*, 112.

19. Adams, *The Whig Party of Louisiana*, 132.

20. The *Constitutionalist*, May 15, 1844, quoted in Winston, "Texas Annexation Sentiment in Mississippi," 15.

21. *Woodville Republican*, November 26, 1842, quoted in Winston, "Texas Annexation Sentiment," 17.

admit that it was a "miserable looking place." Still, he noted, the amount of Whigs and "locos" roughly balanced each other. As a Whig and supporter of Clay, he sent his reasons for opposing the annexation to John S. Boyd of Kentucky:

> This Texas question will detract very considerably from the strength of both Clay & Van in the south, but more from the latter than from Clay. Annexation rages like an epidemic in these parts; it is a perfect mania. But why they should be so bent on this measure, I cannot, for the life of me, divine. It would certainly run counter to the interests of the individual planters by abstracting the slave labour from the present slave states, it would depreciate the value of property in the South by inducing the buyer and speculator away to Texas as well as bringing into market a large amount of the lands of this and adjacent states, the present owners of which lands would wish to emigrate to Texas, in case it were annexed. There would also be a greater amount of the staples of the South procured, which would necessarily reduce the price. From all these considerations it would appear to me highly impolitic for the South.
>
> And the danger, which is urged by some, of the province falling into the hands of Great Briton is surely chimerical. That government disclaims all such intentions, and Texas herself is made up too much of people from the U.S. and particularly of the South to submit to British domination and abolition. Again, the notion of Texas giving a political preponderance to the slave-holding interest of the South is all fanciful. From the nature of the soil, climate, locality position and productions about three fifths of the province would not, and, indeed, could not have slaves. In addition to all this, when we reflect that our territory is large enough for three centuries yet, and that by adopting Texas we assume a debt whose amount is unknown, but without doubt reaches near $15,000,000, and also that we would certainly be taking on our heads a war with Mexico, and perhaps some other foreign power; and also break our treaty with the Mexican republic as well as do violence to the law of nations; in view of all these things, I say, it is strange to me why there should be so strong a party in favour of annexation.[22]

Before the presidential election, some Whigs deserted the party because of the annexation issue. George W. Crabb, Whig congressman from Tuscaloosa, left the party to join the Polk forces in Alabama over Clay's stance on Texas.[23] Sergeant S. Prentiss, a close friend of Clay's and a respected Mississippi Whig, could not countenance such actions, and voiced his opinion on the Texas issue in a *Vicksburg Whig* editorial. "I look upon the Whig cause," he stated officiously, with an added tone meant not just to vent his own view but to buoy the Whig party line, "as far more important than the Texas question, and would rather see that

22. Letter in the Graham Papers, *MDAH*.

23. Moore, *History of Alabama*, 189; William Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record, and Public Men from 1540 to 1872* (Montgomery, 1872), 558. Crabb left politics after 1844, removing to Mobile and becoming judge of the criminal court.

cause triumphant, and Mr. Clay elected, than to witness the annexation to the United States of all the territory between her and Patagonia." But he also continued in the following vein: "I believe the question of Annexation, as now presented, to be a mere party question, brought forward expressly to operate on the Presidential election, and that it ought not to have the slightest influence upon the course, or action, of any member of the Whig party."[24] Prentiss knew that the election had pitted Whigs against Democrats and a measure which, in their better judgment, they knew to be vital to the section's interests. His signal to party members, and indeed, to all his colleagues, Democrats alike, was that the Whig denial of support for annexation was executed out of political expediency, not ideological differences.

Among Democrats, Texas had no more faithful advocate that Robert J. Walker. On January 11, 1837, he introduced a resolution in the Senate calling for immediate annexation of Texas. Memucan Hunt, minister to the United States under President Sam Houston, presented a formal petition to Secretary of State John Forsyth on August 4, 1837. He pointed out to the Secretary that not only was Texas similar to any other Southern state in the United States in terms of population, economy, and political constitution, but it also was vital to American security in the Gulf of Mexico. Forsyth was not persuaded, however, and he even challenged the judgment of the United States' March recognition of Texas' status as a republic.[25] Walker's resolution was opposed by the administration, and passed the Senate only with the most difficulty. It had no chance in the Whig-dominated House of Representatives. Texas found Britain and France no more receptive to its overtures for recognition.

It has been noted before that Walker's motives concerning Texas' independence were conditioned by his own financial risk. Not everyone had such concrete interests in independence or annexation, but such associations are sometimes made because of Walker's

24. George Lewis Prentiss (ed.), *A Memoir of S. S. Prentiss* (2 vols., New York, 1856), II, 315–6; Dallas C. Dickey, *Sergeant S. Prentiss: Whig Orator of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1945), 242.
25. Stanley Siegel, *A Political History of the Texas Republic, 1836–1845* (Austin, 1956), 53, 56, 85–6.

vocal support. His reputation as a land speculator masquerading as politician began in 1833 with the Chocchuma land sales, which became the subject of an intense Senate investigation. Walker and Franklin E. Plummer, who at the time was considered the spokesman for the poor (by eastern Mississippi standards) and proud Piney Woods people in Mississippi, allegedly endeavored to use their position as congressmen to get land titles perfected by the Congress in exchange for half the land of each title completed by them. Walker himself accumulated about $40,000 to $50,000 from the venture. The incident was so notorious that Andrew Jackson cautioned President Polk in 1845 against appointing Walker to Secretary of the Treasury because the Mississippian was, in his opinion, "surrounded by so many broken speculators, and being greatly himself encumbered with debt, that any of the other Departments would have been better, and I fear you will find my forebodings turn out too true... ." Based on his former performance, Jackson believed that Walker would act ignominiously in the Cabinet.[26]

After the election, many Whigs gave reasons why they articulated positions against annexation. Senator Henry Johnson (W-Louisiana) maintained that the first time the Texas treaty had come up for a vote, he voted against it:

> ...he had been long in favor of the annexation of Texas, whenever it could be fairly done, and with the approbation of the great mass of the people of the United States; and in answer to letters received from his friends in Louisiana, at the last session of Congress, pending the discussion on the Texas treaty, he had stated that Texas, in his opinion, would ultimately be so annexed. He had voted against the treaty because it was sprung upon [the Whigs] for party purposes, and evidently with the view of operating upon the approaching presidential election... .[27]

Like other Whigs in the Gulf South, Johnson was pressed to profess publicly opposition to a measure that he personally supported. Now that the election was over, Whigs could vote as they felt. As a planter of some wealth, the senator undoubtedly believed that economic

26. Andrew Jackson to James Polk, May 2, 1845, Polk Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Eichert, "Walker's Participation in Land Ventures," 46.
27. *Cong. Globe*, 28th Congress, 2d sess., App., 224.

affairs between Louisiana and Texas could be conducted cheaper and smoother if the latter were brought into the political fold of the United States.

Johnson, as a politician and sugar planter, denied that the annexation of Texas would present "ruinous consequences" to its neighboring state or to other slaveholding Southern states. He asked his Southern detractors to answer one question: What if Texas were not annexed, it would establish closer trading connections with Britain, and send most of its cotton directly to Liverpool. This, Johnson surmised, would rob New Orleans of the profits it annually reaped from the shipping of Texas cotton into its wharves. More importantly, by implying that with its history of abolishing slavery where it had existed in the Caribbean, the congressman directly challenged the region's obsession with slavery. No territory was safe, he persuasively argued, anywhere British presence could be felt. Johnson pronounced himself in favor of the resolution, and proudly stated that "a large majority of the people of Louisiana are in favor of annexation."[28]

But perhaps Congressman William H. Hammett (D-Mississippi) captured the essence of Whig support for annexation after the Clay defeat in 1844:

> It was Texas that defeated Mr. Clay, and Texas will defeat any man that continues to oppose it. It was a shadow that would bring down the vengeance of a betrayed and insulted people on the representatives who have disobeyed their will, and compel them to abide by the decision they so solemnly and unequivocally made by their approval...

The message was plain and simple: support Texas and win reelection. The Louisianians had pledged themselves committed to the annexation of Texas. Wherever the people went, their representatives followed. Another Louisiana congressman, Isaac E. Morse, referred to a resolution that Louisiana legislators had passed, declaring their support for the annexation of Texas, and confidently expressed to his colleagues that "the people of Louisiana, without

28. The only part of the treaty that bothered Johnson was its vagueness, which called for the U.S.'s absorption of the Republic's debt, an amount that was never calculated, but was rumored to have cost between thirty and forty million dollars.

reference to party distinctions, were unanimous in their desire and strong in their solicitude for the annexation of a region which had once constituted a part of Louisiana."[29]

One of Louisiana's best-known Whig newspapers, the *Picayune*, pronounced itself in favor of annexation. Its own sentiments reflected a virulent anti-British sentiment. In December 1844 the *Picayune* warned its readers about British "rapacity" on the American continent. Even if it meant that Great Britain declared war against the United States, the *Picayune* advocated a firm resolve to annexation. The paper pointed out that "if the Texas resolutions are to be rejected because England does not like them, then no law ought to be passed without first consulting Her Majesty's Government."[30] The only way to prevent any competition with foreign powers was to annex Texas—along with Canada and some of the Caribbean islands.

In Alabama, William W. Payne presented his colleagues in the House of Representatives with a host of reasons, mostly economic, why Texas should be annexed to the United States. He quickly zeroed in on the most solid argument. Texas land, Payne argued, would bring in $170 million to national coffers[31]. The fertility of the soil, which he believed equalled that of Mississippi [the nation's most prolific cotton producer], would contribute to the total amount of U.S. exports $500 million per year in sugar, cotton, rice, "and other tropical productions." Payne knew the Achilles' heel of the South—the fear that Europe might be able to find its supplies of cotton elsewhere. He warned that if Texas were not annexed, Britain might form a commercial treaty with the Republic for its cotton, thus diminishing and even excluding the purchase of Southern cotton. Furthermore, he argued, the South needed Texas because it received much of her exports of pork, flour, and other foodstuffs. Payne did not mention the millions of dollars the U.S. would have to pay in assuming Texas' indemnity from its days as a Republic.

29. *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., App., 90.
30. New Orleans *Picayune*, December 27, 1844; March 2, 1845.
31. This amount was calculated from 136,111,327 acres of public land that would be sold at the $1.25 minimum price. *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., App., 170.

Payne's Alabama colleague, William Lowndes Yancey, called Texas the "Lost Pleiad" in the Southern constellation, and envisioned a geographical hegemony in the South that would come as soon as annexation was effected:

> The annexation of [Texas] will complete what some of the clearest heads in the Union think was originally ours, the magnificent valley of the Mississippi—will give us command of the sources and entire navigation of several of its largest and most valuable streams—will greatly lengthen our share of the Gulf coast, and, of course, increase the number of harbors necessary to the successful prosecution of the vast commerce of our western regions...[32]

Like Payne, the Democrat Yancey was irritated by the statement made by Winthrop of Massachusetts, who augured that the annexation of Texas would "give a perpetual guaranty to slavery." Payne's rejoinder had been that the Northern declaration was illogical because with or without Texas, the institution of slavery would be protected. Yancey called it "a cowardly desire to weaken the slaveholding section by every means which perverted talent can devise—a dastardly envy of a prosperity which still struggles upward in spite of the load which an unconstitutional restrictive legislation has bound upon it."[33]

The Whig paper of Alabama's port city, the Mobile *Register and Journal*, followed closely the debates in the House and Senate over Texas annexation, and urged its own representatives to affirm the resolution, but for different reasons than did its Louisiana counterpart, the *Picayune*. Instead of pandering to its readers' fears that a foreign power might be obtaining a powerful foothold at the doorstep of the American slaveholdings states, the *Register* appealed to the advantage the whole country would gain from annexing the "lone star" state. It challenged the "Southern Senators" to "stand up to the expressed wishes of the people they represent," by supporting the measure that was "second in importance only to the acquisition of Louisiana."[34]

32. *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., App., 88. Congressman William H. Hammett (D-Mississippi) articulated the same: "By annexing Texas, ... [we] would secure to our vast shipping interest the whole coasting trade of this country..." *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., 159.

33. *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., App., 88.

34. Mobile *Register and Journal*, February 3, 1845.

All Gulf South congressmen voted in favor of annexing Texas. In the Senate, five of the six Gulf South senators voted in the affirmative.[35] They were Arthur Bagby and Dixon Hall Lewis, both Alabama Democrats; John Henderson and Robert J. Walker, Mississippi Whig and Democrat, respectively; and Henry Johnson, Louisiana Whig. Only Senator Alexander Barrow (W-Louisiana) stood alone in voting against Texas annexation. Barrow was convinced that annexation would depopulate other Southern lands and decrease the value of that older property. No amount of persuasion from his colleague Johnson could sway his opinion.

The presidential election, which quickly and essentially became a political conflict on the questions of Texas annexation and U.S. expansion, irrevocably weakened the Gulf South Whig party and witnessed the abandon of some of its members, many of whom joined the Democratic party. In Alabama (table 1), the Gulf South state with the largest discrepancy in the Whig-Democratic popular vote, Polk received 11,261 more votes than did Clay. Mississippi's citizens preferred Polk over Clay by a margin of almost six thousand votes (table 2). In Louisiana, on the other hand, the Democratic gain was the smallest; the margin by which Polk won was only 659 votes (table 3). For the first time, the Democrats emerged entirely victorious in the 1844 congressional election in Louisiana. They captured all the seats for Congress (table 4). Louisiana Democrats, with John Slidell's help, were able to

35. Of the Gulf South states, only Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana voted on the resolution, since Florida was still only a territory.

capture the state for James Polk.[36] Controversy over annexation did not break apart Whiggery in Louisiana; it was in a steady decline since 1843, primarily because Louisianians supported the Democratic demand for a broader franchise and a constitutional convention.[37]

36. John Slidell (D-Louisiana) took advantage of the ambiguous state constitution with regard to voting regulations, for it did not overtly specify whether a voter had to cast his ballot in the county of his residence. Since Orleans parish was made up of three districts (Orleans, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines), Slidell made sure that enough Democrats were on hand in the Whig parish of Plaquemines to swing a Democratic victory there. In reaction to the voting fraud, the constitution of 1845 as amended stated explicitly that one had to vote within the parish of his residence. Perry H. Howard, *Political Tendencies in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1971; orig. publ. 1957), 54. Justin Smith, *Annexation of Texas*, 315, quoted in Nance, "Texas Question During the 1844 Election," 138, on election fraud. Alexander Barrow was surprised to hear that Louisiana "public opinion" supported Polk over Clay, as his colleague Johnson espoused. He suspected correctly that the presidential election in Louisiana had been fraudulent, and that "if there was any legal mode of purging the poll of that State, it would be found that a majority of the people of Louisiana had passed their suffrages in favor of Henry Clay." *Cong. Globe*, 1844–45, 28th Cong., 2d sess., 233. Slidell, the mastermind behind the fraud, issued a rejoinder to the effect that although "there may have been, and probably were, instances of illegal votes cast for the democratic ticket[, s]uch instances always occurred in every warmly contested election, and more especially in districts where parties are not nicely balanced." Slidell denied that the Democratic leaders themselves "either encouraged or sanctioned such illegal voting." *Cong. Globe*, 28th Cong., 2d sess., 243.

37. Adams; *The Whig Party of Louisiana*, 117.

Table 1. Popular Vote, Alabama Presidential Election, 1844[1]

County	Polk	Clay	County	Polk	Clay
Autauga	633	475	Limestone	965	325
Baldwin	120	149	Lowndes[3]	678	710
Barbour	860	1,113	Madison	1,720	357
Benton	1,382	373	Marengo	634	726
Bibb[2]	596	350	Marion	638	120
Blount	774	84	Macon	626	1,087
Butler	405	666	Marshall	875	162
Chambers	1,158	926	Mobile	1,347	1,403
Cherokee	955	356	Monroe	350	567
Coffee	315	142	Montgomery	836	1,016
Clarke	631	232	Morgan	682	271
Conecuh	277	441	Perry	849	869
Coosa	796	400	Picken's	967	992
Covington	139	148	Pike	768	862
Dale	616	209	Randolph	747	281
Dallas	722	864	Russell	624	736
De Kalb	700	207	St. Clair	644	46
Fayette	796	153	Shelby	472	511
Franklin	1,079	498	Sumter	1,061	927
Greene	819	1,090	Talladega	851	633
Henry	546	367	Tallapoosa	705	728
Jackson	1,751	87	Tuscaloosa	964	902
Jefferson	585	264	Walker	442	170
Laurence	783	469	Washington	279	273
Lauderdale	919	474	Wilcox	629	585
TOTAL, for Polk—37,830 **TOTAL, for Clay—25,699**					

1. Tuscaloosa Democratic Gazette, quoted in the *Mobile Register and Journal*, December 5, 10, 1844; *Niles' Register*, LXVII (December 21, 1844), 242; Joseph Milton Nance, "The Gulf Coast and the Texas Question during the Presidential Campaign of 1844," Lucius F. Ellsworth (ed.), *The Americanization of the Gulf Coast* (Pensacola, 1972), 140.
2. not official
3. not official

Table 2. Popular Vote, Mississippi Presidential Election, 1844[1]

County	Polk	Clay	County	Polk	Clay
Adams	452	755	Lowndes	350	644
Amite	351	429	Madison	486	612
Attala	305	276	Marion	254	68
Bolivar	61	55	Marshall	1,184	1,035
Carroll	742	678	Monroe	911	549
Chickasaw	632	366	Neshoba	236	156
Choctaw	614	426	Newton	270	143
Claiborne	429	434	Noxubee	577	519
Clarke	353	115	Oktebbeha	336	241
Coahoma	162	143	Perry	71	125
Copiah	649	447	Pike	444	232
Covington	308	98	Panola	408	439
DeSoto	37	—	Pontotoc	709	384
Franklin	220	172	Rankin	406	311
Greene	175	62	Scott	259	112
Hancock	127	57	Simpson	300	178
Harrison	169	103	Smith	249	94
Hinds	915	1,199	Sunflower	14	7
Holmes	498	578	Tallahatchie	218	179
Itawamba	825	368	Tippah	1,170	692
Jackson	216	17	Tishimingo	1,004	480
Jasper	403	210	Unica	24	36
Jefferson	333	364	Warren	507	922
Jones	117	72	Washington	108	209
Kemper	515	291	Wayne	95	102
Lafayette	632	542	Wilkinson	355	441
Lauderdale	631	256	Winston	475	201
Lawrence	545	94	Yallabusha	895	719
Leake	235	190	Yazoo	530	578
TOTAL, for Polk—24,996 TOTAL, for Clay—19,205					

1. *Mississippian*, November 20, 1844; *Niles' Register*, LXVII (1845), 277; Nance, "Texas Question During the 1844 Election," 141.

Table 3. Popular Vote, Louisiana Presidential Election, 1844[1]

Parish	Polk	Clay	Parish	Polk	Clay
Ascension	264	239	Natchitoches	650	452
Assumption	279	285	New Orleans	2,612	3,026
Avoyelles	364	189	Ouachita	206	106
Bossier	103	59	Plaquemines	1,007	37
Caddo	—	—	Point Coupee	175	174
Calcasieu	534	831	Rapides	586	419
Caldwell	194	69	Sabine	383	255
Carroll	221	190	St. Bernard	84	185
Catahoula	304	243	St. Charles	42	96
Claiborne	375	193	St. Helena	222	154
Concordia	95	189	St. James	181	351
De Soto	—	—	St. John Baptist	113	142
E. Baton Rouge	104	209	St. Landry	—	—
E. Feliciana	419	329	St. Martin	303	479
Franklin	158	134	St. Mary's	142	352
Iberville	235	253	St. Tammany	199	169
Jefferson	403	434	Tensas	108	157
Lafayette	399	193	Terrebone	164	265
Lafourche, Int.	137	471	Union	213	206
Livingston	229	100	Washington	230	127
Madison	198	206	W. Baton Rouge	104	209
Morehouse	31	107	W. Feliciana	308	243
TOTAL, for Polk—13,477 **TOTAL, for Clay—12,818**					

1. No returns for Caddo or DeSoto parishes. New Orleans *Bee*, November 26, 1844; *Niles' Register*, LXVII (December 14, 1844), 226; Nance, "Texas Question During the 1844 Election," 140.

Table 4. Twenty-Eighth Congress, 1843–1845. Members of the Gulf South
Alabama
Arthur P. Bagby (D)
William R. King (D)[1]
Dixon Hall Lewis (D)
James E. Belser (D)
Reuben Chapman (D)
James Dellett (W)
George S. Houston (D)
Dixon Hall Lewis (SRD)[1]
Felix G. McConnell (D)
William W. Payne (D)
William L. Yancey (D)[2]
Louisiana
Alexander Barrow (W)
Henry Johnson (W)[2]
Pierre E. J. B. Bossier (D)[3]
John B. Dawson (D)
Alcee L. La Branche (D)
Isaac E. Morse (D)
John Slidell (SRD)
Mississippi
Robert J. Walker (D)
John Henderson (W)
William H. Hammett (D)
Robert W. Roberts (D)
Jacob Thompson (D)
Tilghman M. Tucker (D)

1. resigned April, 1844
2. started 1844
3. died April, 1844

6 Gulf South Interest in Cuba

But 'mid our glorious destiny
We turn a sorrowing eye to thee,
Queen of the Antilles! that thou
Must to the dust thy beauty bow
And still a weeping suppliant wait
At liberty's bright temple-gate,
'Till Heaven accord the auspicious day
When thou shalt cast thy chains away,
And o'er thy beauteous Isle shall see
The Spangled Banner of the free,
Waving in glory to the light
While tyrants tremble at the sight.[1]

If Mexico was able to exert little influence over the economic affairs of Texas, Spain was scarcely able to do any better in Cuba. Spain intended that Cuba provide her with all the products the island could generate. Spanish authorities had demanded that in order to reap the entire profit of Cuba's economic bounty, the ports of Cuba had to be closed to foreign vessels. When this policy was revoked in 1818, high tariffs still remained on goods not going to, nor coming from, Spain. By 1834 the United States had all but monopolized Cuba's coffee trade. In addition, more and more of the island's sugar trade began to be conducted exclusively with the U.S. In response, an organization of Cubans met in Havana in the 1830's, similar to that formed in Texas in 1832 and 1833. As the second wave of reformers, they represented the interests of wealthy Cuban sugar and coffee planters, and demanded an

1. Lewis Miles Hobbs Washington, poem, in the *Texas State Times*, January 1, 1855, Washington Family Papers, *BTHCA*. Washington was a filibuster from Texas who was executed in Nicaragua by the Costa Ricans in 1857.

end to the import duties. José Antonio Saco, José de la Luz y Caballero, and Domingo del Monte were sons of powerful sugar plantation families in Cuba. Although they resolutely supported the continuation of slavery, they had a vision of Cuban agriculture whose future relied more on machinery than on men. They believed in changing the Spanish mercantilist policy, not in declaring their independence from it. One of the most bitter complaints they and other Cubans had against the Spanish government was on its burdensome economic policy. Foreign vessels entering Cuban ports, for example, had to pay $2.50 per tonnage duty. Cuban goods entering American ports paid dearly for that trade, so much that Cuba's coffee industry was almost bankrupted in 1832.[2]

The historian Robert May has written that filibustering in the antebellum period was not universally accepted in the South, namely, that the upper South denounced covert expansionism.[3] Even South Carolina politicians and their presses, he writes, categorically rejected the idea of Southern expansion. The Atlantic South had begun to diversify its agriculture by as early as the 1820's and relied less and less on slave production; however, much the Chesapeake and Carolinas remained wedded to slavery. Virginia and North Carolina, states that traditionally had grown more tobacco than cotton, had begun to grow wheat and corn as well—staples that did not require intensive human labor for harvesting.[4] Perhaps these states feared that with the acquisition of more fertile territory would come the reopening of the African slave trade, a development that would be ruinous to their economy but advantageous to the Gulf South. But having to explain South Carolina's behavior is not easily done. The state that historians associate with the firebrand Deep South rejected the

2. Philip Foner, *A History of Cuba and its Relations with the United States* (New York, 1972), 171–4; Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, 1970), 145.

3. Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854–1861* (Baton Rouge, 1973), 119–20; idem, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, 1985), 279–80.

4. J. D. B. De Bow reported that the hire of a male slave in Louisiana would be cheap at $200. The same slave would hire out cheaply in Virginia at $50. The proceeds of slave labor in the former state from 1840–1845 were over $18 million. The net worth of slaves in the latter was about $10 million. *DBR*, V (1949), 188–89; XXVIII (1860), 162. In 1847, it was estimated that the productivity of slave labor in Louisiana was four times that of Virginia. Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (2 vol., Washington, D.C., 1933), II, 912.

covert expansionism that alone could have represented a safety valve for the Southern region as a whole. As with Texas in 1835–1836, the Gulf South was the strongest supporter of filibustering in the 1850's not just because of its geographical proximity to Cuba and Nicaragua, but also because the Gulf South had the most to gain if these territories were annexed, and the most to lose if they were not.

The United States had been interested in acquiring Cuba since the earliest part of the nineteenth century. Part of the reason friction existed between the U.S. and Cuba with Spain was that, under its economic policy, the mother country taxed all American goods and ships that entered Cuban ports. The Cubans themselves fared no better. One historian notes that in 1850 each Cuban paid about $38 in taxes at a time when the per capita revenue in the United States was $2.[5] Nevertheless, there were close economic ties between the two regions that were further strengthened with the passage of time.[6] The Gulf trade provided Cuba with necessary foodstuffs such as pork, flour, lard, and dry goods that it could not get anywhere else as cheaply or easily.[7] Cuba chafed under Spain's tight control, and within the colony grew a contingency of men, primarily wealthy slaveholders, who desired a transfer in ownership. As with the Texas revolution, this movement, called the *Club de la Habana*, clamored for revolution and annexation into the Union. Philip Foner has written that Cubans themselves were conscious of the precedent Texas had set against Mexico in establishing its

5. Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848–1855* (New York, 1948), 25.

6. When Texas was still a Republic, President Lamar dreamed of a Texas empire stretching from the Gulf to the Pacific. He thought that if commercial relations could be established between Cuba and Texas, a trade route could be implemented from Havana, through Texas, and to the west via Chihuahua and Santa Fé. See Thomas Maitland Marshall, "Commercial Aspects of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition," *SWHQ*, XX (1917), 248–59.

7. A New Orleans capitalist, James Robb, supplied the city of Havana with gas lighting. Robb was also elected first president of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad in 1851. Harry Howard Evans, "James Robb, Banker and Pioneer Railroad Builder of Ante-Bellum Louisiana," *LHQ*, XXIII (1940), 243; Philip Foner, *A History of Cuba*, II, 12. Cuba supplied the U.S. sugar, copper ore, coffee, coined silver, tobacco, and cigars, in that order of importance. *DBR*, V (1848), 463.

independence, and the Count of Pozos Dulces, Narcisso López's brother-in-law, established Cuba's own "Order of the Lone Star."[8]

Narcisso López was an assiduous though hapless filibuster who worked with unswerving commitment toward the annexation of Cuba to the United States, beginning as early as 1843. He and another Cuban annexationist, Ambrosio J. González, petitioned the Gulf South for support in 1848. In New Orleans, they offered General William Jenkins Worth, a veteran of the Mexican War, $3 million to invade Cuba with a group of 5,000 men to defeat the Spanish in their garrison; those plans were scrapped when Worth died the next year.[9] Other Gulf Southerners, many of whom were veterans of the Mexican War, accepted the Cubans' offers of support; Robert M. White, for example, was commander of a Louisiana company in the Mexican War and participant in the suppression of the Indian rebellion in the Yucatan. Many of the recruits gathered at the Cat and Round Islands off the coast of Mississippi [near Pascagoula] in July, 1849. López, thirty-three at the time of the first Cuban campaign, was not a native Cuban. Perhaps his great commitment to the Antilles was that he proved that a foreigner could be just as loyal as a native. He admired the great military tactician, Sorborél, who had also fought the Spanish and was, like other men from the resistance, killed in battle. López read much of Sorborél in his native Vollodolid, a tiny fishing village on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

By the end of August the Taylor administration learned of the encampment of men on the island and issued a proclamation demanding that the group disperse their "unlawful assemblage." V. M. Randolph, commander of the U.S. ship *Albany*, and senior officer afloat

8. Foner, *A History of Cuba*, II, 13. This was formed in 1850 with Quitman at the head of its Supreme Council and Ambrosio González as the military commander. It is not clear that López ever advocated anything for Cuba other than annexation into the Union, despite historian Portell-Vilá's attempts, in *Historia de Cuba en sus Relaciones con los Estados Unidos y Espana* [3 vols., Habana, 1938], to establish the contrary.

9. Ambrosio J. González, "Manifesto on Cuban Affairs Addressed to the People of the United States," September 1, 1852 [New Orleans, 1853], pamphlet; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, May 16, 1849, April 8, 1850; Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 75–6, 79–80, 109; Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* [Chapel Hill, 1980], 45–7; May, *Quitman*, 153–62, 165, 170, 178–9, 187, 189, 19–4, 411, for Worth's contributions during the Mexican War.

in the Gulf of Mexico, stated that he would prevent the steamers *Fanny, Maria Burt*, and all others from furnishing "adventurers" with arms or other munitions; that if the steamers had arms, he would take possession of them and detain the vessels until the congregation was dispersed; and that he would prevent the group of men on the island from boarding the steamers and from holding communication with those already on them. He called the group "unlawful" because of proof that "some" men had acknowledged their destination was Cuba, and proof that some training for the expedition had been conducted in the Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico. Randolph called the men "vagrants in the eyes of the law and in fact" whose only motive in participating was "plunder."[10] President Taylor, under the terms of the U.S. neutrality laws, ordered the navy to blockade Round Island, which successfully prevented the American filibusters from embarking for Cuba. Taylor had no intention of preempting the filibustering expedition in order to obtain the island through more legitimate channels. He arrested the progress of the plot designed to overthrow the Cuban government because it would have ruined congressional attempts to arrive at a compromise on the expansion of slavery in the United States.[11]

The Cuban government, in response to President Taylor's exposure of the expedition assembling on Round Island, moved an "extraordinary [amount] of troops and munitions of war" from Havana to the different ports on the island—Puerto Principe, Trinidad, and St. Iago de Cuba. Captain General Concha banned the importation of all American newspapers, apparently trying to suppress all further Cuban knowledge of the attempted filibustering mission. One Gulf South newspaper interpreted these events as foretelling Cuban revolution.[12] When no such tangible evidence could be found to corroborate such an assertion, the Gulf South newspapers began comparing Spanish despotism and tyranny in Cuba to the recent Hungarian revolution against the Magyars. One stated: "It appears that the Cubans really deserve almost as much sympathy as the Hungarians." Creoles in Cuba, it

10. Mobile *Advertiser*, quoted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 1, 1849.
11. The 1850 Compromise. Foner, *A History of Cuba*, II, 24–5, 32, 43–6.
12. New Orleans *Delta*, quoted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 5, 1849.

declared with disbelief, were compelled to ask and pay for a license if they wanted to travel further than the distance of one mile from their homes. They could neither move without giving prior notice (or risk paying a fine) nor lodge in their homes for a single night any person, even a friend or relative, without giving prior information to the government.[13]

After the Round Island failure, and upon the prompting of Mississippi planter and former senator John Henderson, the Cuban annexationists, López and González, moved to New Orleans to recoup their efforts. On their way there in March, 1850, they met John Quitman. General Quitman regretted they he could not, as Governor of Mississippi, command an army of insurrectionists into Cuba without Cuban insistence upon such a mission.[14] But Quitman recommended to López and González that if they encouraged the Cubans to rebel in the name of independence, they, like the Texans, could receive Southern support.[15] Volunteers wishing to join the López expedition wrote Quitman, stating that the mission was a "holy course" and that battalions could be raised from their locales.[16] Cotesworth Pinckney Smith, Henry S. Foote, John Henderson, and a number of prominent politicians and wealthy Gulf South slaveholders contributed to López's mission.[17] Lawrence S. Sigur, the editor of the New Orleans *Delta*, gave López free publicity in his paper, funds for the expedition, and the use of his home as headquarters. Mississippi volunteers joined the expedition under the leadership of Colonel W. J. Bush. Colonel Chatham Wheat of Louisiana commanded that state's volunteers.[18]

13. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 11, 1849.

14. Nevertheless, there were reports circulating during the spring that Quitman would be joining the filibusters going to Cuba. His wife Eliza denied the rumor in a letter to her son, informing him to cast aside any stories to that effect. Eliza Quitman to Henry Quitman, Monmouth Plantation, June 15, 1850, Quitman Papers, *MDAH*.

15. Foner, *A History of Cuba*, II, 48; Durwood Long, "Alabama Opinion and the Whig Cuban Policy," *AHQ*, XXV (1963), 266.

16. John I. Good to Quitman, Moscow, Alabama, May 30, 1850, *QPHU*, for example.

17. Henderson bought ten to fifteen thousand dollars worth of bonds that were pledged on the public lands and property of Cuba. Foner, *A History of Cuba*, 49.

18. Long, "Alabama Whig Cuban Policy," 266; Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 180.

By the end of March, the Cuban government had learned that a new revolutionary expedition was forming, and that it was scheduled to rendezvous somewhere near Haiti in order to land near Trinidad, which was described as "the focus of democratic principles."[19] On March 28th, the New York *Evening Express* declared that it had received information "from a gentleman just returned from the South" that "several hundred" men were ready to descend on Cuba. This information, the paper acknowledged, was known fully by the Cubans, whom it said were "fully prepared." Calling them "disunionists," another New York rag pointed out that disbursing Cuban land scrip as the incentive for men to become filibusters was evidence that the conspirators' plans for invasion were doomed to failure because of their lack of money.[20] The expansionist press in the Gulf South, however, called the conspirators "patriots." One Whig newspaper stated: "We need not say how gratified we should be to hear that the Spanish yoke has been broken, and the sovereignty of the island resumed by its rightful owners, the native born race, who owe no natural subjection to a distant and feeble sovereignty." Later, in response to the New York *La Cronica*'s tagging of the filibusters as "vagabonds," the newspaper countered by saying that "we feel bound to say that the expedition to Cuba, whatever may be its fate, is composed mainly of men in the flower of their age, resolute in their purpose, and fully satisfied with the honorable nature of their mission."[21]

In mid-May, a reporter, describing the Cuban mind toward revolution, astutely noted: "The belief that an invading expedition is near our shores is universal, and the great mass of the people hope they will come in sufficient strength to carry all before them. There does not seem to be any wish to join them, any disposition to aid in the consummation all so ardently

19. New York *Journal of Commerce*, quoted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, April 4, 1850.

20. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, April 5, 1850; New York *Journal of Commerce*, quoted in the Picayune, April 8, 1850.

21. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, April 14, 1850; May 23, 1850. These public endorsements of the filibusters ran counter to one contemporary's assertion that the press in New Orleans said little of the 1850 expedition. William S. Scott to Alonzo Snyder, New Orleans, May 9, 1850, Snyder Papers, *LSUA*. Scott stated: "The Cuban expedition ... excites much interest here, though the press says very little about it. I understand that the last of the Expedition left here last night in fine spirits. I suppose we shall soon hear from [them] ... all I can say is God speed them."

wish for; in fact when brought to the point, the Creole seems staggered with the idea that he should make war upon the powers that be, that in his hand lies their success or defeat."[22] One historian[23] concurs, saying that the support of civilians to aid an externally executed civil war is almost invariably disastrous, since natives, although they may verbally commit their support, expect foreign soldiers to carry on the war for them. John F. H. Claiborne said what the same thing to Henry Quitman, telling him that every expedition to Cuba that depended on the Creoles was doomed to fail, for "they have no administrative or executive capacity, no fortitude, no perseverance."[24]

But the filibusters never got the chance to test the mettle of the natives. López's men were halted even before they could set foot on Cuban soil, and so this attempt—the second to invade and capture Cuba—failed as well.[25] The Spanish infantry in Cárdenas, attacking the filibustering marauders, successfully ran them off into the Gulf waters in May, 1850. The flight into Cárdenas was fantastically conceived, ill-planned, and poorly executed. Even De Bow called the attempt "a piece of American Quixoticism."[26] By order of the U.S. government, López, Quitman, Henderson, Smith, and Sigur were arrested by a New Orleans grand jury and charged with violating American neutrality laws.[27] All would later be acquitted in the pro-filibustering city.

22. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, May 22, 1850.

23. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 33.

24. J. F. H. Claiborne to Henry Quitman, Shieldsboro, May 10, 1859, Quitman Papers, *MDAH*.

25. Many of these filibusters were detained by U.S. government forces on the island of Key West. There they were given succor from the Honorable J. B. Lancaster, resident of Key West. The men, Theodore O'Hara, John T. Pickett, Thomas T. Hawkins, William H. Bell, Thomas J. Kennedy, and Albert W. Johnson, commended Lancaster for his kindness and his lack of subservience to the federal government. O'Hara et al. to Lancaster, New Orleans, June 25, 1850, Vincent Papers, *LSUA*.

26. De Bow, "The Late Cuba Expedition," *DBR*, IX (1850), 169.

27. The complete list of those who went to trail in New Orleans for violating the neutrality laws in 1850 were: W. H. Burnell, Narciso López, George Beard, Colonel Theodore O'Hara, D. R. Carroll, Colonel John Picket, M. A. Finch, Major Thomas J. Hawkins, W. Urquhart, Colonel W. H. Bell, S. W. Oakey, Captain A. J. Lewis, James Wilson, Colonel Robert Wheate, Joseph Lalande, General John Henderson, P. N. Woods, L. J. Sigur, E. W. Diggs, General D. Augustin, A. Q. Kennet, A. Gonzalez, H. Wilson, John A. Quitman, Robert Armstrong, John L. O'Sullivan, W. S. Cushing, J. F. A. Boyle, D. Hadden, John Goodrich, H. V. Baxter, R. W. Adams, John Wightman, Charles Deake, P. A. Owen, and John J. Clarke. Eliza Quitman to Henry Quitman, Monmouth Plantation, July 1, 1850, March 15, 1851, Quitman Papers, *MDAH*.

The Spanish response to López's latest failure was to penalize Cuba economically. Duties ranging from 50 to 175 percent were imposed on American foodstuffs. In 1852 Cubans ended up paying the same price for flour as they did on the flour duty.[28] Such economic oppression only encouraged more American support for further filibustering movements into Cuba. By the summer of 1851, Captain General Concha was imagining the spectacle in the United States—which was building toward the third commencement of an invasion of his island—with trepidation. The country to his immediate north was plotting to overthrow his government. He felt reasonably sure that he could keep tight control over Cuba. The one exception, however, was the city of Puerto Principe, which was seething over the dissolution of its parliament, and whose young men were under López's spell. Concha noted in alarm that "the desire of the inhabitants for annexation or independence already amounts to fanaticism."[29] But even the iron fist of Concha could not quell the voices of opposition. Don José Lemery, a top Concha henchman, successfully captured this opposition, consisting of sixteen, of whom many were members of the outlawed parliament. But by this time, the opposition's message had spread to other parts of the island—to Santa Cruz, Las Tunas, and to Trinidad, where it appeared most flagrantly. In the last city, a majority of the hardy rebels were arrested. By mid-July at the latest, Concha was sanguine about the strength of his authority, and he testified to the Cuban people's "blind loyalty" to the Government.[30]

The news of Cuban opposition to the Spanish reached the Gulf South by the end of July. López already had begun planning what would become his swan song expedition into Cuba, and with such good news, support and money came pouring in as the Gulf states geared into action.[31] In Galveston, New Orleans, and Mobile, talk was all abuzz about the imminent

28. Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 182. $73,000 in duty was paid on $91,000 of American flour.
29. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 88.
30. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 89.
31. Supporters in New York, aboard the *Cleopatra*, were arrested at the docks to satisfy the government's quest to halt all filibustering activity and violation of the U.S. neutrality laws. Caldwell points out that if the members on aboard the *Cleopatra* were not drunk at the time they were setting off for Cuba, they might have been able to get away before the U.S. Marshall arrived to detain the vessel. Late Cuba State Trials, *Democratic Review*, April, 1852, quoted in Caldwell, "López Expedition," 85; Mobile *Register*, May 6, 1851; Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 152.

campaign.[32] In Baton Rouge, a balls were held and monies were subscribed for the Cuban cause.[33] John Henderson wrote J.F.H. Claiborne, who himself was intimately connected with the New Orleans Cuban supporters[34], that "I still believe in the importance, the morality and the probability of the [López] enterprise, and I believe it is one the South should steadfastly cherish and promote."[35] Felix Huston, who spoke to a large public meeting in New Orleans, compared the current political situation in Cuba to the Texas Revolution. "In 1836," he said, "when Texas holsted the single star to the breeze, the men of wealth came to her aid, and those who had no wealth brought to the cause of freedom strong arms and stout hearts."[36] Huston had not forgotten quickly the method by which Texas was fought and won. The financiers were the wealthy planters and merchants of the Gulf South; those who participated in the Revolution were young, daring, and hungry for land and other profits.

Meanwhile, cities and towns all over the Gulf South quickly organized public meetings during this month, which were designed to raise money, men, and munitions for López. Mobile held "the largest and most enthusiastic meeting ever" at the Alhambra to express support for the Cuban revolutionaries.[37] Montgomery held a similar meeting, which was wholeheartedly supported by the nearby Macon County *Republican*, a diehard Whig newspaper. "Where are you, you 'fire-eaters'?", it asked, taunting Montgomery Democrats. The Eufaula Democratic *Spirit of the South* answered back for their Montgomery allies, stating that they doubted the sincerity of Whig support for the filibusters. To all of this, the *Republican* replied: "Wherever liberty raises its standard, there will be the sympathies of the American people."[38] The Macon County *Republican* lauded the efforts of Dallas County

32. *Galveston Weekly News*, New Orleans *Picayune*, Mobile *Commercial Register*, August and September, 1851.
33. John McGrath Scrapbook, *LSUA*, 7.
34. Claiborne was on the address committee of the New Orleans Cuban meeting. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, July 29, 1851.
35. Claiborne, *Quitman*, II, 69, quoted in Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 83.
36. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, July 27, 1851.
37. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 23, 1851.
38. Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, 3–28 August 1851, quoted in Long, "Alabama Whig Cuban Policy," 270.

volunteers who joined men of its own county to outfit a Montgomery unit that was en route to volunteer for López. It generously described the men as "clever, intelligent, worthy young men" who should be wished "every success in their perilous undertaking." The Whig newspaper's editor, Daniel Sayre, was named to the resolutions committee in Tuskegee's August 12th public meeting, in which measures supporting Cuban independence were adopted. Huntsville and Mobile adopted similar resolutions; the Mobile meeting saw Whigs and Democrats participating together.[39]

In Texas, 250 armed men left the ports of Galveston and Corpus Christi on July 12, 1850 to join the next López mission.[40] They had the public support of the governor, Peter Hansborough Bell, who favored expeditions to Cuba and annexation of the island to the United States. Confident and driven by success, Sam Houston went to New Orleans to address public meetings on the importance of raising money and recruiting men for the capture of Cuba.[41] The following resolutions, adopted by a well-attended New Orleans Cuban meeting, serve as an example of all those passed in the Gulf South:

> *Resolved*, That we greet with joy and enthusiasm the recent intelligence from the Island of Cuba as indicative of the heroic resolution and devotion of that people, and of their purpose to make every sacrifice to achieve their independence.
> *Resolved*, That the Cubans having given an earnest of their sincerity and constancy in the struggle for liberty, it is our duty, as brother republicans and men, to aid by all means in our power their efforts, until they shall be crowned with success.
> *Resolved*, That a committee of ten be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting to draft an address to the citizens of Louisiana and the United States in behalf of the Cuban revolution.
> *Resolved*, That a committee of ten be appointed by the Chair, to be called the Committee for the Promotion of Cuban Liberty, whose duty it shall be to col-

39. *Macon County Republican*, August 14, 21, 1851; Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 25, 1851; Huntsville *Southern Advocate*, August 27, 1851, quoted in Long, "Alabama Whig Cuban Policy," 271. Even after López's failure, a Mobilian stated that "the Cuba excitement has in no way diminished, save that a heavy cloud has settled over its hopefulness." New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 27, 1851.

40. Fornell, "Texans and Filibusters," 412. Another group of 200 or 300 Texans assembled at Mustang Island for Cuba, but were not scheduled to leave until August 25th, too late to be of any service to López.

41. Arthur T. Lynn, British Consul in Galveston, to Sir H. L. Bulwer, British Foreign Office, May 13, 1850, and July 12, 1850 (MSS., British Foreign Office Correspondence, British Public Record Office, London); Lynn to Bulwer, July 7, 1852, F.O.; and Philadelphia *Ledger*, August 1, 6, 1851; in Earl Wesley Fornell, "Texans and Filibusters in the 1850's," *SWHA*, LIX (1956), 412.

> lect contributions from our citizens to aid the Cuban patriots, and to forward the same as speedily as possible.[42]

As always, money had to be raised. With the help of public meetings, about $12,000 was collected in New Orleans to secure the necessary provisions. Henderson lamented: "I find my cash advances for [López's] first experiment were over half of all the cash advanced to the enterprise, and all my present means and energies are exhausted in bringing up the arrearages."[43] One historian notes that "estates in the South had been mortgaged that the owners might share in the future wealth of broad plantations well stocked with negroes."[44] Sigur, one of the most popular men in New Orleans, had to sell his share in the *Delta* so that the filibusters could buy the steamer *Pampero*. One estimate put Sigur's investment in the neighborhood of $75,000.[45] By the time news came pouring out of Cuba that native insurgents were laying the foundation for revolution, the authenticity and imminence of the movement became real to Gulf Southerners. Collections by the end of July totaled $50,000.[46]

On August 3, 1851, the laden vessel left the port of New Orleans to gather men and supplies from Alabama and Florida. Although William Freret, the collector at the port of New Orleans, knew the group were filibusters on their way to Cuba, he nevertheless permitted the *Pampero* passage out of the port.[47] When President Fillmore dismissed him from his post, Freret, in his defense, asked: "Is it to be supposed that at two o'clock in the morning, the hour at which the *Pampero* departed, the whole levee lined with friends of those departing,

42. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, July 27, 1851.
43. Henderson, in Claiborne, *Quitman*, II, 69, quoted in Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 83.
44. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 85.
45. Anderson C. Quisenberry, "López's Expeditions to Cuba," *Filson Club Publications* (Louisville, 1906), 74, quoted in Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 157.
46. Caldwell, "López's Expeditions," 89.
47. Freret was dismissed from his post by President Fillmore, much to the anger of New Orleanians. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 90; Long, "Alabama Whig Cuban Policy," 275; Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 159–60.

that I could have gone on board that vessel single handed, and enforced the law?"[48] López and his men became joyous at the word, received when the steamer picked up more men and supplies from Key West, that three towns on the island were rioting against the Spanish. López and his 435 men arriving in Bahía Honda on August 11st after receiving planted information by the agents of Captain General Concha, leader of the Spanish Cuban forces. López thought the area was in insurrectionists' hands, but when he arrived at the town, he found no supporters there. The *National Intelligencer* was circulating an idea that some others had arrived at independently—that the "U.S." was fabricating stories of Cuban revolution.[49] One Cuban volunteer, writing after the López expedition when it was discovered that native support had been almost nonexistent, wrote: "We joined this expedition with the full impression that the people of Cuba wanted to be liberated. But if the people of the United States are making up a revolution for them, I think there has been innocent blood enough spilt. I am willing to shed my blood to liberate them from the yoke of despotism when they want it; and if they do not, it is better for us to know it."[50]

Concha's forces attacked López and 120 of his men outside Bahía Honda, while the remaining men, under Colonel William H. Crittenden, were ambushed in the town. Caught while trying to flee the country for Key West, Crittenden and a number of his men were taken to Havana and executed. Crittenden's last communication with his friends and family in the United States consisted of the following letter, which circulated throughout the United States, and appeared in early September in the *Picayune*:

> Dear Lucien [Hensley]:
> In half an hour I, with fifty others, am to be shot. We were taken prisoners yesterday. We were in small boats. Gen. López separated the balance of the command from me. I had with me about one hundred—was attacked by two

48. Freret to W. L. Hodge, Acting Secretary of the Treasury, September 3, 1851, in William Freret, *Correspondence between the Treasury Department, etc., in Relation to the Cuba Expedition, and William Freret, Late Collector* (New Orleans, 1851), 13–15; quoted in Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 160. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1851. Besides community pressure, Freret may have felt some loyalty to William L. Crittenden, who was then an officer of the Custom House at New Orleans and a colonel in López's army. Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 92.

49. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 8, 1851.

50. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 24, 1851.

> battalions of infantry and one company of horse. The odds was too great, and strange to tell, I was not furnished with a single musket cartridge. López did not get any artillery. I have not the heart to write to any of my family. If the truth ever comes out you will find that I did my duty, and have the perfect confidence of every man with me. We had retired from the field and were going to sea, and were overtaken by the Spanish steamer Habanero, and captured. Tell Gen. Huston that his nephew got separated from me on the 13th day of the fight and that I have not seen him since. He may have struggled off and joined López, who advanced rapidly to the interior. My people, however, were entirely surrounded on every side. We saw that we had been deceived grossly, and were making for the United States when taken. During my short sojourn in this island I have not met a single Patriot. We landed some forty or fifty miles to the westward of this, and I am sure that in that part of the island López has no friends. When I was attacked, López was only three miles off. If he had not been deceiving us as to the state of things, he would have fallen back with his forces and made fight, instead of which he marched on immediately to the interior. I am requested to get you to tell Mr. Green, of the custom-house, that his brother shares my fate. Victor Ker is also with me, also Stanford. I recollect no others of your acquaintance at present. I will die like a man. My heart has not failed me yet, nor do I believe it will. Communicate with my family. This is an incoherent letter, but the circumstances must excuse it. My hands are swollen to double their thickness, resulting from having them too tightly corded for the last eighteen hours. Write to John, and let him write to my mother. I am afraid that the news will break her heart. My heart beats warmly towards her now. Farewell. My love to all my friends. I am sorry that I die owing a cent, but it is inevitable. Yours, strong in heart, W. L. Crittenden.

López sacrificed Crittenden and his men in order to draw the bulk of Spanish forces away from himself as he advanced toward the interior of the island. It was only too late when Crittenden realized the strategy, but by that time, he and his unarmed forces had been captured. Crittenden was shot just hours after composing this letter. The American Consul at Havana, A. F. Owen, neglected to intercede on his behalf (perhaps on order from the federal government), even though American residents in Havana begged him to show the filibusters some mercy.[51] One American in Havana witnessed the execution:

> I became acquainted with a number of Americans, and we went to see them, as I knew a good many were from Mobile, but I could not get near enough to recognize them, the soldiers and citizens were so thick. I was up in twenty steps of them when they were shot. Their hands were tied behind, and they had to kneel down, and were shot by sections in the back. Afterwards the soldiers marched in the same manner and run their bayonets through their bo-

51. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny*, 92; Rauch, *American Interests in Cuba*, 164–5, 167; Long, "Alabama Whig Cuban Policy," 275. A meeting of passengers aboard the steamship *Cherokee* who witnessed the imprisonment and execution of Crittenden and his party noted the nonfeasance of Owen. They adopted resolutions to persuade the U.S. Government to recall Owen "from a post which he has so signally disgraced." New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 5, 1851.

> dies and struck them on the head with their muskets. It *was* an awful sight, one that I shall never forget.[52]

Newspapers all over the Gulf South expressed similar stunned reports by its people toward the cruel executions.

Meanwhile, López continued to battle the Spanish and Cuban forces. One eyewitness report stated that the General had between 1,500 and 2,000 men to begin with, but by the end of August, his forces were reduced to about one hundred men, one-half American and the other half Cuban. The reporter learned that "they are without food or ammunition, and are barefoot. López has become nearly crippled, having no shoes, and is obliged to tie up his feet in old shirts and rags; they live upon beef and corn, without salt, and the fruits of the island, such as they can get." Towards the end of the month, a violent hurricane[53] struck the island and left López and his gang roving in the mountains, dodging the estimated eight thousand Concha troops that were trying to capture them. A Puerto Principe citizen wrote to a Cuban friend[54] in New Orleans that López and his men were unable to communicate or unite with their Creole allies because the government had prevented any news from reaching them via Havana. By late August, when this letter was written, Concha, who was then in Santiago de Cuba, needed reinforcements from Havana. The citizen wrote that his district, including Ballamo, Higuani, Hoiguin, and Las Tunas, were being defended by only one government soldier because all forces had been sent to fight López. In the absence of government from these areas, the Cuban flag had been raised to replace the Spanish.

Newspapers voiced extremely anxious opinions on the future of López, now prisoner of the Spanish. Despite their outrage against him for his treatment of Crittenden, most American Gulf Southerners appealed to the Cuban people to show López mercy. The Mobile Whig *Daily Advertiser* lectured the Cubans, saying that "Creoles must redeem their promise,

52. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 23, 1851.

53. The hurricane then struck Apalachicola on the night of August 23rd, almost ruining the entire town. Some estimated the damage at $500,000. Another report put the hurricane making landfall in Louisiana on August 10th. Four hundred people at a ball on Last Island, Louisiana, were killed as winds drove waves over the gulf resort, inundating the island.

54. Reprinted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 2, 1851.

or popular interest in Cuban struggles will slacken wonderfully—enthusiasm in their behalf will be both a cheap and a rare article." One Whig paper even warned: "If the Cubans do not join [López] and sustain him now, it is evident that they neither deserve or desire freedom, and we trust that they may be let alone to bear the yoke of servitude for which they alone are fitted." Democratic newspapers in Alabama tried unsuccessfully to drum up enthusiasm for López by staunchly maintaining that the Cuban people were in fact supporting their imprisoned leader.[55] But New Orleans still continued to support the Cuban expedition wholeheartedly. The Cuban Committee, headed by secretary D. I. Ricardo, advertised the following in the *Picayune*: "[We] are making every effort to act effectually to aid our friends, who are enacting wonders in Cuba. Will not our capitalists come forward? We call for aid from far and near, prompt aid. Our brethren, if made of iron, cannot hold out much longer against the whole Spanish force in Cuba, unless they receive aid. There are thousands of men here—but *money* is wanted. Will not a liberal and humane people assist us?" The New Orleanians even organized a concert for Cuba, headed by Mr. Van La Hache and Mr. Hoffner, who were "musical artists." They told the *Picayune* that they were offering "their services to the Cuban committee to give a concert at such time and place as they may appoint for the benefit of the Cuban cause." In addition, Mr. Van La Hache was composing a Cuban march that, along with an "original patriotic song" for Cuba, would be performed.[56] In Jefferson Parish, the ladies of Gretna scheduled a ball at Gretna Hall on Saturday, September 6th, in order to benefit the Cuban cause. A local paper stated that a ladies' concert at Lafayette, which was also for the Cuban cause, would be held on Thursday, September 4.[57]

By the end of August the only area of Cuba the insurgents were able to capture was the area of mountains that surrounded Puerto Principe. López and his remaining faithful were captured on August 29th. Besides López, one hundred and sixty surrendered to General

55. Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 23, 1851; *Alabama Journal*, August 27, 1851; Eufaula *Spirit of the South*, August 28

56. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 2, 1851. A play was also presented at the American theater to raise money for the Cuban cause, called the "Lady of Lyons." *Picayune*, September 4, 1851.

57. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 3, 1851.

Concha. About half of these men were from the Gulf region, perhaps more.[58] These men were quite bitter at the denouement of the "revolution." According to one report, "[the men] were reduced to the very verge of starvation, receiving no supplies from the country people, and the few provisions they brought with them being soon exhausted. The last meat that any of them had eaten previous to their capture was that of the horse of López. They complain bitterly of the deception practiced upon them, they being led to believe that the island was in a complete state of revolution, and that as soon as they landed they would be joined by thousands of Creoles... Instead of finding a people struggling for freedom, who were ready to receive them with open arms and hail them as deliverers, they met with either open opposition or were flown from with distrust." The reports stated further that "[t]he Creoles of the island, the very people whom [the filibusters] came to free from an oppressive yoke, were the first to give notice of their landing to the troops, and were eager in offering their services as guides and soldiers to the Government."[59] The reporter repeated his belief that López had been duped by those Creoles who had previously written to him, promising him support as soon as he stepped foot on the island.

58. The numbers of men from the Gulf region are impossible to know; only 86 men's names and origins were published in the newspapers. More than half of this sum (47) were from the Gulf region, and the extrapolation made is that of the entire number, the same assumption can be made of the 160 survivors. Thirty of the 47 came from New Orleans. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1851. These men included: Antonio Hernandez, Martin Melesimo, Manuel Martinez, Bernard Allen, Francisco Curbia Y Garcia, Julio Chassagne, Havana; Jose Dovren, Cuba; Henry Smith, John Cline, George Foster, James T. Devew, J. G. Bush, W. Wilson, H. Miller, P. Lacoste, M. Lieger, P. Coleman, George, Foster, C. Knowell, Nicolas Port, John Martin, Patrick M. Grath, Charles S. Dally, James Fiddes, S. H. Prennell, Conrad Taylor, Thomas Denton, C. A. McMurray, J. Patan, Conrad Arghalir, Jose Chicheri, G. Richardson, Franklin Boyd, Harvey Williams, Capt. J. A. Kelly, J. B. Braum, Thomas S. Lee, New Orleans; Thomas Monroe, W. A. Rieves, Mississippi; E. H. McDonald, Daniel D. Wolf, A. R. Wier, Charles A. Downner, Mobile; J. D. Preuit, W. L. Wilkinson, A. Cook, Alabama; Franciso Alejandro Leve, Alquizar; and Adres Gonzales, New Grenada. The remainder of the López group was geographical mixed: P. S. Van Vechten, W. L. Hessen, John Danton, M. S. Keenan, Elias Otis, New York; J. W. Simpson, G. Wilson, Thomas Little, Philadelphia; George Boutista, Hungary; Cornelius Duffy, P. Talbot, United States; Thomas McDillon, George Metcalf, Henry P. Metcalf, Ireland; 1st Lieut. R. M. Greicler, M. H. Scott, J. D. Hughes, D. Q. Rousseau, William H. Vaugall, Kentucky; Isaac Freeborn, Ohio; William H. Cameron, Virginia; William Coussins, England; J. Sucit E. Wisse, William losner, R. Schultz, Ciriaco Senepli, Germany; Capt. Robert Ellis, Thomas Hilton, Washington, D. C.; W. H. Craft, Memphis; Jason Brady, Galena, Illinois; James Chapman, Charleston; H. B. Heart, Petersburg; Jacob Fouts, St. Louis.

59. Captain J. A. Kelly of New Orleans concurs on this point, saying that to his knowledge, only two Creoles joined the López expedition, and both were killed. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 13, 1851. Certainly, we know from the reports of those soldiers arrested that several Cubans numbered among López's men.

The government circulated reports widely to the people, which the correspondent read, that López was to be executed the following day.[60] "Justica," the name of the correspondent, went to Punta fort, where López was being held, and saw a huge crowd of people wrapped around the fortress, waiting since daybreak to see the execution of the man who had created such turmoil on their island. Justica watched as a procession of priests crossed an open space in the fort's square and entered López's cell, apparently to give him a last mass. Then the bells of the fort tolled, signalling López's imminent approach. Drums called the soldiers to order, and the entire execution procession quickly filled the square. In the middle of it all, Justica saw a figure—López—adorned in a long white garment with a hood. The filibuster ascended a twenty-foot high scaffold that was surrounded by a balcony. In the center of the platform was a garrote, which consisted of a chair placed against an upright post, and at the back of the post was an iron screw with a long handle, a collar and chain in front. Kneeling on the scaffold and clutching a rosary, López listened while a priest recited a prayer. An officer on the scaffold commanded silence. López was allowed a few, final words, but even then he could not be heard over the vastness of the square into which he sounded.[61] Obediently sitting in the chair, the executioner put the collar around his neck, gave two quick turns of the screw, swiftly sent López to his God.

When the news hit the Gulf South that López had been defeated and publicly garroted, New Orleans was "covered with gloom." Gloom quickly gave way to anger, as the editorial of the city's most widely-read newspaper exclaimed: "We had a lingering hope that the Cubans were not so imbecile and ruthless as those accounts show them to have been... But our worst fears are more than realized... It is a black day for New Orleans; it will mark a dark era in the destinies of Cuba."[62] One New Orleanian wrote: "The excitement about Cuba is

60. The following is in part based on Justica's report in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1851. It is clear that he sympathizes with López in this paraphrase of his hagiographical account.

61. Some reporters, like "Marinus," claimed López stated "he had been deceived by the Creoles of Cuba, that he meant well in all that he had done [because he supposed] that the Cubanos desired a change of Government." New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 3, 1851.

62. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1851.

dying away, or rather [has] turned itself against the powers that be in Washington... ."[63] In total, 160 of the original 435 survived; four were released, and the rest were taken to Spain to serve prison terms working in the quicksilver mines. They were later pardoned by Queen Isabella.[64] One of those imprisoned, George Metcalfe, of Natchez and New Orleans, lay in a stinking prison cell in Havana at the time of López's execution.

Thou calm bright orb of silver ray!
Thy placid beams in silence play,
Upon my lovely cell;—
Thro' missive iron grates they creep,
As if to soothe me while I sleep,
And see that all is well.[65]

Romantic poetry is written only by the victorious. Anyone who lived through the hellish experience of imprisonment in a Cuban prison knew that there was nothing soothing nor lovely about preludes to execution. Metcalfe wrote to a friend, A. K. Farrar that "we are all in prison in irons. Advise all of your friends and my friends not to come here for there is no patriots here. Col. Crittenden and all of his men are shot. I don't know what they will do with us."[66] Many were forced to work as laborers in Spain for some time; others, luckier than they, were released to those friends who petitioned the Captain General. Metcalfe was one of the latter.

The most violent demonstrations in the U.S. toward the executions of the filibusters occurred in New Orleans and Mobile. In the Crescent City, mobs stormed the Spanish consulate, tore the Spanish flag to shreds and mutilated a portrait of the Spanish Queen. Spanish shops and business establishment in the city were demolished. In the Alabama port city, those men who had come into the city from being shipwrecked in a Spanish vessel were

63. Cyrus T. Bemiss to Alonzo Snyder, New Orleans, September 9, 1851, Snyder Papers, *LSUA*.
64. Foner, *A History of Cuba*, 54–60; Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 161; Caldwell, "López Expeditions," 92.
65. James Miles Hobbs Washington, excerpt from "The Prisoner's Song at Midnight," 1832, Washington Family Papers, *BTHCA*. This poem was an early Washington composition, years before the author would have any tangible experience with imprisonment.
66. Harnett T. Kane, *Natchez on the Mississippi* (New York, 1947), 230.

mistaken by a crowd to be defenders of the Concha government and were mobbed.[67] Such outbursts of public feelings did not escape the attention of President Fillmore, although his sympathy was tempered by the issue that ultimately meant more to him than the loss of a sum of men. Writing to Daniel Webster, he declared: "I think the summary execution of the 50 prisoners taken in Cuba, was unfortunate. This wholesale slaughter of officers and men, in so summary a manner, excited the sympathy & indignation of the community. But I still hope to prevent any further violation of our neutrality laws, and to save our young men from a similar fate."[68]

The people who gathered in New Orleans for two months trying to engender support for the Cuban cause disbanded in early September; many "took passage immediately for Alabama." The *Picayune* estimated the total number of men who were ready to sail to Cuba in the event they were needed numbered at no less than 2,000. The newspaper stated: "We note this as a strong proof of the hold which Cuba has upon the minds of the Western and the Southwestern people."[69] No mention was made of the support given by the seaboard South, even though some men, originating from Virginia or Washington, D.C., volunteered for the López mission, most of the assistance came from the Gulf region—Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Cuba.

Perished missions immediately split the Gulf South expansionist and nonexpansionist presses on the issue of filibustering. Both sides continued to agree that filibustering was an important means of obtaining foreign territory, but the split entered on the basis of when such missions should be undertaken. The Whig newspaper, the *Daily Picayune*, maintained

67. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 4, 1851, Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 161. An editorial in the same edition of the *Picayune* denies that any Spaniard was "menaced or molested in his person, nor was there even any outcry against Spaniards as a class. The gutting of cigar shops was a criminal act, indeed, but it does not appear that it was done in any fierce spirit of national animosity, but rather by a class who would have been equally ready to execute a like feat on any opportunity for disorder." Congress was forced to pay a $25,000 indemnity for the damage done in New Orleans before the Americans were released by Spain.

68. Fillmore to Webster, Washington, September 2, 1851, Webster Papers, quoted in Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 163.

69. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 7, 1851.

that unless "there is assurance of a better understanding with the people of the island, so as to justify interference on their behalf, and of such numbers and preparations as will make the enterprise secure of self-protection,"[70] all future expeditions would be suicidal. Attempts to conquer lower Gulf territory only heightened the appetites of hungry Gulf South expansionists. *De Bow's Review* was the mouthpiece of Southern interests in the Gulf of Mexico. Of the need for Cuba, the editor proclaimed: "Cuba is indispensable to the proper development and security of the country. We state the fact, without entering into the reasons of it or justifying it, that such a conviction exists. *Call it the lust of dominion—the restlessness of democracy—the passion for land and gold, or the desire to render our interior impregnable by commanding the keys of the gulf....*"[71] Its editor came to understand that where the compass of Southern interests was concerned, the needle would point south.

The admission of California into the Union as a free state in 1850 galvanized De Bow into a more radical position on the future of Southern interests in the Union. Although perhaps not a typical Southerner—for his expansionist views were not shared by the entire region—he was characteristic of the white, slaveowning Gulf Southerner because of his preoccupation with finding territorial protection for slavery further south. Having been born in South Carolina during the debates over slavery in the Missouri territory, he came of age during the country's flailing attempts in 1850 to restore the confidence that had been lost over the issue of the expansion of slavery into the territories. By that time, the citizen of New Orleans had found his calling in exclusively promoting Southern interests. He envisioned a South whose dynamism would emanate from the Gulf of Mexico, which one observer called the "American Mediterranean." By colonizing the lands that bordered the Gulf, the South could produce there an "Anglo-American amalgamation" that would rival the United States. The objectives of De Bow's program for expansionism were to establish more slave states and thereby achieve parity within the Union, as well as to complete the economic unity of the

70. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 6, 1851.
71. *DBR*, VIII (1850), 512.

Gulf politically. For De Bow and other expansionists at the time, those objectives had to be reached immediately for fear that the lower Gulf would be overrun by freedmen if the South did not begin to exert influence in the area.[72]

72. *DBR*, VIII (1850), 512; XIV (1853), in "Reciprocal Treaties of Commerce," 531; Robert R. Durden, "J. D. B. De Bow: Convolutions of a Slavery Expansionist," *JSH*, XVII (1951), 447, 450–1.

II.

One million dollars up front. That was John Quitman's asking price to lead an army of filibusters to free Cuba from foreign domination. This was not a personal fee, but the minimum amount of money Quitman felt was needed to purchase armaments and recruit men for the mission. Samuel R. Walker, the man who would become Quitman's closest adviser and organizer of the secret mission, did not even blanch at the demand but instead began carrying out Quitman's orders. Walker, a Louisiana sugar planter, was a firm supporter of filibustering. He and Quitman were very close friends, the latter probably having acquainted himself with the planter through their mutual vocation. Quitman most likely owned lands near Walker in Louisiana, and from there cultivated the friendship with Walker, strengthening the relationship later by similarly-held political beliefs.

During the years 1853–1855 De Bow began to popularize the Caribbean to his readers. Like Quitman, De Bow keenly felt the possible threat an emancipated Cuba could present to the Gulf South. In the 1850's, six out of ten persons on the island were black. He began to propagandize the importance of immediate American action to free the country from Spanish dominance, thereby preparing its way for U.S. annexation.[73] We have seen that in 1850 De Bow lent his wholehearted support to López in his second campaign to liberate Cuba. When those expeditions failed, De Bow's next editorial support came in 1854. He accepted an article by J. S. Thrasher, Quitman's agent in Louisiana, who urged Cuba's annexation to the United States. One year later, De Bow was articulating the idea that "the Gulf of Mexico [might] be commanded by the slave States and ... Cuba to make it a southern lake."[74]

Gulf Southerners continued to inhabit the Antilles island. "The Judge and Mrs. Sharkey," wrote Mrs. Sharkey's sister, "who have been spending the last two months on their plantation have just left for Havana. William is a little uneasy on their account for fear it

73. Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 185.

74. *DBR*, XVII (1854), 43–9; *DBR*, XVIII (1855), 683; Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 184, on Thrasher. Unbeknownst to De Bow, however, Quitman's plans for an expedition were unravelling.

may be unsafe for them in Cuba if the present difficulty between Spain and our government is not amicably settled. They are both much pleased with Cuba and if it belonged to us would like to purchase a permanent home there."[75] Ellen Hyland, the author, wrote her sister about Cuba: "We heard such marvellous and contradictory accounts of Cuban affairs that we were very uneasy about you and the Judge, but of late the papers report that all is quiet as all difficulties have been smoothed over."[76] Other Gulf Southerners continued to remain interested in Cuba by reading about the island. Henry Hughes of the Mississippi Gulf coast noted in his journal that he was reading "Cuba and the Cubans." Hughes was an avid supporter of filibusters and was keenly interested in the acquisition of Cuba.[77]

Quitman kept the Gulf states' sentiments for Cuban revolution alive in late 1853. In June of that year, at the Southern Commercial Convention at Memphis, Thrasher offered a resolution declaring the acquisition of Cuba to be important not only to the South's security and protection, but also for commercial exploitation and military defense. Listening to his speech was Quitman himself.[78] Thrasher later made a more forceful argument, which was published in the *Picayune* and then in pamphlet form, that Louisiana was in support of Cuban annexation because it knew that once part of the Union, Cuban lands and sugar prices would be equalized, and therefore no serious economic threat to the American sugar industry would exist.[79] Thrasher noted that the acquisition was favored by no state more than

75. Ellen Chamberlain Hyland to Mary, Bogue Desha, September 22, 1852. Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Papers, *BTHCA*.

76. Ellen Chamberlain Hyland to Mary, Bogue Desha, December 3, 1852. Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Papers, *BTHCA*.

77. Henry Hughes Diary, February 20, 1853, Henry Hughes Papers, *MDAH*. Hughes kept a scrapbook of articles related to William Walker and Nicaragua.

78. *DBR*, XXV (1853), 269. This argument was anticipated by the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, XXV (September, 1849), 203, quoted in Rauch, *American Interests in Cuba*, 201.

79. John S. Thrasher, "Cuba and Louisiana: Letter to Samuel J. Peters, Esq." (New Orleans, 1834), pamphlet; *DBR*, XVII (1834), 43–9. Thrasher canvassed for Quitman in Louisiana. He was a former editor of the *Club de la Habana*, and an inmate of Spanish prisons in Cuba. Rauch, *American Interests in Cuba*, 184. Samuel Peters was an influential Whig and president of the Union Bank in New Orleans. According to Walker, Peters believed that Cuba, once annexed to the United States, would make the South a stronger section "when the Federal Union was dissolved." "Walker, Diary of a Louisiana Planter," December 19, 1839, *TUA*, quoted in Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 182.

Louisiana, and by no contingency greater than the sugar growers. Louisiana sugar planters felt no threat from the cheaper Cuban sugar because their own commodity was protected by a protective tariff. What made Cuba's sugar so cheap, he argued, was the lower value of labor and land there. Once annexed to the United States, Cuba would have to cease its importation of slave labor; the price of its slaves would rise. By the same token, Cuban land would become more dear. Gulf Southerners so valued the trade conducted between themselves and the Cubans that they desired the economic stability that would come by annexation. It is possible too that these sugar growers had operations in Cuba.[80] One sugar planter who did not have operations in Cuba in the 1850's but desired them was F. D. Richardson of Louisiana, who was a kinsman of the powerful Liddell family. In 1852 he wrote a letter to Moses Liddell, telling him, among other things, about how the planting of his sugar crop was progressing. In the next breath he began talking of Cuba, almost in a *non sequitur*:

> From the present condition of the plantation—the quantity of seed cane on hand, and the quality of land to plant, we ought to be able to calculate on a good crop. And now that the democrats have got into power we shall no doubt have Cuba & a war with Spain—the latter of which would be a temporary advantage to the sugar planters of Louisiana.[81]

War would make Louisiana sugar cheaper because it would probably destroy Cuban sugar crops.

Sugar planters in Louisiana supported the Quitman campaign. The bulk of Quitman's financing came from them. In Louisiana, money was donated and collated by Samuel R. Walker, Duncan Kenner, and Pierre Sauvé, all sugar planters. Kenner and Sauvé, along with Arnold Harris, formed a group called the Louisiana Trust Committee, and handled all the

80. John Abbott, traveling in the South, noted that Louisiana sugar planters would not object to annexation, but unlike Thrasher, he believed that they would simply sell their plantations to cotton growers and relocate in Cuba. Abbott, *South and North*, 53.

81. F. D. Richardson to Moses Liddell, Bayside Plantation on Bayou Teche, Louisiana, November 6, 1852, Liddell Papers, *LSUA*.

financial contributions that were donated to the Quitman campaign.[82] In Alabama, John A. Winston and F. B. Shepard, both cotton planters, numbered among the Mobile financiers. In Mississippi, cotton planter Ferdinand L. Claiborne offered his money and even his son to the effort.

Walker was closely linked to Quitman's mission to Cuba.[83] He wrote a series of letters to Quitman in 1854, telling him of support garnered, filibusters located, and steps taken toward execution of the expedition. Walker later called himself "the depository of [Quitman's] most sacred confidence[—]perhaps the only one in New Orleans that he could confide in without reserve—the only one there who had no interest of mine own to subserve that no clash with my duty as a friend and he well knew that now in otherwise he could still trust."[84] Walker continued:

> Being not myself connected with the proposed expedition, save as a well wisher and for his sake he spoke with me freely of men and things connected therewith—His connection was a condition one as I remember a million of money was to be made up before he would consent to take the command. Men were to be raised and were ready. So soon as the money was raised it was to be placed with all other moneys in the hands of Gen'l Quitman. We informed an association in New Orleans to make collections there. Three gentlemen were named as the depositories of the subscriptions. As agent of General Q. I received from Gaspard Bethancourt a large number of Cuban securities. I had this bundle sealed with B's private seal and to be drawn on the order of Gen'l Q. And deposited them in the Union Bank... Much time was wasted. The junta disputing with one traitor at least in it and that arch traitor Domingo Goicoria... I believe this man Goicoria was an unmitigated scamp, and as ingenious a scoundrel as I have ever encountered. He grew rich through this matter. He managed to mar this affair as effectually as any evil genius ever marred a good enterprise. When a large amount of money was collected and ready to be handed over, money procured and transmitted through every conceivable difficulty and danger by the patriots in the island G— was sure to commit some gross blunder [on purpose] to prevent the consummation. Thus when

82. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 187. Although they pledged to return all monies received if the expedition should be dissolved, they did not do so. Herminio Portell-Vilá, *Historia de Cuba en sus Relaciones con los Estados Unidos y España* (3 vols., Havana, 1938), II, 89–90; Juan M. Macias, Savannah, to Quitman, June 6, July 6, 1855, Macias Notebook; both quoted in Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 187.

83. Samuel R. Walker was a partner in a firm of insurance agents and cotton factors. The firm included a former Tennessee governor, Campbell. On December 22, 1855, he was bought out (along with Campbell) by another partner, Perkins. (February 27, 1854). New Orleans, Louisiana, vol. 11, 71, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration.

84. Samuel R. Walker, "The Diary of a Louisiana Planter," typescript, July 15, 1859, entry 28, *TUA*.

> things were near ready at one time for purchasing of a proper steamer[,] G—[,] Treasurer of the Junta, who had signed a written article that were to bring every honorable responsibility faithfully fulfilled. He on his own responsibility purchased an old unseaworthy steamer the Massachusetts, which entailed [as the sale could not be rescinded] a cost of some $45,000 to make her seaworthy. Then when fitted up everything goes pretty quietly until the time to sail arrives when it was found that a United States Revenue officer was on board. The G— was the only man to arrange matters of his own showing. When at last things were nearly ready G. tries to get up with M. at Savannah a counter expedition to steal all the material and G. to load it. Finally when things could be no longer prevented without exposure Gen. Quitman dispatched Sam'l Jones, Jr. and another to possession of same the barks refused to obey the private signals given by G— and agreed on by Gen. Quitman.[85]

In February, Walker informed the General that his presence was needed in New Orleans in order that the committee in the Crescent City could take "steps to place machinery in motion." In the spring he still was gently requesting, although a bit more forcefully, that in order to keep the "spirit" of the organizers alive, he must come to New Orleans. Besides, a frustrated Walker quipped: "I am afraid our Committee as represented here are each ambitious of doing less than the other." He concluded, again with the message: "Unless you are on the spot I firmly believe little will be accomplished at all."[86] Plans for the Cuban expedition and the outfitting of a group of men was proceeding too slowly for Walker, who grew increasingly impatient at the lack of progress the New Orleans committee was making. He believed that Quitman's physical presence would propel the committee into action, thus expediting the plans.

Quitman did finally go to New Orleans, and while he was there, his wife Eliza wrote to their son Henry, explaining to him what she thought her husband was doing. Eliza never supported filibustering, and she was reluctant to see her husband mixed up with the likes of people like Felix Huston, whom she had once referred to as a "snake." Though older now, Eliza was as frightened as she was seventeen years before when John had left the state to join the Texas army.

> Your Father has gone to New Orleans... From his frequent visit[s] this winter to the City I am led strongly to believe that he with others are engaged in orga-

85. Walker Diary, 38–40, *TUA*.
86. Samuel R. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, February 7, April 28, 1854, *QPHU*.

> nizing troops for an attack upon Cuba. There is something going on secretly which will be developed before a very great while. These are only my own thoughts, drawn from observation upon the signs of the times. My dear Henry pray you do keep yourself free from their dangers If you should engage with them it would break your Mothers heart for my hope of happiness is fixed strongly upon my son, my heart clings to you, my child, more than you think... I have no reason to suppose that you would ever think of such a thing as engaging with the Filibusters, but I speak by way of caution that you may resist the temptation whenever it may be presented.[87]

By the early summer of 1854, Walker received two packages from a person or persons whose contents he did not disclose to Quitman. Perhaps the General knew about the contents, for Walker pointed out that "in accordance with your instructions," he had placed the packages in a tin box, locked, and that he put the key in a drawer in his desk, "where it is at any time to be had by you." Given the fact that Quitman knew of the packages it is unusual that Walker needed to have pointed out that "these packages do not contain money but other documents you [spoke] of." Perhaps these "documents" were false entry documents, indispensable items to filibusters. Regarding the committee's progress in New Orleans, Walker wrote: "Everything goes on well here but subscriptions do not come in as fast as we could wish. I think you ought to be here more if possible." Walker still was convinced that the rich coffers of the Gulf South would be opened without haste were Quitman himself to appear in the Filibuster City and demonstrate his support and leadership of the expedition. In exasperation, perhaps of the work the New Orleans committee was undertaking, Walker asked: "What in the name of heaven is being done in Mississippi?"[88] Walker was extremely protective of the General and anxious that his attention be divided by visitors only under the most extreme circumstances (besides which, Walker was still eager for Quitman to leave Mississippi and come to New Orleans for an extended stay). Captain Flanders of the *Pampero* had asked Walker for his advice on visiting Quitman in order to ask whether he could canvass with him on the Cuba mission. Walker told him to write Quitman instead.

87. Eliza Quitman to Henry Quitman, Monmouth, March 21, 1854, Quitman Papers, *MDAH*.
88. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, May 30, 1854, *QPHU*.

In July Walker was traveling throughout the Atlantic South, a region in which he remarked to Quitman that he "heard little or nothing of the matter which interests the South so deeply— Whenever I did mention it I found the question was misunderstood & they were totally ignorant of the positions we assume[d,] in short they had never weighed the matter at all... I was greatly surprised that S. Carolina [showed] so little interest in a subject of such vital importance to the South." When he was in Washington he learned that were it not for "*us* N. O., [Cuba] would have been bought." Walker recalled his reply to such statements: "I told them it was the worse thing could be done for the south & the very thing we did *not* desire the we would make her independent in spite of the administration."[89] Walker, like so many other Southerners, realized that if Cuba were purchased by the United States, the political infighting between the North and the South would guarantee that Cuba would not become a slave state. If Cuba, on the other hand, were simply freed from Spanish domination, like Texas from Mexico, it would enter the Union at some later period as a slave state, because it would already have a slave constitution and the institution in practice, as opposed to a territory like Kansas.

Quitman did come to New Orleans in September, but was gone before Walker could reach the city to meet him. When he realized Quitman was gone, Walker wrote him a long letter about his efforts to date regarding the expedition. Walker told him of a trip he took to Cuba, saying: "We ran a long the coast of Cuba for half a day & spent some three hours in Havana. It is the most glorious land that eye ever rested on and I am of course a hotter Filibuster than ever." But his thoughts quickly turned toward the capability of the Southern filibusters to overtake the Island. "The soldiers and sailors," he continued, "much more efficient looking men than they have been described to be. The officers seen by me are very fine looking soldierly men, exhibiting a contrast to the Creoles, by no means favorable to the latter. Indeed what I have seen of the Creoles convinces me that we have literally *nothing* to hope

89. Walker to Quitman, July 31, 1854, *QPHU*.

for from such as I have seen... ."[90] What Walker concluded was that the native population could not be counted on to assist the American filibusters in freeing the country from Spain's domination. The historian Basil Rauch suggested that Americans living in Cuba enjoyed their lifestyles, including their tax-exempt status (as foreigners) on the island. They were not in the least interested in overthrowing a government that afforded them such economic freedom for one that would subject them to the same taxes, levies, and other economic headaches as all Southern planters were subject to in the states. This attitude among the people is in marked contrast to the attitudes of Texans' toward the filibusters who aided them in 1835–1836.

Walker also referred to a "G.L." who told the expedition coordinator that he would "give 5000 muskets if any one addresses him coming directly authorized by you and authorized to receive them." Pierre Sauvé had the same request in a later correspondence to Walker.[91] It was his custom to refer to all possible or actual participants by their full name; only initials were used, and consequently, it is almost impossible with certainty to identify the people in Walker's letters. A "General S." and a person by the name of "L." were two men closely connected with Walker in the fund-raising. Walker had good reason for his secrecy. He told Quitman in October that three letters previous to his current reply had been intercepted.[92]

Walker, knowing what it was like to try to raise money in almost absolute secrecy, wrote Quitman with much anxiety that the arrangements for the expedition, as they stood in the fall of 1854, relied too heavily on provisions that were not entirely practical. Quitman had conveyed to Walker or the New Orleans recruiters the necessity of purchasing an armed steamer for the trip to Cuba. Walker was in total disagreement on three points. First, he said, we need money to equip ourselves with munitions. What good will an armed steamer be, he asked, once we are on shore? The recurring problem of money, as far as Walker was

90. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, September 21, 1854, *QPHU*.
91. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, October 11, 1854, *QPHU*.
92. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, September 21, 1854; Carrolton, Louisiana, October 8, 1854; *QPHU*.

concerned, was that publicity was required to raise a substantial amount, but clandestine missions could not be advertised.[93] Moreover, the absence of revolution in Cuba also precluded the massive pourings of money from the Gulf South into filibusters' pockets that had characterized the López expedition in 1851. "We will get no more [money]," he promised, "unless we get it with the men themselves who may bring small sums in their pockets." This option was hardly promising. Besides, he argued, an armed steamer would cost "more than we can raise in 3 years at the present rate."[94] Second, Walker suspected that any armed steamer they might be able to obtain would be a slow-moving one, hardly competitive against the efficient-looking ships Walker had seen himself during his trip to Cuba. Finally, Walker pleaded with the General: If our desire in part is to prevent the administration from finding out about our activities, how will we ever be able to leave an American port in an armed steamer? In light of Walker's objections, Quitman's plan seemed completely preposterous. Other Quitman supporters were equally as hesitant about Quitman's demand. One wondered if he should ask the General to consider a plan to resign. Another mused that "the freight of the munitions of war alone will cost seventy-five thousand dollars, which look like a fable, but it is set down in the estimate."[95]

The constant reports of would-be supporters of the expeditions claiming no monetary support to Quitman without Quitman's express and personal authorization, the lack of money, the "queer party" of Cuban revolutionaries based in New Orleans, and the continual absence of the General from the Crescent City grew tiring to Walker. Increasingly, his [redacted]ers

93. Not even the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* knew of Quitman's expedition. It stated on June 25, 1854: "If there has been an enlistment or engagement of men for any such purpose, or any uncommon purpose, it has been kept so profoundly secret, and the men have been so closely immured within walls, or hidden in swamps, that the most zealous Cuban liberationist in feeling—and there are multitudes of them about—has never been able to guess where they are."

94. Walker to Quitman, Carrolton, Louisiana, October 8, 1854, *QPHU*.

95. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 179.

to Quitman assumed a frustration with the frequent obstacles. But, by early October, the filibusters had raised $35,000.[96]

Quitman had many reasons for supporting the annexation of Cuba. Three years prior to Thrasher's speech Quitman gave his own rationale for its importance to the South:

> We have been swindled by [the administration and the anti-slavery states] out of the public domain. Even a portion of Texas, supposed to be secured as slave-holding, has been wrested from us. Every outlet to the extension of our institutions has been firmly closed. The golden shores of the Pacific, open to the adventurers of the wide earth, is denied to Southern labor, though in part acquired with our blood and purchased with our treasures. We are now hemmed in on the west as well as the north. The line once fixed, to save the Union, has been contemptuously disregarded. The area for the employment of our labor has been circumscribed by the fiat, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."[97]

Quitman knew that the only direction the South could expand was further south, not north in what remained of the continental United States.[98] He realized that if the region wanted more land, it needed to strike fast. Annexation of slave territory was no longer possible through political channels. The South would have to protect itself by getting territory by whatever means possible. Filibustering was all the more palatable to Quitman when he learned that some Cubans desired political independence from Spain; such remonstrances reminded him of Texas' cries for help in 1835–1836. Quitman was never one to shy away from a group of people who wanted to throw off the yoke of despotism, especially if revolution would benefit him financially.

In late 1853 Quitman declared that although he was ready to become engaged in an "enterprise," he did not want to commit himself to a project until he and his agents could raise the funding necessary to perform it.[99] Quitman believed that a sum of no less than

96. Walker to Quitman, New Orleans, October 11, 1854, *QPHU*. Walker complained about the lack of *enough* money to carry out the campaign; he and other agents certainly were generating money, but nothing close to the $1 million Quitman wanted.

97. Caliborne, *Quitman*, II, 130, quoted in Rauch, *American Interests in Cuba*, 201.

98. Caleb Goldsmith Forshey to Quitman, Rutersville, Texas, May 20, 1857, *QPHU*, echoed the same sentiment in a letter written later in the period. "Let Kansas go my friend," Forshey wrote, "not by force, but if it will, make no effort to get slave owners to move there. Turn your mind & your thoughts further South. Get rid of dead weight, & add reliable territory on the South."

99. Unsigned draft to I. M. M. [Juan M. Macias], New Orleans, December 28, 1853, *QPHU*.

$800,000 was imperative to a successful operation. A figure of 300,000 men—at minimum—he added, was crucial also before he would commit to the project.[100] Having recently become a private citizen, ex-Governor Quitman was able to turn his political eye to the island. He, like many other slaveowners in the Gulf states, worried that the abolition of slavery in Cuba was imminent. The emancipation of slaves in the Caribbean French possessions convinced Quitman that Spain would follow France's lead and call for the freedom of all slaves in Cuba. He therefore decided that private efforts had to prevent such a pending contingency by establishing Cuban independence from Spain before a "negro or mongrel empire" could set off slave revolts in his and other Gulf states.[101]

Quitman was determined to prevent Spain from exerting any dominance over Southern affairs. The mother country had appointed Juan M. de la Pezuela as Captain General of Cuba. Rumored to be an abolitionist, Pezuela imposed regulations freeing illegally-imported American slaves, allowing racial intermarriage and black participation in the militia, permitting Cuban slaves to purchase their freedom, and importing free African laborers instead of slaves. Pezuela seemed to be living up to the rumors surrounding him. This frightened many Gulf Southerners. Quitman therefore justified filibustering in Cuba by arguing that Americans had a right to protect their own interests against a hostile foreign power.[102]

Others feared European influence in Cuban affairs, and were busy trying to obtain Cuba for the South. John Slidell (SRD-Louisiana), a long-time supporter of Cuban annexation, attacked the legal impediment to filibustering, the neutrality laws. On May 1st, he offered a resolution designed to enable the president to suspend the operation of the laws. His movement in large part was based on what he thought was convincing evidence that both F[redacted] and Britain were pressuring Spain to abolish slavery on the island. Lord Parlmerston,

100. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 178–9; Quitman to C. A. L. Lamar, New Orleans, January 5, 1855, *QPHU*.
101. May, *The Southern Dream*, 34.
102. May, *Quitman*, 277.

as early as 1851, had written a letter to his British envoy in Madrid stating that abolition of slavery in Cuba would be "one way of keeping the island out of American possession."[103] Slidell and other members of the Louisiana legislature feared that British and French influence in the area would turn Cuba into another Haiti by freeing the slave population and "africanizing" the island. He argued Pierce to allow "individual enterprise and liberality" to "enable the native population of Cuba to shake off the yoke of their trans-Atlantic tyrants."[104]

In frustration with administration policy over Cuba, Senator Albert Gallatin Brown (D-Mississippi) bellowed: "I go for [Cuba] because I want an outlet for slavery ... We want it, we cannot do without it, and we mean to have it."[105] Ends were more important to Brown than were means, and if Quitman were the road toward which American possession of Cuba was to be attained, Brown would be a happy traveler on it. There is no evidence that he directly supported Quitman; but he very clearly declared his pro-filibustering sentiments in the Congress. In early 1855, Brown unsuccessfully sought, as Slidell had formerly attempted, to have the U.S. neutrality laws suspended (in this case permanently) so that Quitman would be able to publicize his effort.

If Quitman was determined to carry out his expedition without Spanish interference, he was equally as determined not to violate American neutrality laws. Early in the campaign, Quitman wanted a mission, both planned and executed, that would not in any way violate U.S. laws.[106] He was still smarting from his 1851 trial and acquittal in New Orleans—however predictable was the acquittal—that he neither needed nor wanted any more legal encounters. Thus, one volunteer suggested that a way of circumventing the neutrality laws would be to disguise themselves as immigrants on their way to Kinney's

103. A. L. Dicket, *Senator John Slidell and the Community he Represented in Washington, 1853–1861* (Washington, D.C., 1982), 34.

104. Dicket, *Senator John Slidell and the Community he Represented in Washington*, 35.

105. James Byrne Ranck, *Albert Gallatin Brown: Radical Southern Nationalist* (New York), 130.

106. To Benjamin Dill, he stated that the campaign should be organized "without breach of neutrality laws, or interfering with war power." Initialed draft to Benjamin F. Dill, June 18, 1854, *QPHU*.

colony in Nicaragua.[107] Kinney himself was not adverse to a connection with Quitman. He advertized his Mosquito lands in Nicaragua as a haven for the South (meaning Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas—according to his conception) in exchange for money.[108]

Quitman gave varied reasons supporting an expedition into Cuba in a drafted statement to Oxford *Organizer* editor Benjamin F. Dill. One was racially-motivated; he feared the island would be overrun by "mongrels." "Spain under advice of England," he said, "has determined to africanize Cuba." He also wrote that "[Spain] is arming the black against the white." Other statements demonstrate his desire to protect Southern interests: "Her fate is ours"; "Danger both to Cuba & ourselves imminent & can only be averted by revolution," and "self preservation demands we should do something." Nationalism provided another reason Quitman wanted to annex Cuba. "Sympathy for an oppressed people," he noted, "& duty to own own country prompt me to aid a revolution with money arms & men, associated with patriotic men." But generally speaking, Quitman did not dwell in abstractions. He was a man of action, not thought. His last rationales are responses to the Pierce administration: "Public opinion, more potent than the administration is with us," and "the Govt from anti-slavery tendencies is powerless." Quitman's intention was to protect the Cuban people from both armed blacks and Spain by aiding them in seeking independence, thereby protecting slavery.[109]

But if Quitman was a man of action, he was also a man who inspired action in others. Many men jumped at the chance to join Quitman's group, the Order of the Lone Star. One supporter wrote the general that even though he had always been a filibuster in theory, he had never been one in practice because he had never found a leader who inspired him enough to volunteer. He stated that he would join only a mission Quitman were leading, for it proved

107. William Theophilus Brantley to Quitman, Selma, Alabama, January 17, 1855, *QPHU*.
108. Henry L. Kinney to Quitman, San Juan del Norte, November 3, 1855 *QPHU*. Kinney wrote, "What is a few millions of dollars to La., Miss, Texas, & Ala. to have a new Republic established to strengthen the political institutions of the South."
109. Initialed draft, Quitman to B. F. Dill, June 18, 1854, *QPHU*.

to be "suicidal" to assist in expeditions led by a Cuban or Spanish leader, alluding to López. Another wrote to say that "Quitman's very leadership guaranteed success. Many of the men who wrote directly to Quitman asking to join his expedition were veterans of the Mexican war; some had served with Quitman there. Colonel John L. Ford, for example, who had commanded a company of Texas Rangers in the Mexican War, had only to receive "intimations" about the Quitman expedition before he began at once outfitting a corps of young filibusters.[110]

Robert May calls Quitman's plan to invade Cuba a "gentlemen's expedition," yet states that the volunteers composed "a violence-prone group." Although we know that many Southern gentlemen could be also quite violent, many of Quitman's affiliates were not gentlemen but restless adventurers, much like the motley group of Texas volunteers. By far the most written support Quitman received was from Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas.[111] Colonel Ford from Texas wrote: "I will cheerfully consent to follow *your* lead. My anxiety is for the South. I desire to see the Slave States in possession of material guarantees for the present security of slavery and for the future expansion of the area of slave territory.[112] Another wanted to join, especially if there were a possibility he could obtain a officer's position.[113] One Mobilian who served with López desired to fight with Quitman for the island again.[114] Another wanted "to extend [to Cuba] the blessings of the liberty we enjoy as

110. Greene C. Chandler to Quitman, Jackson, Mississippi, May 18, 1854; W. D. Griffin to Quitman, Minden, Louisiana, July 10, 1854; T. S. Anderson to Quitman, Austin, Texas, April 24, 1854; *QPHU*.

111. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 180–1.

112. John L. Ford to Quitman, July 2, 1855, Quitman Papers, University of Virginia, quoted in James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 278.

113. Eugene De Mauprat, New Orleans, January 20, 1855, *QPHU*.

114. R. A. Harris, Mobile, January 3, 1855, *QPHU*. During the 1851 López expedition, Harris was under the command of C. R. Wheat, a New Orleans lawyer and officer of the two earlier López missions. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 180. Wheat was a rabid filibuster who wrote Quitman in January, 1854 that if the "Friends of Cuba" could donate $200,000 to General Carrajal on the Rio Grande, that the northern Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nueva Leon, and Coahuila would be revolutionized, whereupon the money would be returned to the Cuban fund. All available artillery and munitions of the revolutionized states would be sent to support Quitman's Cuban expedition. C. R. Wheat to Quitman, New Orleans, January 30, 1854, *QPHU*.

a people to the oppressed & down-trodden of other lands, and especially incited to a wish for action in behalf of our near neighbors of the island of Cuba."[115]

That so many Gulf Southerners were interested in Quitman's proposed expedition was also a reaction to the rumor that slavery would be abolished in Cuba. The same fear that had so quickly prompted the annexation of Texas in 1845 might well be able to wield the same kind of motivating influence among Gulf Southerners, in order that they might protect Cuba against such an occurrence. A theatrical satire, *Those 15,000 Fillibusters*, acknowledged the rumor in performances before capacity-filled crowds in New Orleans. In fact, one of the key actors in the play was General ****, a thinly-disguised Quitman. Of the General, an advertisement said, "[he is the] commander-in-chief of the 15,000, provided they raise the *Dimes*."[116] In Natchez, Robert P. Sargent wrote: "We have a good deal of excitement now & then in relation to Cuba, & I think there is a strong party of patriots mustering their movements... ."[117] Sargent was referring to the neutrality laws that forced the Quitman planners into such secret corners.

That so many Gulf Southerners were recruited for the Quitman expedition was also a show of support and faith in the General's Cuba agent—Felix Huston, commander-in-chief of the armies of the Texas Republic in 1836. In his official Texas capacity, he helped raise over $100,000 for the revolutionary effort. After 1836, he moved to Mississippi, where he came active in Democratic politics, and together with Quitman, Foote, Henderson, and Albert Gallatin Brown, Huston actively petitioned for Mississippi support in Texas' annexation. He campaigned throughout the Gulf, raising funds and recruiting men for the island mission. His nephew was one of those executed by the Spaniards with Crittenden. One Huston recruit was Major Julius Hesse, President of the Mobile committee to aid the López expedition in

115. C. C. Hornsby to Quitman, New Orleans, December 13, 1854, *QPHU*.
116. Dicket, *Slidell and the Community*, 39; "Those 15,000 Fillibusters!", advertisement, June 16, 1854, Southern Filibuster Collection, *LSUA*.
117. Robert Percy Sargent to J. Rupert Paxton, Natchez, June 15, 1854, Robert Percy Sargent Letters, *LSUA*.

1852. Many Mobilians interested in joining Quitman were interviewed by Hesse. One of them, William Theophilus Brantley, wrote Quitman that the campaign would attract the support of "Central Ala," where the "young men" of his acquaintance were of "a disposition favorable to the acquisition and achievement of the independence of Cuba."[118] That most of Quitman's support came from the Gulf South was also in part a result of that region's greater interest in acquiring slave territory in the lower Gulf than in any other region of the South.

The U.S. government was intent on preventing any filibustering activity from even forming. In New Orleans, Judge Campbell, of the U.S. Circuit Court, called in Quitman, Thrasher, and a Dr. A. L. Saunders to compel them to observe "the laws of the United States...especially an act...commonly called the Neutrality law" for a period of nine months, releasing them on bonds of $3,000. Thrasher and Quitman agreed to do so, but only under protest. Quitman refused to comply voluntarily, viewing it as "an unconstitutional, illegal and arbitrary exercise of power." He therefore was jailed temporarily by the U.S. Marshal.[119]

Ultimately, the expedition was aborted because of financial difficulties and the strict policy of the federal government toward the filibusters. In early 1855, Quitman wrote a potential supporter that "the want of money is the obstacle in the way of prompt and quick action."[120] One Alabama supporter lamented that "the times are extremely tight as regards money matters, and general distress prevails."[121] In Mississippi, another regretfully stated that "there is also at this time, more difficulty in raising money, than I have ever before known since I have been in the state."[122] In addition, New Orleans was reportedly in the

118. William Theophilus Brantley to Quitman, Selma, Alabama, January 17, 1855; Felix Huston to Quitman, April 8, 1854, Mobile; *QPHU*. Hesse was a financial agent in Mobile for William Walker's second attempt at Nicaragua.

119. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, July 4, 1854.

120. C. A. L. Lamar to Quitman, New Orleans, January 5, 1855, *QPHU*. Another plausible explanation is given by C. I. Fayssoux, who wrote in a private note: "Genl Quitman, G H Smith, Thatcher, P Harra Picket and many others, consulted U.S. authorities were informed they would not be permitted to leave U.S.—then abandoned the effort." Fayssoux Collection, 1852, *QPHU*.

121. Wiliam Theophilus Brantley to Quitman, Selma, Alabama, January 17, 1855, *QPHU*.

122. William S. Langley to Quitman, Jackson, January 13, 1855, *QPHU*.

midst of a financial slowdown in early 1854.[123] The United States, after the López embarrassment, was determined to nip future in the bud filibustering movements by tightening enforcement of the neutrality laws.

Those financiers, however, never saw a return on their investment, for on April 30, 1855, Quitman resigned from his position as head of the Order of the Lone Star. Quitman decided to dismantle the preparations for an expedition because of meetings with the Pierce administration, the federal government's success at threatening enforcement of the neutrality laws, and the lack of enough money.[124] Silently, in the background, Quitman's filibusters fell by the wayside quickly upon hearing of his resignation from the effort. Financiers were left holding the bag, for most of the money they had donated had been converted into munitions, equipment hardly useful to a merchant or planter.

123. Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition," 186.
124. C. Stanley Urban, "The Abortive Quitman Filibustering Expedition, 1853–1855," *JMH*, XVIII (1956), 175–196.

7 *Gulf South Interest in Nicaragua*

There is perhaps nothing quite as demoralizing as failure begotten by good intentions. Nothing appeared to be working for the Gulf South. From its standpoint in 1854, the region lay mired in a dense forest, vainly trying to traverse the musty, dank terrain, a landscape of accomplishment covered in the decay of an impotent Whig party and of numerous campaigns to annex Cuba. In the opinion of the Gulf South, Cuba was too fickle—one minute it claimed it wanted assistance in thwarting Spanish domination, the next it slammed the door in the face of its "liberators." Were it not for the formidable prosperity of its people and the growing confidence of its economy, the region might have been entirely pitiable.

The failure of the Cuban annexation movement, the inability to expand further in the continental United States, and the growing hostility between the North and the South pushed the Gulf South to the brink of desperation. Its members began to look anywhere in the tropics for a place where they could expand. Some, for example, urged a policy of settlement and expansion into Brazil. W. L. Herndon and Matthew Fontaine Maury explored Brazil in the mid-1850's to determine the navigability of the Amazon River for American commerce. They sailed from New Orleans to the mouth of the great river in the summer of 1856, taking many notes and studying the local fauna as well as the currents of the water.

The similarity between the Amazon and Mississippi rivers was not lost on the two men. "The waters are quite as muddy and quite as turbid," Herndon noted, "but the Amazon lack[s] the charm and the fascination which the plantation upon the bank, the city upon the bluff, and the steamboat upon the water, lend[s] to its fellow of the north." In fact, the Amazon was seen as a continuation of the Mississippi valley.[1] The Gulf of Mexico was the unit around which the two umbilical waterways fed foodstuffs and other produce to the hinterland peoples dependent on them.

For the aggressive Gulf South mind, whose spirit of acquisitiveness was fed regularly on the hope of ever-new territories to absorb and the negative energy of sectional inferiority, the implications of geographical similarity to the Amazonian world was soon articulated. J. D. G. De Bow, like most proslavery members of the Gulf South, believed that the eventual acquisition of the lower Gulf South was imperative to overcoming the minority status of Southerners in the Union. He saw a great potential for American trade and eventual expansion there.[2] Constructing Anglo-Saxon settlements on the banks and bluffs of South America was exactly what De Bow had in mind for that continent. He wanted to see the South build "the foundations of Anglo-Saxon cities on the sites of Indian villages ... [whose] influences ... will inevitably work a restoration of the political, moral, and social condition of the South American states." Brazil, the largest country in South America, was a constitutional monarchy that sanctioned slavery.

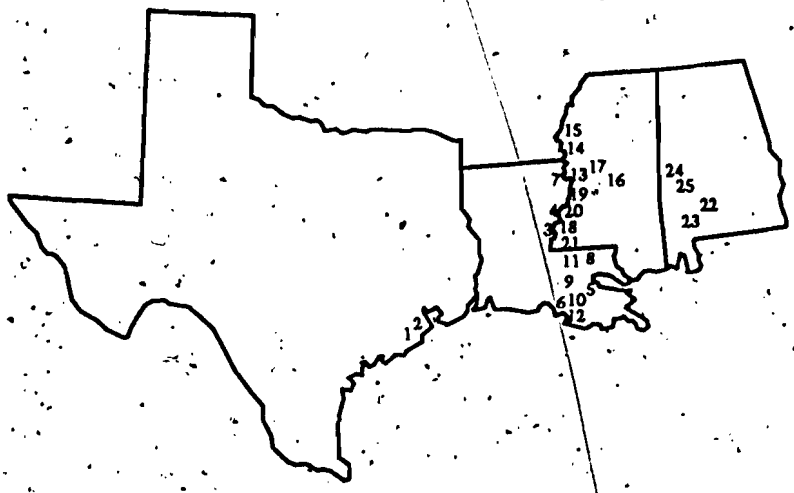
But De Bow was also driven to promote and espouse expansion because he feared the growing minority status of whites within the Gulf South itself. Herndon's brother-in-law,

1. *DBR*, VII (1849), 531; XII (1852), 393, 396. In 1853–1854, Brazil exported over 28 million pounds of cotton (or 156,155 bales of cotton; Brazilian bales weighed about 182 pounds). *DBR*, XXI (1856), 294–95.

2. *De Bow's Review* spoke of the Gulf in 1850 in an article written by Lieut. Maury called "Great Commercial Advantages of the Gulf of Mexico." *DBR*, VII (1849), 510–23. In 1844, the U.S. imported over 158 million pounds of coffee worth almost $10 million. Brazil's exportation of coffee to the U.S., through the port of New Orleans, was roughly 95 million pounds in 1844. Our principal export to the South American country was flour, for which, in 1846, it imported over $1.6 million. As early as November, 1846, *De Bow's Review* included a major article on "Coffee and the Coffee Trade." *DBR*, II (1846), 303–21; IV (1847), 269; XVI (1855), 231–51.

Maury, a naval officer and navigator, expressed the same opinion, saying that it would be necessary to colonize South America "whenever the pressure of this institution [slavery] ... shall become too powerful upon the machinery of our great Ship of State."[3] In the 1850's, blacks outnumbered whites nine-to-one in several counties in both Louisiana and Mississippi.[4] The chart below demonstrates black majority in the Gulf South:

Counties with a black majority in the Gulf South, 1843–1860



1.	Wharton, TX	70% majority
2.	Brazoria, TX	70% majority
3.	Concordia, LA	90% majority
4.	Tensas, LA	90% majority
5.	St. James, LA	70% majority
6.	St. Mary, LA	70% majority
7.	Carroll, LA	70% majority
8.	E. Feliciana, LA	70% majority
9.	Pt. Coupee, LA	70% majority
10.	W. Baton Rouge, LA	70% majority
11.	W. Feliciana, LA	70% majority
12.	Iberville, LA	70% majority
13.	Issaquena, MI	90% majority
14.	Washington, MI	90% majority
15.	Bolivar, MI	70% majority
16.	Madison, MI	70% majority
17.	Yazoo, MI	70% majority
18.	Adams, MI	70% majority
19.	Claiborne, MI	70% majority
20.	Jefferson, MI	70% majority
21.	Wilkinson, MI	70% majority
22.	Dallas, AL	70% majority
23.	Wilcox, AL	70% majority
24.	Greene, AL	70% majority
25.	Marengo, AL	70% majority

Without expansion, what was then true for a handful of counties would become reality for all of them. No proslavery advocate could fail to see the implications of black majority, possible violence and insurrection, not to mention entrapment. Brazil—and all the lower Americas—were to be a safety valve for the Gulf South.[5]

But Brazil was not practical. It was an area relatively untouched by American capitalism. Gulf Southerners were interested at this stage only in a policy of commerce for the country.[6]

3. Robert R. Durden, "J. D. B. DeBow: Convolutions of a Slavery Expansionist," *JSH*, XVII (1951), 454.

4. Stanley B. Parsons, et al., *United States Congressional Districts and Data, 1843–1883* (New York, 1986), 93, 112, 121, 139; Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, 903.

5. Maury even used the term "safety-valve," Durden, "J. D. G. DeBow," 454. In 1858, the Southern Commercial Convention in Montgomery passed a resolution calling on the region to "foster more intimate and detailed commercial relations." *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 597.

6. Late Southern Convention at Montgomery," *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 597, in which the convention proposed the resolution: "That the South ought to foster more intimate and direct commercial relations with the Empire of Brazil."

Filibustering for a territory in which American presence already was felt and through whose power Southerners could expand their peculiar institution was the most sensible way to proceed. That opportunity arrived in 1855 in the person of William Walker, who had placed himself at the head of the government in Nicaragua. Once established there, expansionists in the Gulf rallied behind Walker. Much historical ink has spilled over the relationship Walker had with the original sponsors of the Nicaraguan effort—the East and West Coast capitalists.[7] It is curious to note, however, that the pens fall silent on the subject of the extent to which Gulf states contributed men, funds, and provisions to the "grey-eyed man of destiny."

After Quitman aborted his mission to Cuba, De Bow turned his hopes and his magazine to Nicaragua. Before 1855, De Bow had always substantiated the amount of commerce that the United States conducted with the Caribbean, but he had never before advocated so strongly the significance of these territories to the South. From the early 1850's, then, his *Review* began to articulate the similarities between the slave South and lower America. It was Walker to whom De Bow and the *Review* looked to establish the country of Nicaragua along the line of Southern interests.[8] The best crops of a tropical world could be grown to perfection—rice and sugar—stated one article. Another stressed that crops flourishing in a temperate zone—wheat, tobacco, timber, and cotton—could grow well in Nicaragua.[9] De Bow sanctioned filibustering to acquire the country.

By 1855 the Gulf South was accustomed to the motions of military campaigning: agents of a particular mission entertained like-hearted supporters throughout the states; prominent political and commercial figures waxed passionately on the need for territorial acquisition and economic expansion; they pledged monetary subscriptions to the effort and urged others to follow; and "emigrants" from the states swelled into Galveston, New Orleans, and Mobile

7. See Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*; idem, "William Walker and the Steamship Corporation in Nicaragua," *AHR*, X (1904), 792–94; Philip Foner, *A History of Cuba*, II; Albert H. Z. Carr, *The World and William Walker* (New York, 1963).

8. Especially when Walker authorized slavery to exist in Nicaragua, the *Review* published accounts of the analogous attributes the Central American country shared with the South.

9. *DBR*, XXII (1857), 105–6.

from the hinterland to embark on the trip to free a land from foreign oppression and to acquire land for themselves. The Mobile Greys and the Natchez Fencibles were two of the many filibustering "clubs" that had organized in the beginning of this period to fight for Texan independence from Mexico.[10] The successful assistance with which these clubs had won Texas from Mexico temporarily satisfied the restlessness of the Gulf South and filled it with pride and self-righteousness. The region believed that henceforward, every campaign to add more territory to the region of the slave states could be won like Texas, and more importantly, would contribute piecemeal to the destiny of the South, namely, to win all the lands in the Gulf South.

Nothing fit more consistently into Walker's own history of self-aggrandizement than that he wanted to rule Nicaragua. His dream was the same as George Bickley's, who would attempt to make real that same vision four years later with a secretive group called the Knights of the Golden Circle—to make the Gulf of Mexico an inland sea by acquiring all the lower Americas and thus creating a Southern empire whose power emanated from Cuba. Walker's plan included the conquest of the other four Central American states in turn, so that the confederation of states would be similar to their American South counterpart. When the latter seceded from the Union, an eventuality about which Walker was supremely confident, the merger would create the greatest slave empire and commercial emporium on earth.[11] Walker, however, was neither the pawn of the Southern supporters of expansion nor an agent of manifest destiny. He wanted power for himself.

Henry Lawrence Kinney, a co-founder of Corpus Christi, Texas (1841), said to Nicaragua at the same time as Walker, with similar plans. According to one historian, his ambition was

10. Frederick C. Chabot, *Corpus Christi & Lipantitlan: A Story of the Army of Texas Volunteers, 1842* (San Antonio, 1942), 33.

11. Scroggs, "Walker's Designs on Cuba," 199; Foner, *History of Cuba*, 112. On the Knights, of which little is known, and less has been written, Oliver Morton, *Southern Empire* (Boston, 1892); C. A. Bridges, "The Knights of the Golden Circle, A Filibustering Fantasy," *SWHQ*, XLIV (1941), 287–302; Ollinger Crenshaw, "Knights of the Golden Circle: The Career of George Bickley," *AHR*, XLVII (1941), 23–50; Jimmie Hicks (ed.), "Some Letters Concerning the Knights of the Golden Circle in Texas, 1860–1861," *SWHQ*, LXV (1961), 80–86.

to organize "an empire with a new kind of government," and even offered himself as a candidate for governor of Greytown. But he was defeated overwhelmingly.[12] Unquestionably, Kinney's intent was to set up his own country, with colonists from Texas primarily as its inhabitants. Kinney himself was intentionally vague, remarking that once his own country was founded, "the rest will follow."[13] In a letter to John Quitman, however, Kinney did provide a clue to his intentions:

> I am permanently on terra firma in C[entral] A[merica] and I want some assistance, and I think it is important for the Southern states to have me permanently established with a constitution suited to the interest of the Southern states. I want men & money & I do feel as if the South should at once establish a firm govt suited to us here, I have a constitution prepared and more for men & money to support it. *What is a few millions of dollars to La., Miss., Texas, & Ala. to have a new Republic established to strenthen the pollitical institutions of the South.*"[14]

Kinney was a prominent Gulf South merchant whose economic connections gave him a sense of the significance of the lower Gulf South to its sister states in the Union. Not only did he conduct business between the interior of Texas and the port of Corpus Christi, but he also traded with foreign countries that bordered on the Gulf of Mexico. He had lived in Havana for three years, and likely acquired business ties among Cuban merchants. Kinney also had an uncle in Matamoros, Mexico, and it is said that Mexican authorities knew about, and allowed to continue, contraband trade between that port city and Corpus Christi. This trade was protected on the Texan side of the border by the Rangers.[15] If Kinney did well in conducting trade, he was an even better promoter of colonization. During the height of the California gold rush, Kinney organized a group of young men, mostly from Louisiana and Mississippi, called "Kinney's Ranger," to search for treasure.[16]

12. Charles W. Hayes, *Galveston: History of the Island and the City* (2 vols., Austin, 1974), II, 962; Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, *Writings of Sam Houston*, VII (Austin, 1942), 442–3.

13. New York *Herald*, June 6, 7, 17, 1855, in Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 105.

14. Henry L. Kinney to Quitman, San Juan del Norte, November 3, 1855, *QPHU*.

15. Chabot, *Corpus Christi & Lipantitlan*, x; Ephraim Douglass Adams (ed.), "Correspondence from the British Archives Concerning Texas, 1837–1846," *SWHQ*, XVII (1913), 64.

16. Mabelle Eppard Martin, "California Emigrant Roads Through Texas," *SWHQ*, XXVIII (1925), 287–301.

But Kinney was concerned that those who wanted to go to California go by way of Corpus Christi, and by doing so, attract more settlers and more business into the area. In the early 1850's he advertised some of his Corpus Christi lands for sale, claiming that "the lands are of first rate quality, being a dark, deep loam ... rich and fertile, easy of cultivation and capable of producing large crops of cotton, corn, sugar, tobacco, &c."[17] Unless Kinney's lands were located on the shoreline, it is extremely unlikely that lands in south Texas were capable of growing anything but cactus. In 1852 he organized a Corpus Christi Fair, by which he meant to induce emigrants to settle around the area. One historian believes that this plan was fueled by Kinney's desire to provide General José M. J. Carbajal with men and provisions to successfully sever the northern states of Mexico from the rest of the country, and thereby establishing a republic on the Rio Grande.[18] Kinney advertised extensively. He hired theatrical troupes and scheduled fireworks, bullfights, cockfights, as well as lectures on philosophy and literature. During the fair, Carbajal, representing the Liberating Army of Mexico, spoke of the economic and political tyranny Mexico imposed its northern region. He appealed to his listeners for support. He got a heady rouse of applause, but little else. Kinney himself expected between twenty and thirty thousand to participate in the fair and purchase land in Corpus Christi, but scarcely two thousand turned out and few showed any interest in permanent settlement there. Perhaps its logistical isolation to organized settlements, proximity to political instability, or reputation for general unhealthiness were to blame. In any case, the scheme had been a failure, and Kinney was heavily in debt.[19]

17. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 29, 1851. Kinney wanted "settlers of good repute for honesty, industry, and perseverance." His lands were selling from $1 to $3 per acre. Of the spot, Kinney stated: "Such a delightful location, either for profit, health or enjoyment, is not to be found on this continent. To those with small means this will prove a perfect paradise. To the capitalist not a more favorable opening for investment can any where be met with." William Dinn, of 20 Canal Street, handled Kinney's land inquiries.

18. Hortense Warner Ward, "The First State Fair of Texas," *SWHQ*, LVII (1953), 163–174; *DBR*, XIII (1852), 103.

19. Ward, "The first State Fair of Texas," 166, 169, 173. The lack of monetary support for Carbajal was attributed to a shortage of money. John S. Ford, "Memoirs" (transcript, 7 vols., *BTHCA*), IV, 644, in Ernest C. Shearer, "The Carbajal Disturbances," *SWHQ*, LV (1951), 224.

By 1854 he meant to try his hand at the colonization of the Mosquito Islands off the coast of Nicaragua. Perhaps if it were a successful venture, Kinney could pay off his Corpus Christi fair debt. Backed by financiers, Kinney contracted for thirty million acres of land, for which he was to pay $500,000. Undoubtedly, scrip was sold at twenty-five cents an acre to those interested in settling in the Central American region. In January, 1856, he *Galveston Tri-Weekly News* reported that immigrants to the Kinney's Mosquito territory were embarking for the "New El Dorado" in "large numbers" from New Orleans and other ports. It stated that immigrants were sanguine about finding gold, and they had received a "liberal" bounty of land.[20] One of the agents authorized to sell Mosquito scrip, Dr. R. J. Swearingen, of Texas, gave citizens in Houston an account of the land there, remarking that it was probably the best sugar cane country in the world.[21] In 1855, De Bow wished Kinney's venture into Central America the most hearty success, adding the "the Mosquito territory ... is now about to open its doors and receive into its midst a people who will, in a few years, change the whole face of that prolific country, and establish order and quiet throughout Central America."[22]

Many other Gulf Southerners descended upon Nicaragua during the 1850's. All eyes in fact had taken careful notice of it. Jane McManus Cazneau, along with her husband William, had plans for Nicaragua similar to those of Kinney.[23] J. B. Cheeseborough, a New Orleans resident, wrote Fayssoux in 1856: "Do not forget your promise to write me a full description of the country, its health, &c—your own prospects and what things would pay to ship there, and all other information you gather."[24] Many people were interested in what the country was like, and whether it might be a good region to relocate or purchase land.

20. *Galveston Tri-Weekly News*, January 17, 1856; Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 100; John M. Bonner Letter, New Orleans, May 21, 1856, Bonner Family Papers, *LSUA:* A great interest is manifested among our citizens for Gen. Walker & his cause—sympathetic meetings are held every night."

21. Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, April 10, 1856.

22. *DBR*, XVIII (1855), 67.

23. Her ties to other Texans were extensive. Both she and her husband were friends of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar. In the mid-1830's she purchased two leagues of land from Sam Williams.

24. J. B. Cheeseborough to Fayssoux, New Orleans, 1856, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

The Gulf South dutifully recorded the goings-on in Nicaragua, from 1855 until the fall of 1856, without using Walker's ascendency to power as a forum to urge the colonization of the country by slaveowners. Even the *Picayune* realized that Walker was not a proslavery expansionist.[25] Instead, the region wildly applauded Walker's success, viewing it as a victory for the United States in terms of furthering American hegemony in the Western hemisphere. Walker, the press noted, had brought peace to an area that had known only strife and civil war under its own indigenous leaders. But given a shot of American prowess, Nicaragua had been politically stabilized.

In March, William Walker invited Kinney to Granada, for he doubted the veracity of the Texan's claim to the Mosquito territory. Kinney and Walker quickly bickered over who controlled the Mosquito territory; Walker argued that the area was part of Nicaragua; Kinney pointed out his contract giving him ownership. Meanwhile, Britain had always maintained that the Mosquito territory could not belong to Nicaragua, for Spain never had subjugated the Mosquito Indians when it had possession of Nicaragua. The quarrel ended promptly with Kinney's arrest and imprisonment. Later, learning that he had entered Granada under a policy of safe-conduct, Walker simply had him deported.[26]

But Walker had something Kinney did not, namely, the backing of the South. Pierre Soulé, the Louisiana congressman and minister to Spain under President Pierce, was the force behind Walker's negation of the Nicaraguan slavery emancipation. Walker had severed his ties with Vanderbilt by revoking the charter of the Accessory Transit Company (ATC) that provided a fleet of ships in the Nicaraguan service. He needed partners whose own ambitions would foster the economic development of Nicaragua, but not those who might subordinate his own. Walker was a man for whom power was an intoxicant, but in this matter it was not

25. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, July 13, 1856.

26. John Hill Wheeler's account of the meeting between the two as follows: "Col. Kinney called on the Com. He seems uneasy and talks too much, and does not regard facts. He said that Walker had threatened to hang him, and asked me if I had heard him say so. I replied that I did not recollect if ever hearing Gen. Walker mention his name." Diary of John Hill Wheeler, January 4, 1856, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*.

so heady that it dulled his instinct for self-preservation. By allying the country closer to Southern interests, he knew he could better maximize the commercial potential of the land. What he needed was Southern capital, bought by Southern slaveholders, to buy land and cultivate it with slaves. Soulé's own influence on Walker was not simply political savviness; the New Orleanian had recently purchased a "rich hacienda" near Naindaime that at one time belonged to Fruto Chamorro, the Servile President of the Republic. Soulé reportedly paid about $50,000 for the estate.[27]

The plan was to first reimpose slavery in order to ally Nicaragua with the Southern states. The decree reinstituting slavery was issued on September 22, 1856, the day one of the fathers of the Texas Revolution, Branch T. Archer, died.[28] The decree had as its goal to "bind the Southern States to Nicaragua as if she were one of themselves." Since Nicaragua, like the Gulf states, lacked the requisite human capital to develop the land, Walker agreed that the course of action should be a revival of the African slave trade. A resounding success could be achieved only if the Caribbean were joined with Nicaragua in a political alliance with the sister states in North America, should they break their bonds with the North. Therefore, Soulé looked to Walker for the acquisition of Cuba. Realizing that Spain would never sell her possession, Soulé wrote that "if we acquire Cuba, we must acquire her as we acquired Texas." He, like De Bow, Maury, and other Gulf Southerners, had come to believe that "the safety of the South is to be found only in the extension of its peculiar institutions ... towards the equator."[29]

27. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 28, 1856; J. Preston Moore, "Pierre Soulé: Southern Expansionist and Promoter," *JSH*, [illegible] 1955), 208ff; Lucia Douglas, "The Interest of Texans in the Nicaraguan Filibusters," typescript, *BTHCA*.

28. *DBR*, XXIII (1857), 221. Archer died in Galveston, Texas. William Walker defended his action to reinstitute slavery by saying: "The introduction of slavery into the Spanish American Republics ... would end the long strife of their mongrel races for supremacy, give the control of their affairs to a pure unmixed white race, and eventually secure them the blessings of free and stable institutions." walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile, 1860), 263.

29. William Walker, *War in Nicaragua*, 263; Moore, "Pierre Soulé: Southern Expansionist and Promoter," 203–23; Jeffrey A. Zemler, "The Texas Press and William Walker in Nicaragua," *ETHA*, XXIV (1986), 31; Samuel R. Walker, "Cuba and the South," *DBR*, XVII (1854), 519–25.

For Walker, the inverse was also true. After his estrangement from Cornelius Vanderbilt and the Accessory Transit Company, the safety of Nicaragua seemed to be sure only in an alliance with the South. So it was to the Gulf states that Walker went primarily, to tour the major cities for economic sustenance.[30] He needed recruits for his army and emigrants for his republic. Most advertising in the Gulf South for the Nicaraguan effort was conducted openly, for there were no reprisals in a region that embraced so completely the necessity of furthering slave interests. In New Orleans, for example, notices read: "Nicaragua.—The Government of Nicaragua is desirous of having its lands settled and cultivated by an industrious class of people, and offers as an inducement to emigrants, a donation of Two Hundred and Fifty Acres of Land for single persons, and One Hundred Acres additional to persons of family. Steamers leave New Orleans for San Juan on the 11th and 26th of each month." Notices appeared in New York papers as well, but those were of a more clandestine nature; also, by January, 1856, the city government was making a serious and successful effort at circumventing the passage of ships destined for Nicaragua.[31]

Misfortune forced Walker to wed himself to the Gulf South by the summer of 1856 simply because he had burned all other bridges behind him. The mightiest construction, the ATC, literally connected the states with the filibuster in the most literal fashion by providing him with ships and the best opportunity to regularly water his country with good American stock. The resourceful Walker of course turned this misfortune to his advantage. Announcing that thenceforward he wanted only "good pioneer stock," Walker's sent his recruiters to the Southwest. At one point Walker said that he wished no more recruits from "the purlieus of Bowery and Five Points." He desired "Southern gentlemen" from New Orleans than black guards from New York.[32] Walker's call for help was quickly answered, and in October and

30. Walker had been the editor of the New Orleans *Crescent* before he became a filibuster. He was on close, friendly terms with De Bow. *DBR*, XX (1856), 670.

31. The New York advertisements usually read: "Wanted.—Ten or fifteen young men to go a short distance out of the city. Single men preferred. Apply at 347 Broadway, corner of Leonard Street, room 12, between hours of ten and four. Passage paid." Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 139, 149.

32. Newspaper clippings, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*.

November, 1856, more men volunteered to filibuster for him than during any other time of his tenure. 160 men volunteered in October and another 194 followed the next month.[33]

The filibuster William Cazneau of Eagle Pass, Texas, contracted with a minister of Walker's government to provide Nicaragua with one thousand colonists. Two other Texas agents, Colonels Waters and Lockridge scoured the Texas countryside for men and arms.[34] The Texas Rangers were targeted for recruitment. Having been formed in 1836 as a mounted police force, by the 1850's the Texas Rangers were principal actors in the filibustering campaigns of Nicaragua. By later 1856 a regiment, led by Col. G. W. Crawford, petitioned other Rangers back home to join ranks and fight in the "glorious struggle" against the Costa Ricans. The Rangers were encouraged to bring their saddles and as little liquor as possible, but to refrain from eating the fruit in Greytown.[35] Colonel Powell of Montgomery and General Henningsen recruited men from the former's home state of Alabama.[36] John C. McMahon, a twenty-two year old Mississippian from Coahoma county, joined Walker's army in 1856.[37] L. Sigur traveled to Nicaragua in April, 1856, fresh from the Cuban missions a few years earlier, to aid Walker in his battle against the Costa Ricans.[38] Walker's definition of "good pioneer stock" needs a brief explanation, for our friend, the dissipated son of a

33. "Tabulation of the Number of Men According to When and Where Enlisted and Remarks," Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

34. New York *Herald*, December 25, 1856; Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, August, 1857; *Texas State Gazette*, June 14, 1856 and the San Antonio *Ledger*, August 23, 1856, both in Lucia Douglas, "The Interest of Texans in the Nicaraguan Filibusters," *BTHCA*. Lockridge to Walker, St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, April 11, 1860, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*. This letter was published in New Orleans' *True Delta*, April 14, 1860.

35. Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, January 22, September 29, 1857. Walker preached temperance to his men. Of of the official statements on this subjects stated: "The commander in chief sees with regret that one of the chief military virtues—temperance—is not as much esteemed as it should be in the army. He earnestly expects the officers of the Army to furnish in this respect an example of self-restraint and control to the men, and to see properly punished socially as well as legally the intemperance which is calculated to bring to bring the Army into contempt and disgrace." After Walker's first failure in Nicaragua, many filibusters who survived judged that the greatest problem in maintaining discipline was whiskey. *Daily Delta*, July 1, 1857, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*. Also, it was thought that the fruit was poisonous—the Garden of Eden analogy was lost on the newspaperman—but it is more likely that the men who died were sick before they ate the fruit.

36. Faye Acton Axford (ed.), *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs* (University, Alabama, 1976), 226.

37. Linton Weeks, *Clarksdale & Coahoma County: A History* (Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1982), 21.

38. Diary of John Hill Wheeler, April 9, 10, 15, 1856, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*.

prominent physician in Natchez, George Metcalfe, was rejected by Walker's recruiters in New Orleans.[39] In Baton Rouge, seven young men joined Walker in 1855—William Cork, an employee of Mr. John Hill; William Dallas, from the carriage factory of W. F. Tunnard; James Fairbanks, of the firm of Fairbanks & Wilson; Milton Graig and John Dixon of the Seventh Ward; a young man named Reynaud, an assistant overseer on the plantation of Major T. J. Bird; and John McGrath.[40]

His supporters included personages of social and political importance in the Gulf South—congressmen, a senator, ex-governor, and the ubiquitous scores of newspaper editors. Anson Jones, former president of the Republic, defended filibustering and Walker by stating that "the hybrid and savage races of Mexico and Central America [are] wholly incapable of self-government."[41] One of Walker's most important acquisitions in his war to maintain power in Nicaragua was Callendar I. Fayssoux, a seafarer who was midshipman of the Texas Navy in the 1840's, and more recently, had accompanied Narcisso López to Cuba in May, 1850 for the unsuccessful Cárdenas expedition. One of Fayssoux's friends, who was himself a Cuban filibuster, remembered how Fayssoux guided his ship to the guarded Havana shoreline in the wee hours of one May morning by swimming to shore with a rope in his mouth—rope that he used to anchor the vessel to land.[42] Sometime in 1856 Fayssoux canvassed for Walker up the Mississippi river, stopping at various plantations and merchant houses along the way. Fayssoux kept meticulous notes about the parish in which he was traveling, on what side of the river a particular plantation or house was located, and just how far they were from New

39. Harnett T. Kane, *Natchez on the Mississippi* (New York, 1947), 230.

40. John McGrath Scrapbook, *LSUA*, 27. The filibuster McGrath and the compiler of the McGrath scrapbook are not related.

41. Anson Jones, *Memoirs* (Austin, 18—), 531, quoted in Lucia Douglas, "The Interest of Texans in the Nicaraguan Filibusters," *BTHCA*.

42. *The Sunday States*, written by J. C. Jamison, September 27, 1903 and *New York Herald*, December 14, 1857, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*; Abercrombie, Captain of U.S. Army to Commander Moore, Texan Navy, Philadelphia, May 30, 1842. Fayssoux visited Havana one last time in 1859. On the back of a permit, issued by the Governor of Havana, allowing Fayssoux to visit the city in December, the filibuster wrote: "Visit to Havana 1859 might have been hung or garoted if, recognised In visiting Havana I ran a risk: as I had been under Gen Lopez C. I. Fayssoux[.]" Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

Orleans. By the intricate details he kept, it seems likely that Fayssoux stopped frequently, for he recorded the names of managers or supervisors of many of the plantations or commission houses. Fayssoux recorded nothing that would prove he was recruiting money or supplies for Walker, but when he was touring Alabama, he did mention that one planter had been extremely generous with his property by extending it for the use of Walker's filibusters, who were trying to find their way back to Mobile from Norfolk.[43]

Yet another filibuster of repute was Louis Schlessinger, an adventurer who had once served in the Hungarian army under Kossuth and had followed, with Fayssoux, López in the expedition to Cárdenas. Although he was captured by the Spaniards and condemned to the chain gang at Ceuta, he managed to escape, and in 1856, joined Walker in Granada. Awarded the title of Adjutant-General and sent to Costa Rica as Walker's ambassador, Schlessinger, by the latter end of 1856, attempted to negotiate a treaty of peace.[44]

Perhaps one reason Texas was so wedded to the idea of supporting Walker when slavery had been instituted was that it now seemed that Texas was staring at itself in a mirror. An editorial in the *Galveston News* expressed a real understanding for the analogous circumstances, defending Walker by stating: "Texas was the achievement of filibusterism."[45] This argument of course was the same type that Quitman and others had made to defend the acquisition of Texas from the Mexicans. A leading member of a San Antonio committee organized to aid Walker saw itself headed by the editor of the San Antonio *Texan*, E. G. Huston. Of those men from the Lone Star State who organized to sail for Nicaragua, the largest group originated in San Antonio and were members of the Alamo Rangers.

The picture of Nicaragua the Gulf South had was that of a tropical paradise. Agents of Walker who staged public meetings in the states extolled the untouched "wilderness," the fecund acreage, and the possibilities of treasure. Even though Swearingen remarked that the

43. Fayssoux Notebook, *TUA*.
44. John Hill Wheeler newspaper clippings, Wheeler Papers, *LC*.
45. *Galveston Weekly News*, February 9, 1856; Lucia Douglas, "The Interest of Texans in Nicaraguan Filibusters," *BTHCA*.

condition of the country did not favor emigration, his speech nevertheless served to bolster Texan sentiment toward settling in the Caribbean paradise whose wealth was like a ripe fruit waiting to be plucked. His favorable reports could not help but sharpen the appetites of the restless, young men of the Gulf South. Hundreds of them made the trek to Walker's republic in 1856. Some of them, according to the Gulf propagandist press, found an "eternal paradise," with land "as rich as cream."

Others, like John Rivera of New Orleans, wrote letters of warning to future immigrants, declaring that young men were being "deceived" by the "transcendental promises" of the Nicaraguan agents who promised "glittering inducements in land and money."[46] Rivera, a Texas native, had for some time worked in New Orleans as a printer, and was a "general favorite" in the city. He issued a statement for the public record claiming that he came to Nicaragua merely as a visitor, and had no intention of joining the army. But like so many other immigrants, he added, he was forced to bear arms and fight. What Rivera neglects to point out is that he did so well as a soldier that Walker appointed him to the position of second lieutenant, to reward his "good behavior." He served with many Texans in a battalion led by Captain Turley of Mississippi. In early August, 1856, he deserted the army with Turley and the remainder of the battalion, and was reported to be "going through the country, plundering the ranchos and haciendas along the route."[47]

Most of the emigrants to Nicaragua were young men; the average age was a little over twenty-six. The pie chart on the next page indicates the breakdown by age of the 1,027 men who served in the Nicaraguan army. Imbued perhaps with the romanticism surrounding the fighting that would bring democracy and liberal institutions to a barbarous land for future American settlers, with the thrill of fighting for the honor of the South, the fear of Northern encroachments, or with the restlessness or boredom that local prosperity produced, scores of

46. Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, April 10, 15, 25, 1856; June 30, 1857.

47. Charles Calladan, Collector of Customs for the Port of Granada, August, 1856, quoted in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 27, 1856. Calladan died at the battle of San Jacinto, Nicaragua, in September, 1856. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, October 23, 1856.

the adventurous young of the Gulf South left their homes for Nicaragua. Many of these men came to Nicaragua with the intention of serving in Walker's army. One former Walker soldier, who wrote to his sister that the rumors of his death had been greatly exaggerated, had given up filibustering only when he got married.[48] Another said of New Orleans, the great nexus for the recruitment of soldiers:

> This is a City in which I would dread being idle, as it is a kind of rendezvous for all reckless characters and men of desperate fortunes—whose acquaintance I should judge it would be hard to shun were a person out of Employment for they are always looking up young men without prospects, for various fillibustering and piratical expeditions. There are at present numbers of such men in town recruiting for Col Walker's forces in Nicaragua and they find but little difficulty in procuring young men for their purposes—for what are men to do who have nothing to employ them and no prospectus of making their expenses.[49]

Some, however, brought their families, and came to farm the land. But this group quickly learned that deception was in Arcadia, for as soon as their vessels were docked, they were informed that all male emigrants had to serve a year in the Nicaraguan army before taking up their lands.[50]

Age breakdown of the 1,027 men who fought in the Army of the Republic of Nicaragua, 1857.[51]

14 and under	2
15–19	118
20–24	388
25–29	245
30–34	119
35–39	64
40–44	32
45–49	20
50–54	6
55 and over	3
not recorded	30
	1,027

AVERAGE: 26.13 years

48. J. G. Gunwiler Letter, Bastrop, Louisiana, July 3, 1858, *LSUA*.

49. J. A. W. Brenan Letter, New Orleans, December 19, 1855, *LSUA*.

50. Rivera, Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, April 10, 15, 25, 1856; June 30, 1857; Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 234–35. One popular saying among Americans in Nicaragua was: "Every American who comes into Nicaragua kills three men, himself and two natives." Newspaper clippings, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*.

51. Item 120—Register of the Army of the Republic of Nicaragua, including Muster Roll, 1857. Tabulation of the Number of Men According to Age, Height and Complexion. Tabulation compiled by Dr. Alejandro Bolaños G., Masaya, Nicaragua, 1972.

A Panama correspondent to the New Orleans *Picayune* calculated that from Walker's landing in May, 1855 to his defeat at Rivas in May, 1857, he had at his command a total of 2,518 men. He estimated that the Costa Rican forces numbered over 18,000, of which a total of 5,680 were killed. The filibuster force lost 850. Among those killed were all the Baton Rouge filibusters, except William Dallas.[52] The losses were proportionately similar: one out of three men on each side was killed. Such losses of lives were to be expected in war, some argued, and the bulwark of Gulf support was even stronger for Walker when he waged his second bout at the Nicaraguan title. In summoning support from bankers and prospective emigrants alike, Galveston *Tri-Weekly News* editor Willard Richardson challenged his Northern detractors: "Gen. Lafayette had no more right to come to the aid of the American revolution, nor Gen. Rusk, Gen. Lamar, Gen. Sherman, the immortal Fannin, Travis, and hundreds of other patriots, to come to the assistance of Texas in her desperate and then almost hopeless struggle, then Gen. Walker and his friends now have to maintain the Government established in Nicaragua by invitation of the inhabitants." Richardson also had an argument for those easily rallied to defend the "cause of the South." "But after all," he continued, "the abstract principle is not so important to the people of the South, as the vast results that must follow a change of Government in the Central American States. While the enemies of slavery are steadily narrowing its limits on the North and North West by their free soil organizations extending along the line from Kansas to Eli Thayer's Colonies in Virginia, *they are equally determined in their opposition to every effort that is made to find a refuge or escape for slavery on the South.*"[53] These arguments induced support from those who financed the Texan battle for independence and the expeditions for Cuban acquisition.

Richardson's battle cry was echoed throughout the Gulf South. The call to Walker's aid was answered with a resounding affirmative. In November, 1857, Walker left Mobile for Nicaragua with about four hundred men, most of them from the Gulf South. Late in

52. John McGrath scrapbook, *LSUA*, 27.
53. Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, September 29, 1857.

December, 1857, the Galveston *News* reported that about 700 Texans had enlisted as immigrants to Nicaragua.[54] One of those Texans who jumped at the chance to play a part in the American capture of a foreign country was Lewis M. H. Washington, a former filibuster from the Texas Revolution. It is said that he traveled to Nicaragua as a correspondent of the New Orleans *Picayune*. As soon as he arrived in Nicaragua, he joined a company commanded by a Captain Moon. In mid-February, 1857, Washington carelessly walked through an open space of land that lay vulnerable to enemy attack. There he was shot in the foot and was unable to walk. Several men in his company carried him to the main body of the unit, which was stationed at a secluded place near the rear of a hill, called Lord Nelson's Ditch. When Colonel H. T. Titus ordered the retreat of the filibustering forces from Castillo, no order was given to the men to take Washington with them. The filibuster was left behind. The Costa Ricans seized him as their prisoner and demanded information from him about the intended movements of the American forces.

Washington was not gravely injured; certainly his mental capacities were not impaired by this wound. He withstood the barrage of questions and the almost certain torture; when the Costa Ricans' methods proved useless, they took him to their leader, General Moro, who at that time was in San Carlos. Perhaps they believed Washington might be of some use to Moro there, or that Moro could at least decide what to do with him. They traveled forty miles up the San Juan River, forty long miles for a man who was completely helpless and yet who, all his life, had romanticized battle and duty. Did he despise the men who left him behind? Did he ache to see his wife and children? Perhaps the certainty of death petrified him and hardened his resolve. Seconds before his execution—for Moro wanted Washington

54. *New York Herald*, December 14, 1857, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*. In Houston, Captain Hal. Runnels recruited 100 men; in Austin, Captain McEachern had 70; in Brazoria, Captain Phelps had 40; in Powder Horn, Captain Henry had 75; near the San Antonio river, Captains Stribbling and Perry had 100; and from other parts, Captains Mosely, McIlhenny, Moore, and Keys had 205.

executed as an example of what Costa Ricans did to marauders—he cried out: "I am an American? Shoot me!"[55]

In Mississippi, there was a man who had been watching Walker's movements for four years and those of filibusters for almost a decade. Henry Hughes, a States' Rights Democrat from Claiborne County, Mississippi, kept a substantial scrapbook filled with clippings and articles on Walker and Nicaragua. He unsurprisingly favored those who articulated sympathy with Walker's attempt to capture and maintain power in the country.[56] He was also a member of the African Labor Supply Association, which favored bills legalizing the importation of African slave labor into the United States. J. D. B. De Bow was president of this organization. R. T. Archer, Nathan Ross, and I. N. Davis were vice presidents. In the summer of 1858, Hughes wrote Walker, asking him to come speak to the Port Gibson supporters of his Nicaraguan campaign. In the letter, Hughes authored a message on the group's behalf, crediting Walker with founding a Republic based "on the supremacy of a superior race, and on the industrial subordination of an inferior race."[57] While this clearly was never Walker's original intention in 1856, these filibustering financiers believed what they want to, and were prepared to raise whatever money was necessary to help him reestablish what would benefit them both.

But while there seemed to be support for Walker from the Mississippi Gulf coast, there was hardly any enthusiasm for another expedition to Nicaragua from the people of New Orleans. Fayssoux wrote Walker in May, 1859, despairingly stating that "there is apparently but little interest taken in our affairs at present in New Orleans and but few of the officers here." Perhaps this is why Walker turned to Mobile for help.[58] He appointed two men to

55. "Death of Lewis M. H. Washington," *Texas State Times*, May 2, 9, 1857; *Galveston News*, April 21, 1857, in the Washington Family Papers, *BTHCA*.

56. Henry Hughes Scrapbook, in the Henry Hughes Papers, *MDAH*, including the New Orleans *Crescent*, April 10, 1855, featuring "Miss Pellet on Nicaragua." Hughes was a supporter of the annexation of Cuba.

57. *Port Gibson Reveille*, August 14, 1858, Henry Hughes Papers, *MDAH*.

58. Fayssoux to Walker, New Orleans, May 24, 1859, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

handle the passports and arms during his 1858 attempt to reinvade Nicaragua through Honduras. The men, Hesse and Humphries, also operated a shipping line form Mobile to Nicaragua.[59] Julius Hesse was a German Jew who had ben living in Mobile since the early 1850's and was worth about $20,000 in 1856. Walker asked Fayssoux to make sure that Hesse and his partner got enough passports and the right amount of armaments necessary for the expedition. But as was the nature of filibustering, to be entrusted to supply arms was also the same as being in charge of corralling as much provisions of all kinds as could be gotten. In June, 1860, Fayssoux wrote Humphries, saying, "Bread will be the most necessary article."[60] He also appointed H. Maury to canvass Alabama for recruitments. Maury traveled through the Black Belt, through Selma and Montgomery, in order to pick up money as well as men.[61]

There were significant problems with trying to move Walker's men from the interior of the eastern Gulf South into one of the Gulf port cities. For example, many Alabamian filibusters had no resources to travel from the Black Belt region to Mobile. Fayssoux noted, however, that a planter from Montgomery, came to their aid. Benjamin F. Tarner welcomed the filibusters into his home, gave them food, drink, and rest, setting them up comfortably on his plantation while Hesse and Humphries managed to find them transportation to the coast.[62] Many other instances of charity and succor were extended to filibusters by Gulf South nabobs. For example, Fayssoux kept a careful notebook of prominent Louisiana and

59. No mention of Humphries is noted in the Dun & Company papers. It does mention that Hesse's business partner up to February, 1857 was Moses Waring, that the firm was known as M. Waring & Co., and that they were steamboat agents. The Dun agent wrote that Hesse dealt in politics "pretty deeply" and made "some pretty heavy bets on the last Pres Elect[ion]" (February, 1857). A year later, the agent reported: "Doing a fair business will sustain some loss by the late Nicaragua enterprise which he was interested as Agent & part owner of the *Fashion*, but good for his liabilities" (February 11, 1858). A later entry stated that Hesse "was interested with Walker in his Nicaragua expidition [*sic*] ... fitting out the schooner *Susan*" (September 13, 1859). Alabama vol. 17, 74, R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration. Elliott Ashkenazi, *The Business of Jews in Louisiana, 1840–1875* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1988), uses the credit reports of Dun & Co. for Louisiana merchants.

60. Fayssoux to H. G. Humphries, New Orleans, June 20, 1860, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*. The Mobile steamer that regularly plied to Nicaragua was formerly a New Orleans vessel, but was bought by friends of Walker. *New York Herald*, December 14, 1857, John Hill Wheeler Papers, *LC*.

61. H. Maury to Fayssoux, Mobile, March 16, 1859, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

62. Notebook kept by C. I. Fayssoux (1856–1858): "Mr. Benjamin F. Tarner is the Planter of Montgomery that assisted Walkers officers when in distress at that place." Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

Mississippi river planters as well as how far their plantations were located from the port of New Orleans.

But the glorious return of Walker in 1857 was not meant to be; he was arrested in Greytown and charged with violating the American neutrality laws. This action by the government aroused a fury of reprisals from the Gulf South press, which argued that important parts of the neutrality laws were too vague and should be repealed.[63] At the Southern Commercial Convention in Montgomery, 1858, Percy Walker of Alabama argued that the establishment of Americans in Nicaragua was "a work of duty," and that further "illegal and disgraceful" conduct by the Federal Government "will most certainly dissolve the Union itself." Senator Arthur P. Hayne of South Carolina, however, argued that the issue was not "paramount to all others" and desired to "avoid all further threats and menaces upon the part of the South until they were in a situation to put them into execution." But the Gulf South supports of Walker continued to argue on his behalf.[64] Walker would, however, never successfully reenter Nicaragua. In 1860 he sought to liberate Honduras from a government that "stood in the way of the interests of all Central America" and then make his way into Nicaragua, but he was thwarted in that endeavor as well. The Honduran government captured him, and on September 12, 1860, he was executed.[65] The reality of mail service in those days made ironic the following letter to Walker, sent to him three days after his death: "It is painful for me to tell you so, but I think that it will be very hard to do any thing of importance, in the way of reinforcements, until we hear some good news from you... ."[66]

In the end, the only territorial gain for the Southern expansionists was the Gadsden Purchase (1854), a piece of land purchased from Mexico for $10 million to be used for a transcontinental railroad route linking the Pacific with the Atlantic.

63. Apalachicola *Advertiser*, quoted in the New York *Herald*, December 14, 1857; Montgomery *Advertiser*, January 14, 1858.
64. "Late Southern Convention at Montgomery," *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 603–4.
65. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 385.
66. Fayssoux to Walker, New Orleans, September 15, 1860, Fayssoux Collection, *TUA*.

8 *The Gulf South in the 1850's*

In the 1850's, the Gulf South was beginning to develop itself internally. Railroads, formerly neglected in the flush times of the 1830's by shortsighted town boosters and ignored again in the 1840's by a deflated economy, began to be built furiously, as if the region, acknowledging its relative youth, were trying to catch up to the rail-connected East and Midwest. Commercial conventions, begun in the late 1830's to address particular Southern economic problems, were staged with extreme regularity and were attended by active, vocal participants in the 1850's. These conventions crystallized the differences between the Souths, Gulf and Atlantic. The Gulf South also busied itself rebuilding its local economies. The recovery was neither uniform nor constant. Some towns relapsed into hard times after regaining some economic stability; others found difficulty in repeating the flush times twenty years beforehand.

J. D. B. De Bow was the Superintendent of the Seventh Census of the United States, and in that capacity, he had a nimble facility with the innumerable statistics pertaining to the growth and development of the States. As a Southerner, he was particularly sensitive to the rates of economic development between his section and the North; the differences seriously disturbed him. He knew that the Gulf South's locomotion was contingent on waterways. Frequently what determined the success of a town was its proximity to water. Rivers, creeks, lakes, and the ocean represented the quickest and cheapest way to transport goods.

De Bow wrote an extensive and elaborately annotated article, "Address to the People of the Southern and Western States," for the *Review* in 1851. In it he laid out very clearly the need for Southern internal improvements—but not before he had built his case extensively for the woeful transportational network under which Southerners lived. Taking ten Northern states—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York—and ten Southern states—Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee—De Bow found that the populations were nearly equal, yet the Northern states had 6,838 miles of railroad in operation, while the South had only 2,309. In other words, De Bow argued that in terms of population, the North had three miles of railroad to the South's one. More horrifying to him was the fact that this statistic remained true even though the South was six times bigger than the North.[1]

The solution—building more railroads—was an extremely expensive one. De Bow estimated that each rail mile in North Carolina cost $12,806.[2] It came as no surprise, then, that railroad building was quite nascent in the early 1850's. Only very small roads connecting cities and towns were constructed. In Louisiana, two roads joining Lake Pontchartrain and Carrollton to New Orleans were constructed in 1835.[3] Maunsell White and John Slidell were both on the corporate board of the Carrollton and New Orleans railroad line that traveled four miles and cost 25 cents to ride. The Pontchartrain line was a little more expensive—costing 38 cents per person.[4] No other road, however, was built for twenty years. The same scenario was found in Mississippi and Alabama. Up until the 1850's, Huntsville, Alabama, for example, had closer connections to New Orleans than it did to Montgomery or

1. *DBR*, XI (1851), 142.
2. *DBR*, XI (1851), 144.
3. William H. Williams, "The History of Carrollton," *LHQ*, XXII (1939), 195; Witton P. Ledet, "The History of the City of Carrollton," *LHQ*, XXI (1938), 230. Another railroad, the West Feliciana, gave residents of the Louisiana parish and the Mississippi county of Wilkinson, access to the Mississippi River. The road was chartered in 1831 but final construction was not completed until 1842. Elisabeth Kilbourne Dart, "Working On the Railroad: The West Feliciana, 1828–1842," *LH*, XXV (1984), 29–56.
4. Ledet, "The History of the City of Carrollton," 237.

to Mobile because of the inability to traverse overland efficiently. For the same reason, much of northern Alabama formed closer alliances with southeastern Tennessee than with southern Alabama. Texas was just as uninitiated as its Gulf South neighbors to the east in developing a railroad system.

Railroad building broke new ground in the 1850's all around the Gulf South. In Alabama, part of the desire to build new roads to connect areas of the state together was precipitated by the discoveries of mineral wealth. Iron, coal, and limestone deposits were found near the vicinity of Tuscaloosa, and these deposits fueled the speculative spirit of local Alabamians to capitalize on their wealth by constructing a railroad from the Mississippi line, near Meridian, up through Tuscaloosa and into the northeast portion of the state.[5] According to the state geologist, Michael Tuomey, the iron found in the vicinity of Jefferson County exceeded that "of any locality in the U.S."[6] Those in favor of the railroad received help from Robert Jemison, Jr., a Tuscaloosan who greatly favored a line running through his town. On December 12, 1853, the Alabama Legislature granted a charter to the railroad.

The linking up of new areas occurred not simply within the region. The trend during this decade was the construction of roads by the Gulf South to tap the resources of the West and Atlantic South. Landon Garland, president of the South East and North West Railroad in Alabama, decided that if his rail line were going to pass through the Magnolia State from west to northeast, he wanted the end of the line to join up with another road. The most advantageous merger was in the city of Chattanooga, through which the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad passed.[7]

5. The railroad, called the North East & South West Railroad Co., was to end in Chattanooga, there linking up with the East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad. Rebecca Agnew Holt and Mary Lightfoot Garland, "Landon Cabell Garland's Letter Book While President of the North East & South West Alabama Railroad Company, 1854–1855," *AHQ*, XXXIV (1972), 37.

6. L. C. Garland to C. G. Gunter, Tuscaloosa, 20 November 1854, in the Garland Letter Book, quoted in Holt and Garland, "Garland's Letter Book," 69.

7. Holt and Garland, "Garland's Letter Book," 39–40.

By far the most ambitious railroad line conceived in the Gulf South was the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. As planned, it would be the longest railroad in the country under a single charter. The road would join, almost in a vertical fashion, the port city of Mobile with the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi River, and would be 521.8 miles long, at an estimated cost of $9,700,000.[8] The committee of individuals assembled to give serious consideration to the implementation of road were not only members of Alabama, but of Mississippi as well, particularly those from the eastern part of the state. The citizens of Mobile voted a tax on their real estate of $300,000 to help finance the railroad. Those Mississippians immediately understood the differences in trade that would accompany the completion of the line, and that lay principally in the increase of goods coming into their section of the state as opposed to going down the Mississippi river and entering the port of New Orleans. The road inevitably would diminish New Orleans' importance as the region's main center of Western goods. East Mississippians joined their good friends in Alabama in supporting the line, to which the Federal Government in 1850 gave a land grant to aid in its construction.[9]

To suppose that Mobile's involvement with and, indeed, enthusiasm for the railroad indicated a rivalry with New Orleans is to misunderstand the basic relationship it had with its larger Gulf South port. Although by 1840 Mobile was second only to the Crescent City as the country's leading cotton port, Mobile always had acknowledged the superiority of New Orleans as a trader of goods. That Alabama's port was overshadowed was simply a result of nature and geography. New Orleans drained more of the nation's interior than did Mobile. The interdependent relationship between the two ports symbolized the history of Gulf South ports. From 1849 until the Civil War, Mobile sent up to half of its cotton to New Orleans to

8. *DBR*, XI (1851), 161. Of the distance, 164 miles would be in Alabama, 191 in Mississippi, 127 in Tennessee, and 40 in Kentucky.

9. Grace Lewis Miller, "The Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Ante Bellum Times," *AHQ*, VII (1945), 37–40.

be reshipped to the Northeast and Europe.[10] On the way back home from taking Alabama cotton to New Orleans, vessels would bring back important staples and manufactured goods for Alabamians. This statistic means at least two things—that Northern and European vessels came to New Orleans to obtain cotton more frequently than they came to Mobile, and that Alabama planters had to pay twice to have their cotton transported to its final destination (first down to Mobile and then over to New Orleans).[11]

The mouthpiece of New Orleans' interests, *De Bow's Review*, enthusiastically applauded its sister city's attempts to enlarge her trading sphere. In an 1849 issue the magazine declared that

> [t]he Mobile and Ohio Railroad must there, when finished, inevitably attract and monopolize the whole of this immense travel. Not only this, but thousands who are deterred from visiting the Gulf by the perils of the Mississippi River navigation would avail themselves of the existence of railroad facilities to enjoy the delightful winter climate of the tropics.[12]

The region's most vocal economic booster supported the railroad because, above all, it would attract people to the Gulf South. Alone, New Orleans could not propel the area ahead of the rest of the country in economic output. New Orleans believed that with the construction of the nation's second largest lifeline would come a flood of people anxious to vacation or even invest in the Gulf region.

In order to persuade planters of cotton and corn in the hinterlands that the Mobile and Ohio railroad would benefit them, the railroad boosters argued that the rail would eliminate the invariable delays that planters were helpless to combat. Sometimes the difficulties of river navigation blocked goods from reaching their markets for six or eight weeks, and planters would have to pay from $3.50 to $7 transportation costs on a bale of cotton. The

10. Harriet Amos, on the other hand, claims that the ties of Mobile and New York were closer than that of Mobile and New Orleans. Judging from the symbiotic relationship between the two, based on geographical proximity and year-round contact, the New Orleans-Mobile connection was much more important to Mobile. Amos, *Cotton City*, 24.

11. New Orleans had the reputation of charging high prices to move goods through its port.

12. *DBR*, VII (1849), quoted in Miller, "The Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Ante Bellum Times," 47.

railroad, on the other hand, would deliver it for $2.50 or $2.50 a bale. In addition, the rates for corn and bacon would be half the rate they currently were, using the railroad.

The general trend regarding sectional trade favored to shift from a dominant Western-Southern trade to one in which Western goods were diverted to the East Coast.[13] The growing network of railroads and canals in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast encouraged the trading relationship between the two sections. The Mobile and Ohio Railroad was one significant way Mobile thought it could circumvent some of the Western-East Coast trade. Construction began early in 1851. By 1854 Mobile's line ran as far north as Winchester, Alabama. Three years later, De Bow lauded the project, saying: "There is something grand in the idea of a city, with the comparatively limited wealth and population of Mobile, embarking so boldly in this great enterprise for connecting the Gulf of Mexico with the Ohio and vast regions beyond it."[14] Again, the predominant interest of the important representative of the Gulf South was to support business ventures that, in turn, sought to enlarge the scope of business and investment throughout the region. By the end of the year, Mobile's real estate had increased while new industries had begun producing goods. A paper mill and shoe factory, the Mobile Dry Dock Company, and a ship building enterprise all had their start during the late 1850's as a result of the railroad and the newly-awakened interest in Mobile.[15]

The Mobile and Ohio Railroad was one of the most ambitious construction projects undertaken in the Gulf region during the 1850's. Many of the railroads sponsored and completed during this time were the first in many parts of the Gulf South. The sentiment in favor of railroads in North Louisiana, for example, caught hold of that state's population in the early fifties, with help from their neighbors to the south, particularly J. D. B. De Bow. In an article he composed for the *Review* in 1851, he argued that the northwest section of the

13. Lamp, "Empire for Slavery," chapter one.
14. *DBR*, XXIII (1857), 486, quoted in Miller, "The Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Ante Bellum Times," 56.
15. Miller, "The Mobile and Ohio Railroad," 57.

state, particularly the area around Shreveport, served as a sort of informal funnel for Louisianians to trade with Texans for to migrate there.[16] De Bow noted that about 40,000 bales of cotton came down the Mississippi River into New Orleans from North Louisiana. The problem, he pointed out, was that the navigational system for getting cotton down to the port city was tricky, for the bales first had to travel down the Red River. Although the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad Company convened in 1853 to announce that it had $285,000 worth of stock to which supporters had subscribed, the line was never completed before the War.[17]

The only operating railroad in Mississippi by the early 1850's was the short road connecting Jackson with Vicksburg. The state proposed extending the road further into Alabama, to Montgomery; connecting Jackson with Holly Spring, Mississippi; and connecting Jackson with New Orleans. With this road, Mississippians hoped that the 150,000 bales of cotton produced by the Cotton Belt counties of Sumter, Marengo, Perry, Green, and Dallas, would be turned to New Orleans, instead of continuing to go to Mobile, where they traveled by means of the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers. Vicksburg wanted New Orleans to pay for the whole cost of building the railroad to Alabama.

Texas was the portion of the Gulf South whose land transportation systems were particularly in need of improvement. Texas and portions of Louisiana were the last areas of the Gulf South that were settled and developed. Two areas were being surveyed for railroads; one that would connect Lavaca Bay on the Gulf of Mexico with El Paso, on the Upper Rio Grande; the second that would link Austin, Texas' capital and New Orleans. Branches of the latter railroad would connect Houston, Galveston, Montgomery, San Augustine, Washington, and Nacogdoches. Two railroads were under construction by 1850. One was from Brazos, Texas and Galveston, an important one, since most of Texas' cotton growers grew their

16. De Bow, "Louisiana and Texas Rail-Road—Or How New Orleans Shall Find Sources of Abundant Wealth in the Future to Atone for all of Her Losses," *DBR*, XI (1851), 327–329, quoted in Marshall Scott Legan, "Railroad Sentiment in North Louisiana in the 1850's," *LH*, XVII (1976), 127.

17. In part, not enough money could be raised in the overwhelmingly rural northwest part of the state. Legan, "Railroad Sentiment in North Louisiana," 141.

cotton and sugar along the Brazos, and were in the habit of sending their crops down the serpentine Buffalo Bayou through Houston and into Galveston Bay to the port city.[18] The second railroad, the San Antonio and Gulf Road, was chartered, and was under incipient construction by 1850.

18. Almost all Texas farmers in the antebellum period lived east of the 98th meridian. Richard G. Lowe and Randolph B. Campbell, *Planters and Plain Folk: Agriculture in Antebellum Texas* (Dallas, 1987), 13.

II.

> It is the misfortune with us that when we have been aroused in the past it has been by paroxysms, and never followed by sustained efforts. We have come together in convention, but when the convention adjourned that was the end of it. Nobody had the power to act in the recess. The thing soon passed out of mind.[19]

Southern commercial conventions illustrated the desire among Gulf Southerners to unify and aggrandize their region. Southerners convened the first conventions devoted to the improvement of commerce in the late 1830's in Augusta, Georgia (1837) and Charleston, South Carolina (1839). The main focus of the meetings was to discuss ways the South could recover form the Panic of 1837 and establish direct trade with Europe. South Carolina and Georgia attended the first meeting; Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina attended the second meeting. All the major resolutions were proposed by Georgians and South Carolinians, such as George McDuffie, Thomas Butler King, Henry N. Cumming, A. H. Campbell, and James Gadsden. By the mid-1840's almost all the Gulf states joined, and the topics discussed ranged from the construction of an Atlantic-Pacific railroad to the reopening the African slave trade and the status of local commerce in particular states. In the last decade before the Civil War, the Gulf South voice of territorial expansion and the opening up of more trading networks with the Caribbean became louder and more distinct.

At the Memphis Convention of 1845, several resolutions were proposed, voted on, and passed. The major issue of the convention was whether a railroad linking the Pacific and Atlantic oceans should originate on the Atlantic Coast. No division between the two regions in the South was evidenced on this question. On the debate, however, concerning the construction of a West-South railroad, the Souths were sharply split. Robertson Topp, of Memphis, suggested that:

19. Herbert Wender, *Southern Commercial Conventions* (Baltimore, 1930), 94. Wender's dissertation, written sixty years ago, is still the most inclusive work on the subject.

> Railroads and communications from the Valley of the Mississippi to the South Atlantic ports would give greater facilities to trade, greater dispatch in traveling, and would develop new resources of wealth. They would be salutary influences on the commercial, social, and political relations of the country, and were recommended as work within the power of private enterprise and as a profitable investment of capital.[20]

This was the first resolution of any convention to advocate the capture of the West by a specific part of the South. The Tennessean, Topp, believed that the Atlantic South already had an advantage over the Gulf South in railway lines that connected it with the West; indeed, Western goods were more likely to be sent to the Gulf South *via* Atlantic South ports than they were to travel to the Gulf South directly. Although the convention (sardonically nicknamed the "Charleston" Convention by perturbed Gulf Southerners[21]) was chaired by John C. Calhoun, who called upon all members to improve the interests of the South and the West combined, his colleagues in the South had a different conception of how that combination should take place.

The Memphis Commercial Convention in 1847, a meeting whose date coincided with the economic take-off of the Gulf South, focused Southern eyes on the need to link the Atlantic and Gulf Souths together. The suggestion was made in Memphis, at the Convention there in 1849, that a railroad be built to connect the Souths together from Charleston through Alabama and Mississippi. Eventually, the road would proceed through Texas all the way to the Pacific Coast. Both Atlantic and Gulf Southerners applauded plans to develop such a connection, but they differed on how such a connection should be finished on the Pacific. Atlantic Southerners favored the Charleston plan; Gulf Southerners, led by the New Orleanians, wanted a water passage from the Gulf South to the Pacific Ocean via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in southern Mexico.[22] One Charleston newspaper responded to New

20. Wender, *Conventions*, 63.
21. Wender, *Conventions*, 147.
22. Judah Benjamin, future Confederate Secretary of State, championed the Tehuantepec plan. Eli N. Evans, *Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate* (New York: 1988), 44–45.

Orleans' attitude by claiming that it evinced a "intrasectional jealousy [that was] detrimental to the South."[23]

James Robb, a wealthy merchant from New Orleans and member of the Louisiana senate, challenged notions such as the one Topp made at the 1845 Convention, namely, that the Atlantic South should be the receptacle of Western produce. At the Southern and Western Railroad convention, held in 1851 in New Orleans, he boasted to a large audience:

> We have only to increase the facilities of getting [to New Orleans from the West], when the people of the West will look as naturally to New Orleans as the center of the arts, of fashion, and of ideas, as the people of France do to Paris.[24]

Robb feared New Orleans was losing the Western trade because of its almost exclusive reliance—by the late 1840's—of cotton as its export, and because of its distance from the West, America's premier hinterland. Goods sent from the West to the Gulf port by river in order to be reexported took a week or more to reach their final destinations, whereas Western goods could be transported to the East by rail within two or three days.

Robb entreated the members of the convention to encourage their states to build railways and factories in order to keep Southern goods and capital in the South. His scolding raised the ire of Memphis lawyer and railroad promoter John T. Trezevant, who described Robb's vision of a better South "as a giant game of chess [that] New Orleans was playing against the cities of the Atlantic seaboard for the great prize of the avenues of commerce."[25] Trezevant's remonstrance to his neighbor in the Gulf South, however, was ineffectual, for Robb was only one of several Gulf Southerners who repeatedly urged the dominance of their region over the Atlantic South.

23. New Orleans *Daily Delta*, 23 February 1854, Charleston *Daily Courier*, 23 March 1854, both in Jere W. Roberson, "To Build a Pacific Railroad: Congress, Texas, and the Charleston Convention of 1854," *SWHQ*, LXXVIII (1974), 122.

24. *DBR*, XI (1851), 73.

25. Wender, *Conventions*, 78. John Timothy Trezevant, one of the most influential citizens of Memphis, was a local attorney for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. *NCAB*, XXXIV, 316–317.

The tone of the 1852 Baltimore Southern Convention was decidedly pro-South Atlantic. The founder of the Maryland Historical Society and a member of the city's Board of Trade, Brantz Mayer, opened the floor with the resounding proclamation:

> Baltimore is nearest the North, nearest the South, nearest the West; so central in fact, as to be nearest all. It is nearest the manufacturer of the North—the producer of the South and West—the speculator of Europe, and purchasers everywhere.[26]

So much was Mayer a booster that he seemed not to consider his city part of any region. He clearly wanted Baltimore, as the mid-Atlantic's port city, to capture Western trade. His position was lauded and buttressed by the assembly's president, William C. Dawson, of Georgia, who declared that, based upon her geographical position, Baltimore was entitled to the trade of the West and South.[27]

Mayer's implication—that the South Atlantic was better situated to receive Western goods and trade with Europe and Northeast—made it clear to Gulf Southerners that John Calhoun's request for an united South and West was not being taken seriously. J. D. B. De Bow, who attended all of the conventions and devoted a tremendous amount of space in his *Review* to disseminate their news, asked his readership to attend the Charleston convention (1853) because the "South-Atlantic States will be present in great force, to deliberate with their fellow citizens of the West."[28] This is how Gulf Southerners categorized themselves geographically—as Westerners. They cast themselves as being different than the Atlantic South.

26. *DBR*, XIV (1853), 376; NCAB, *X*, 32, for biographical information on Mayer.
27. Wender, *Conventions*, 96.
28. *DBR*, XV (1853), 255. De Bow was president of the Knoxville Commercial Convention in 1857. *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 574.

Of the nine conventions held in the 1850's, four[29] took place in the Atlantic South, three in the Gulf South, and two in Tennessee. It is not surprising that wherever the conventions were, the resolutions slaved for discussion were concerned primarily with issues vital to that particular city or its immediate surroundings. For example, in the 1855 New Orleans Commercial Convention, a petition asked the General Committee to consider discussing a resolution calling for the development of a system of direct trade between New Orleans and Europe, favoring Galway, Ireland, as the proper point of communication.[30] Another motioned the convention to vote on making appropriations for a ship canal to be built between the Mississippi river and Lake Borgne (ten miles below New Orleans). A third, which was adopted by the General Committee, called for the convention to ask Congress to appropriate funds to deepen the channel through Atchafalaya, Louisiana and Galveston, Texas. The Atlantic Southerners, needless to say, were not pleased with this agenda. Captain Albert Pike, of Arkansas, articulated their frustration in his floor speech, stating bluntly that

> ...this convention was brought here for the very purpose of furthering the interest of New Orleans. ...It is well known that there was a large delegation to the Charleston convention (1854) from the States of Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. ...It is well known, too, that the delegations from these States were opposed to the meeting of this convention in the city of New Orleans. They desired that it should adjourn to meet in Richmond or Norfolk.[31]

The convention members understood that a cleavage existed in the South between "the several southern States bordering on the Atlantic ocean and the gulf of Mexico."[32] The two

29. In the 1850's, commercial conventions were held annually (with the exceptions of 1851 and 1860):

1850—Richmond, VA
1852—Baltimore, MD
1853—Memphis, TN
1854—Charleston, SC
1855—New Orleans, LA
1856—Savannah, GA
1857—Knoxville, TN
1858—Montgomery, AL
1859—Vicksburg, MI

30. *DBR*, XXVIII (1855), 520.

31. *DBR*, XXVIII (1855), 628. Pike was a poet and lawyer who, from 1853 to 1857, lived in Louisiana and practiced law. *NCAB*, I, 527–528.

32. *DBR*, XXVIII (1855), 527.

Souths, Atlantic and Gulf, competed for the economic hegemony of the South. The convention in 1855 further corroborated Robertson Topp's conviction during the 1845 Memphis meeting. The difference between what he saw happening then and what occurred during conventions in the 1850's was that *both* regions—not just New Orleans—were playing the chess game.

Many supporters of filibustering, such as John Quitman, John Slidell, Maunsell White, Mirabeau N. Lamar, and De Bow, were also fervent supporters of Southern commercial conventions. White, a septuagenarian by the time of the 1858 Montgomery convention, was designated as one of several vice presidents. At the same time that the Gulf South was constructing railroads to connect itself extraregionally, many Gulf Southerners began to see themselves as different from the Atlantic South. De Bow, born during the heat of national discussions over the expansion of slavery in the territories that was the Missouri Compromise, had begun to understand, by the late 1840's, what kind of forum the South needed to express itself commercially. At this time the *Review* examined and promoted the interests of the Southern states as a whole. But by the 1850's, De Bow increasingly came to support issues of extreme significance to the Gulf South.

"There is a rich field of biographical incident throughout the States of Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and others of the Southwest," wrote De Bow, "which ought to be explored."[33] He inaugurated his "Famous Men of the Southwest" series in the late 1850's, so that his readership could become more familiar with the most important business and commercial leaders of the region. The first man profiled was Maunsell White.[34] Of him, De Bow, wrote:

> He believes in extending the domain of liberty, and sympathizes with those all over the world, who are engaged in the work. His purse has often been at their service. He believes in acquiring Cuba, sympathises with the case of Walker in Nicaragua, and would go for the whole of Mexico tomorrow...

33. *DBR*, XXV (1858), 480.
34. "Pioneers of the Southwest," *DBR*, XXV (1858), 482.

This profile was the only one that appeared in the *Review* before the end of the decade. It is plausible that had other installments been published, the men sketched would have been similar to White—wealthy Gulf Southerners who were active in promoting internal improvements and filibustering campaigns. There were the characteristics admired in the region.

The Montgomery convention was different from the preceding ones because its tone was more political and national in orientation. For example, the major topics of discussion were the repeal of slave trade laws and the support of William Walker and the filibusters in Nicaragua. The convention was presided over by a South Carolinian, A. P. Calhoun, who beamed at the "unanimous feeling existing throughout the South," and continued, to loud peals of applause, that "[w]e have now, for the first time struck a chord in the great Southern heart, and a common pulsation is felt along the Atlantic and the Gulf States striking deep into the interior."[35]

Calhoun's remarks were quickly forgotten and the convention got down to its usual rancor. Dominated by Montgomery's most outspoken politician, William L. Yancey, a bitter debate ensued on the issue of reopening the slave trade. Virginia jurist and journalist Roger A. Pryor took the position that to adopt such a resolution would be tantamount to dissolving the Union because the North unequivocally would not tolerate it. And, Pryor added, Virginia was not ready to leave the Union. Yancey issued a challenge to Pryor, to admit that he advocated such a position out of a respect for Jefferson, who was President at the time (1807) the laws prohibiting the further importation of African slave labor were enforced, or that Virginia opposed the measure because it would hurt the Virginia slaveholding class. After all, Yancey pontificated, slaves sold in Virginia cost as much as $1,200 each; if the slave trade were reopened, Commonwealth slaves would become less valuable. Pryor was livid, accusing

35. *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 574.

Yancey of staining the honor of the Commonwealth. Yancey attempted to smooth things over, trying to assure the Virginian that he meant no insult. He finally stated:

> we do not wish to move alone—in Alabama, for instance—but would prefer to have all the other States with us; he will go to Virginia, and though she cannot move on account of her peculiar border position, she might say in a spirit of true sisterhood to the Gulf States—move on, form your confederacy, and we will see that you are not molested by a foe that should reach you across our territory.[36]

Yancey and Pryor represented the extremes of the two Souths on the issue of reopening the slave trade. The Gulf South was not unanimously in favor of the idea because many of its members were frightened by the idea of disunionism associated with it. And they accurately saw Yancey as a committed disunionist.

The convention also discussed supporting the americanization of Nicaragua. William Walker was a special guest at the assembly. F. B. Shepherd, the Alabama cotton planter who helped raise money for John Quitman's secret campaign to invade Cuba in 1852[37], was on hand at the Montgomery convention to petition that William Walker be allowed to sit on the floor of the convention. The resolution was adopted. Later in the proceedings, Percy Walker of Alabama campaigned to establish American settlements in Nicaragua, wanting the convention to approve of a resolution in favor of it. Senator Arthur P. Hayne of South Carolina quickly countered. He was worried that the previous discussion on the slave trade, challenging as it did the Constitution of the United States, was too dangerous; Walker's proposition, according to Hayne, "contained a threat and menace to the General Government." Walker was shocked. This question, he stated excitedly, was paramount to all others because it meant the extension of Southerners into Central America, "and from there northward towards the United States." It was, he added, the "only way in which the South could extend her territory and institutions." Joining Walker in assent was Shepherd, who stated that:

36. *DBR*, XXIV (1858), 600. Yancey would include South Carolina, Georgia, and Arkansas in the confederacy.

37. See Lamp, "Empire for Slavery," chapter six.

> ...the only blood that ha[s] been shed for the institutions of the Southern States, ha[s] been fought and shed upon the fields of Central America. In that respect Nicaragua ha[s] done more than any State of the South...[38]

Again, the two Souths were divided on filibustering. The same players consistently played the same role, whether the game was either for Cuba or Nicaragua.

De Bow thought the conventions would bring the South together, but in the end, they did little but underscore the divisions between the Souths—Atlantic and Gulf—on issues of economic and territorial expansion. From the sound and fury, not much was accomplished. The African slave trade was not going to reopen, Nicaragua was not going to be americanized, no Pacific-Atlantic railroad was completed, no direct trade with Europe was maintained. But the talk was important. It gave the Souths a chance to test whether they had any solidarity, any unity. It gave men a forum to articulate their differences and an opportunity to tests the boundaries of what they could accomplish together.

38. Percy Walker (no relation to William Walker) supported the Texas and Nicaragua filibustering effort; see Lamp, "Empire for Slavery," chapters three and seven.

III.

Since the mid-1960's, historiographical literature on the economy of the antebellum South has been concerned with questions on the profitability of slavery, large concentrations of wealth, class conflict because of the disparity in wealth between slaveowners and yeomen farmers, and the economic position of yeomen farmers. The consensus of many economic and social historians of the Old South is that the region was immensely prosperous and would have continued to succeed into the 1860's at similar economic levels had the War not occurred.[39] But census statistics, upon which so much of these studies are based, do not capture, for example, the seasonal vagaries that could snuff a town's prosperity, cannot illustrate the way weather could stunt or ameliorate crop growth, will not give the historian tactile examples of how people lived throughout the decade. Some Gulf Southerners did well in the 1850's; some did badly. Sugar performed extremely well; cotton began returning comfortable profits to its owners. But economic success, much like the peopling of this area for the period as a whole, was neither uniform nor constant. In this period of "economic relativism"—with some towns in decline, some succeeding, other vacillating—the 1850's became a much different decade than the 1830's had been. In the 1830's, the parts of the region that were settled first did so meteorically, and if some declined, the fall was quick and painless for most inhabitants, who simply picked up their belongings again and traveled on. Like everything else, towns were portable and as transitory as the money that fueled their growth. But in the 1850's, local economies were more stable because the population was settled there, exchanging goods and services, and building social and cultural institutions.

Jackson, Mississippi did quite well in the 1850's. The city's most important economic development during that decade, according to one historian, was to establish a cotton factory in 1857.[40] The census of 1860 mentions that 27 men and 27 women worked in cotton goods

39. Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South* (Baton Rouge, 1988).
40. Martha Boman, "A City of the Old South: Jackson, Mississippi, 1850–1860," *JMH*, XV (1953), 2.

factories in Hinds county—perhaps this very one. The annual value of products these laborers made amounted to more than $42,000 a year, an income fourth in the state for such manufacturing counties (behind Attala, Monroe, and Wilkinson counties).[41] In the business district of the town (State and Capital streets), forty commercial stores occupied space—businesses that sold everything from groceries to sheet music. Two banks tended to the business needs of the many Jacksonian merchants who bartered goods to the state capitol's planters and farmers. Probably no more visible sign of wealth existed in the antebellum Gulf South than architecture. In Jackson, the wood construction of the city's houses gave way to brick, thin plantation-style columns were replaced by massive Corinthian pillars, and the Greek revival passed into Gothic and Italian Renaissance influences.[42]

The 1850's were very prosperous for sugar growers, in part because the industry began taking off only in that decade. In Louisiana, prices for sugar plantations generally inflated beyond the range of most except the rich. Planters enjoyed a prosperity reminiscent of the 1830's[43], and one historian speculates that the owners of inflated sugar lands would have faced a similar financial disaster were the war not to have occurred.[44] Sugar did not reap for its producers a large profit until the mid-1850's, when a declining Cuban production created higher demand and prices for U.S. grown sugar. Prosperity continued and survived the outbreak of the Civil War. St. Mary's Parish, for example, was quite successful. From 1850 to 1860, every holding except one increased in size.[45] The white population of the parish did not increase dramatically, (2,423 to 2,508), but the slave population grew significantly (9,850 to

41. *Manufactures of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, 1865), 285–293.

42. Boman, "A City of the Old South," 13.

43. Especially the large scale planters. David O. Whitten, "Sugar Slavery: A Profitability Model for Slave Investments in the Antebellum Louisiana Sugar Industry," *LS*, XII (1973), 423–42.

44. J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753–1950* (Lexington, 1953), 165.

45. In the exception, actual property decreased, but the value of the property had increased by $32,000. Jewell Lynn de Grummond, "A Social History of St. Mary's Parish, 1845–1860," *LHQ*, XXXII (1949), 25.

13,057).[46] The parish was codifying its plantation regime, as well as solidifying its production of sugar. In terms of the former endeavor, St. Mary's Parish contained more asses and mules than did any other parish in the state. In addition, it was second only to Rapides Parish for the total value of livestock (in 1860).[47] In almost every year[48] from 1850 to 1860, the parish led the state in sugar production. Factors who sold St. Mary's sugar came from either Mobile or New Orleans; much of the production of the parish was sent via New Orleans to be shipped elsewhere.[49]

Alabama planters and yeoman farmers alike found the 1850's to be a prosperous decade as well. Joel Dyer Murphree, formerly of Commerce, Tennessee, moved his family to Troy, Alabama in 1845. A dry goods salesman, he was unable to make any money from his Tennessee store by 1843, having so overextended his business in credit that he could not make payments to two firms in Nashville, Tennessee.[50] By selling off several horses, Murphree was able to pay off most of the debt he owed in Tennessee; with some other small sums, he bought meager supplies that he peddled from a wagon in Pike county, profiting $125. This was the grand commencement of Murphree prosperity in Alabama. Buying supplies from H. Lehman & Brothers, Montgomery (to the north of him), Murphree sold hardware, dry goods, and foodstuffs to planters and their families through the Pike county area. By 1856, Murphree had enough money to open up a bigger general store—Murphree, Carr, & Jones—along with his brother-in-law and a family friend. Once in a while the store

46. *Compendium of the Seventh Census* 248; *Population of the United States in 1860*, 194, quoted in de Grummond, "A Social History of St. Mary's Parish," 26.

47. *Agriculture in the United States* (Washington, 1864), 66–67. Total value of livestock—St. Mary's Parish, $1,322,850; Rapides Parish, $1,405,040.

48. Exceptions included 1853 and 1856; the former due to a hurricane, and the latter due to floods. de Grummond, "A Social History of St. Mary's Parish," 43.

49. Some of the factors were Joseph Hall of Mobile; A. C. Ainsworth, Peterson and Stuart, and M. M. Matthews and Company of New Orleans; William Hall to W. H. Weeks, 3 February 1847, in the David Weeks and Family Papers, quoted in de Grummond, "A Social History of St. Mary's Parish," 44–48.

50. William Murphree to Joel D. Murphree, Commerce, Tennessee, 12 December 1843, for reference to the delinquency notices from Hurtman & Co., and Woods Stockwell & Co, quoted in "Joel Dyer Murphree: Troy Merchant, 1843–1868," *AR*, XI (1958), 117.

sold slaves.[51] Murphree became a cotton agent as well, buying bales from Barbour and Henry county planters and selling them to factors in Montgomery. He even purchased a saw mill, a tan yard, and a cotton gin. To complete this one small picture of economic mobility, deed records show that Murphree invested about $5,000 in farm lands and town lots during the period 1856–1860, but there is not evidence that he became a planter or that he had an overseer and employed slaves. Murphree is an excellent example of economic mobility among yeomanry in the South.

For planter James M. Torbert, an Alabamian who lived near Murphree in Macon County, the end of the 1850's marked his most prosperous period. For the 1856 season, he planted 120 acres of corn ("quite a poor crop," he complained), making 1,100 bushels; he also planted 165 acres of cotton, yielding 29 bales. The cotton, amounting to 17,002 pounds, brought in $2,890.34, at seventeen cents per pound.[52] By the end of the 1857 season, he planted five more acres of corn, for a total of 125, and produced about 1,700 bushels; he planted 175 acres of cotton as well—10 more acres than the previous season—yielding 40 bales. $2,736 was his cash profit from the sale of his cotton, a figure near that of the previous year.[53] He followed the same course for the next season by planting 10 more acres of cotton, 185 total. In addition, he increased his acreage of corn by 35 to 160 acres, but only made 1,500 bushels, "owing to too much rain early in the Spring."[54] By this year, 1858, his cash profit from the sale of cotton increased to $3,678, an increase over the previous year by a margin of $942.

But Torbert was interested, not unlike many Gulf Southerners, in finding newer and more fertile lands in which to grow cotton. He and fellow Alabamian Robert Seaborn Jemison narrowed their attentions on Texas. In a reaction atypical for many of his fellow countrymen, Torbert expressed his disappointment with the state: "I did not like the Country poorly

51. "Joel Dyer Murphree: Troy Merchant," 121.
52. "James M. Torbert's Journal for 1856," *AHQ*, XVIII (1956), 279. Torbert says that the sum of money he received for the 17,002 pounds of cotton was $1,955, an incorrect figure if each pound sold for seventeen cents.
53. "James M. Torbert's Journal for 1857–1874," *AHQ*, XXII (1960), 46–47.
54. "James M. Torbert's Journal for 1857–1874," 47.

watered and verry little timber. I think it is verry much over rated."[55] He complained about the $200 dollars and asthmatic attack it cost him to survey the state's lands. Jemison, on the other hand, was particularly effusive about the country, people, and manners of the Lone Star State. Sweet sights and melodic sounds invariably struck him as "pleasant," and Jemison knew many of his former Alabama countrymen were now living in Texas. He toured the state and caught typhoid fever. Once he lay in bed for several days, "grunting—groaning—puking and purging," concluding, "If I were a young man nothing could keep me [from living in either Galveston or San Antonio]—the Inducements are Indeed great & the Incentives to perseverance meet such a Handsome Reward."[56] But Texas, he undoubtedly guessed, was meant for the young and stout-hearted. He was neither, and decided against a move there.

Torbert's misgivings and Jemison's age notwithstanding, many people still were intensely interested in settling in Texas. One resident of Liberty, Mississippi was offered a chance to move to Texas in 1852. He wrote to his friend, John Chamberlain Jr., in Vicksburg, Mississippi: "Judge Smiley has just returned from Texas. He has purchased [land] & designs moving in the spring. I think I shall accompany him. He says that avenues to wealth & enjoyment are many & easy to any industrious [person]. He says I can live in his family as long as I choose & he thinks that Charles & I could soon make a fortune at merchandizing & at the same time I could practice law."[57] One Alabamian from Tuscaloosa bought $2,232 worth of land in Robertson County, Texas. He may have bought the land and kept it as an absentee landowner, since he also had holdings in eastern Mississippi at the time.[58]

55. "James M. Torbert's Journal for 1857–1874," 48. The original spelling of all quotations, as long as it is not too confusing to the reader.

56. Hugh D. Reagan, "Journey to Texas, 1854; The Diary of Robert Seaborn Jemison of Talladega," *AHQ*, XXXIII (1971), 202, 207–8.

57. F. H. Stephen to John Chamberlain, Jr., Liberty, Mississippi, 6 January and 8 December 1852, Chamberlain-Hyland-Gould Papers, *BTHCA*.

58. The Foster Mark Kirksey Collection, land deed, 1859, Robertson County, Texas, Box 1689, folder 44; Mary E. P. Kirksey to Foster Mark Kirksey, Noxeebee, 1 December 1848, for reference to the 1,300 acres of land in Mississippi; both in *WSHSCLUA*.

It took Texas longer than it did any other part of the Gulf South to recover from the economic deflation of the 1840's. By 1847—the time cotton had increased in price and towns began to grow again--places in Texas during 1848 were still depressed. Ashbel Smith wrote Sam Houston that "times are truly quite dull in Galveston—numbers of houses to rent—property has depreciated more than one half in twelve months. I am practising medicine—rather nominally or as the phraze is, ornamentally." Business continued to be dull into the fall of 1848.[59] In Matagorda, Texas, one resident noted that in the summer of 1853, most residents had moved to the North. John Gibson explained the exodus of many of the town's people from the area—yellow fever.[60] In 1854, Matagorda Bay was demolished totally by a hurricane that destroyed all the crops. In fact, the storm decimated much of what had been planted up to fifty miles away from the Gulf of Mexico. Up the coast, in Galveston, one resident exclaimed: "Galveston is decidedly the POOREST place I have ever lived in. There's no money, no wealth at all, in this place and yet it is by far the largest and most improved place in all Texas." The author, Bertha van Nooten, and her husband ran a school in town, and of this business she remarked: "People grudge even at my prices which are lower BY HALF than what they now [are] in N. Orleans and yet, every article of provision, and also rents of servants are at the highest rate."[61] The most thorough examination of Texas agriculture maintains that cotton production "boomed" during the 1850's. The average crop per farm increased 215 percent, from 3.3 to 10.4 bales.[62]

59. Ashbel Smith to Sam Houston, Galveston, 25 March 1848; W. S. Smith to Ashbel Smith, Galveston, 1 September 1848, Ashbel Smith Papers, *BTHCA*.

60. John H. Gibson to Isaac Reynolds, Matagorda, 30 June 1853 and 20 October 1853, Green Caudron Duncan Papers, *BTHCA*.

61. Bertha van Nooten to John G. Dunlap, Galveston, Texas, 30 October 1854, Dunlap Family Papers, *TUA*.

62. Lowe and Campbell, *Planters and Plain Folk*, 68–69.

IV.

In 1855 David Christy coined the phrase "cotton is king," in a year when the exportation of cotton amounted to one-half of all United States exports. Its value was more than $100,000,000 annually. But despite the sheer economic might of the conglomerate, the Gulf South could not translate economic brawn into successful territorial expansion. By the mid-decade four attempts had been made—twice in Cuba, once in Nicaragua, and once in the Mosquito Islands in Honduras. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, Bleeding Kansas, and John Brown's raid notwithstanding, repeated filibustering failures heightened the perceptions of many that slavery was in immediate danger. Expansion, they believed, was crucial to safeguard the South against Northern attempts to box the South in its existing area.

Desperate plans followed desperate minds.[63] In 1858 De Bow was calling for the acquisition of Mexico. "She has shown," he declared, "that, left to herself, she is wholly incapable of organizing and sustaining any permanent form of government." As Walker argued for the Americanization of Nicaragua, De Bow asserted that a "new population [from the United States and Europe] would suffice to keep in check the cowardly negroes, Indians, and mixed breeds." In order to save Mexico, annexation to the United States was imperative."[64] But Mexico posed an even greater problem to the United States, especially to those who lived near the Mexican border. Sam Houston, as President of the Texas Republic and now governor of the state, had a general familiarity with marauding bands of Mexicans who would travel through the state, pillaging as they went. In 1839, for example, Colonel Ephraim McLean, nephew of Thomas McKinney, was hired by the Texas Republic to fight Indians on the Texas frontier. He and his men stopped off one evening at the small town of

63. None was as daring as George W. L. Bickley's secret organization, the Knights of the Golden Circle. See Lamp, "Empire for Slavery," chapter seven; Oliver Morton, *Southern Empire* (Boston, 1892); Ollinger Crenshaw, "Knights of the Golden Circle: The Career of George Bickley," *AHR*, XLVII (1941), 23–50; Jimmie Hicks (ed.), "Some Letters Concerning the Knights of the Golden Circle in Texas, 1860–1861," *SWHQ*, LXV (1961), 80–86; C. A. Bridges, "The Knights of the Golden Circle, A Filibustering Fantasy," *SWHQ*, XLIV (1941), 287–302.

64. *DBR*, XXV (1858), 613–26.

Refugio, and found it ransacked by about one hundred Mexican banditti. Ephraim made a bold chase after the border ruffians, but they had already recoiled into the protection of Mexican soil. The only trace they left of their escape from Refugio was the lifeless body of a kidnapped citizen who had been shot dead and hung by the heels.[65] Many Texans were terrified by the invasions from the west from which they had little protection. The Texas Rangers was the only company that could have assisted American citizens in Texas, but it was a small contingency of men spread out too thinly over the state's terrain.

Even people outside Texas were anxious about the fate of Mexico. In 1856, during a speech advocating the partial repeal of the neutrality laws, John A. Quitman warned? "Mexico, I repeat, is convulsed with annual revolutions, is approaching a state of anarchy, and soon, wasted, plundered, and depopulated, will become derelict, and liable to be seized upon as a waif by some stronger power. She can be saved only by the advancing flood of our enterprising citizens." Sam Houston believed there was only one way to prevent the plunder from happening at all. Americans had to be allowed to bring order and stability into the chaos brewing in the Latin American countries. In 1858 he introduced a resolution into the Senate that called for a protectorate to be created for the states of Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and San Salvador, "in such form and to such extent as shall be necessary to secure to the people of said States the blessings of good and stable republican government."[66] Northern representatives were outraged. Henry Wilson of Massachusetts argued that the measure was "of a most extraordinary character ... intended to encourage that spirit of filibustering which has disgraced this country." Even Atlantic Southerner James H. Hammond of South Carolina interpreted Houston's resolution as being a thinly-disguised

65. Hayes *Galveston: History of the Island and the City*, II, 834–5.

66. John A. Quitman, "On the Subject of the Neutrality Laws," pamphlet, Quitman Papers, Harvard; Sam Houston, "A Resolution Proposing a Protectorate over Mexico and Central America," 16 February 1858, *Writings*, VII, 33–34. Mexico was undergoing its fourteenth revolution since separating from Spain; Nicaragua, at the time of Walker's first invasion in 1855, had gone through fifteen presidents since 1821.

filibustering maneuver, and "that the South must remain quiescent with its present area of slave territory."[67]

Two months later Houston amended his proposal, asking only that a protectorate be formed over Mexico. A Houston supporter from Leon County, Texas, wrote to *De Bow's Review* that "thousands of rifles are sleeping in Texas and the Southern States, ready to awake at the call of a leader, and become an "Army of Occupation" in that broad territory between Monterey and the Rio Grande. They will be ready to establish a protectorate over that portion of Northern Mexico, or annex it to the Union, under a democratic form of government." He maintained that the only security of the South was to be found in expansion; non-expansion meant political diminution.[68] There is every reason to believe that the Gulf South support would have been forthcoming had Houston been a filibuster. Although Houston believed in congressionally-sanctioned filibustering, Walter Prescott Webb has convincingly shown that there is evidence Houston began to explore the possibility of invading Mexico in order to place himself at the head of an American protectorate.[69]

Seven filibustering missions, either attempted or executed, were conceived and developed within the Gulf South during the 1850's to capture foreign territories in the Caribbean. Throughout the antebellum period, expansionism was a natural tendency of people in the Republic. In the name of freedom and democracy, Americans expanded westward to the Pacific coast to settle and commercially exploit the land.But a particular group of people were responsible primarily for acquiring the Southwest. These people were bound in the same economic and social web, and shared ties of kinship and fidelity. The economic network stretched over the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to tether Mexico, Cuba, and lower America

67. *Congressional Globe*, 35 Cong., 1 sess. (1857–1858), 735–36; *DBR*, XXVI (1859), 214–16.
68. *DBR*, XXVI (1859), 214–16.
69. In 1859, Houston declared that he was opposed to filibustering "as it is generally understood," meaning that he despised secret missions by private citizens intending to overthrow governments. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Boston, 1935), 203; Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny*, 446–7.

to the interests of the Gulf states. Gulf Southerners helped free Texas from Mexican domination and then guided it into the United States so that the web could be woven politically as well.

Gulf interest in Texas, Mexico, Cuba, and Central America grew out of national and local sentiments. Those who advocated greater acquisition of territory from a foreign power called themselves both patriots and filibusters. As patriots, they declared themselves on the side of those oppressed peoples who were attempting to cast off the yoke of foreign tyranny. As filibusters, they were fighters for the "cause of the South"; men whose sectional sensibility of romance and chivalry bred in them the desire to widen the territorial domain of the South, and after 1850, to regain for her political freedom in an Union in which she was becoming, ever-increasingly, a minority section. As a mirror of national sentiments, Gulf filibustering shared a prominent role on the national stage with other actors around the country who played a part in the drama they called "manifest destiny." But even as early as 1835, expansionism as enacted by Gulf Southerners had assumed a local intent and purpose. Even though maintaining an ideological stance for supporting Texans in their revolution against Mexico was a major component in the rationales given by filibusters, the financial backers of the revolution articulated very practical arguments in favor of winning Texas away from Mexico. The same can be argued twenty years later as men of arms and men of money gathered in the Gulf to support William Walker's campaign to open up the Central American country of Nicaragua to Southern expansion.

Attempts to expand into the lower Gulf always have been couched in the rhetoric of securing freedom and democracy. Whether they be called "men of destiny" or "freedom fighters," American involvement in the western hemisphere has been accepted as a natural right. But whereas today recondite aid to the liberators of foreign lands is perceived by some to be an executive prerogative, in the antebellum period it was primarily a private war, organized mainly by the citizens of the Gulf South.

It was not uncommon to hear the Gulf South plead such altruism in acquiring Southern territory. Its spokesmen frequently alluded to the historical precedence of territorial acquisition, harkening to Lafayette, Paine, or even Quitman as examples of men who had freed colonies from the tyranny and oppression of the mother country. But there were also practical concerns to address. One was a national concern, that of establishing more slave states to keep the pace set by the North in the 1850's. Most of the other concerns, however, were more provincial. One was the need to prevent outside forces from affecting the securities of the American South. Those who favored Texas' annexation feared British control in that area. Others favored the acquisition of Cuba when it seemed that slave revolts in the South would be touched off if Spain emancipated slaves in Cuba. Another issue closely tied to the desire to promote the security of the South was to promote the security of the territories themselves. Sam Houston's urging for a protectorate over the lower Americas was intended to protect American commercial interests there as well as to protect his own citizens in Texas.

Racism, although less important a factor in motivating filibustering than economic interest, informed covert missions as well, for supporters maintained that the acquisition of the lower Gulf was necessary in order to prevent the "mongrelization" of those countries. If, as Walker hoped, Americans could be induced to immigrate to Nicaragua, Anglo-Saxon colonization would shore up the political stability of the country by employing, naturally, Americans in positions of policy-making; a growing white population would impose order on society because the white race was more civilized. Reinstituting slavery would make a place for the inferior races in society.

Acquisition of the territories bordering the Gulf of Mexico was a natural expression of the economic ties with those lands that the Gulf South had fostered and maintained during the antebellum period. The region believed that filibustering was the avenue by which the commercial abundance of the lower Gulf could be more easily channeled into the ports. One of the most salient arguments the Gulf South pushed for in its proposals for colonization was

the further exploitation of their commercial possibilities. The political unification of the Gulf states with the lower Gulf would make the Gulf of Mexico an inland sea; as a result, the power of the Gulf South would make the entire South the center of the wealthiest commercial emporium on earth. Then Southerners could find themselves in a better bargaining position when it came to settling political questions with the North.

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