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# Revolution and War in the Hemisphere

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# Revolution and War in the Hemisphere

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**C O N N E X I O N S**

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# Chapter 1

## U.S. Civil War

### 1.1 History and Memory: A Case Study of the Confederacy<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1.1 History and Memory: A Case Study of the Confederacy

Although the U.S. Civil War officially ended with Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender to Union General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865, an unofficial war began at that moment that would continue to divide the North from the South. Defeated southerners were determined to prevent a true Reconstruction of society along the lines of racial equality and instead continued their racial battles via the construction of a "Lost Cause" mythology. Building monuments and memorials to fallen soldiers, Confederate society molded history to demonstrate an ideal southern society, with a blind eye to any faults. Southern women, in particular the United Daughters of the Confederacy, joined together to garner support for this reimagined ideal of southern history. Within the work *Handbook of Song & Rhymes: For Annual Reunions of Texas Camps of the United Confederate Veterans*<sup>2</sup> available online as part of the 'Our Americas' Archive Partnership<sup>3</sup> (a digital collaboration on the hemispheric Americas), the "Lost Cause" mythology takes center stage. This module explores how educators can help their students move towards a real understanding of these supporters of the South. Even though the opinions of these personages are odious to many people, they are important historically and their lives and actions convey vital messages about the relationship between history and memory.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34111/1.3/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34111/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/22024>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34111/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

**General Robert E. Lee**

**Figure 1.1:** General Robert E. Lee, depicted within this engraving by A. Robin (ca. 1860-1870) was seen as a hero of the Confederacy. Numerous Confederate and Lost Cause ballads focused on Lee's exploits in battle.

The *Handbook* would be most useful if presented as part of the transition between the Civil War (1861-1865) and Reconstruction (1865-1877) periods. The lectures and activities could then continue into the discussion of the racial conflicts and violence within the South (lynching, Jim Crow) of the 1890s and beyond. Intended for Confederate reunions, the work is also dedicated to a local Texas leader of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). The UDC was established in 1894 and quickly grew in number across the South. For more information on the UDC see Karen Cox's *Dixie's Daughters* (2003). After one year there were 20 chapters, by the second year there were 89, and the third year witnessed 138 chapters (Cox, 28). Through songs and poems such as "Old Kentucky Home" and "Bonnie Blue Flag" the UDC and other memorial associations celebrated a 'perfect' South that had been disrupted by what they viewed as the improper and selfish actions of northern aggressors.

### Confederate Women



**Figure 1.2:** This photo (ca. 1912) depicts two women who belonged to the United Daughters of the Confederacy. In particular, note their conservative attire and memorial pins and ribbons.

The role of women is one entrypoint into an analysis of the *Handbook*. Following the defeat of white southern manhood in the South, historians have posited that the region experienced a gender crisis in which men felt emasculated (see works by LeeAnn Whites and Laura Edwards). This argument is plausible considering the efforts that southern women took to reestablish traditional gender roles in the years following the war. As historian W. Scott Poole states, “they rejected modernity outright” (17). In this exercise, ask students to look through the *Handbook* searching for songs and poems that highlight southern womanhood. Then, create a diagram that lists the various traits of womanhood during this period. Writings such as “The Southern Girl” would be particularly useful for this activity. Students could also explore how the southern white masculine ideal, as represented via Robert E. Lee, was similar to and different from feminine ideals. How is “The Sword of Robert Lee” a masculine ballad?

When dealing with historical figures it is sometimes difficult to recognize the fact that these individuals were possessed of true emotions and feelings. The works within the *Handbook* convey these intangibles in a way that more traditional sources fail to do. For example, the songs and rhymes convey, in a general sense, the emotions surrounding death in the Civil War period. Almost every individual in this period in the South was impacted by the death of a loved one, especially as the conflict resulted in approximately 620,000 casualties in the North and South (Johnson, 2009). Works such as “Sweet Bye & Bye” and “Centing on the Old Camp Ground” express the possibility of arriving at an idyllic Old South after death. In this case, it would be useful to pair an individual poem/song with a chapter from Drew Gilpin Faust’s recent work *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2008). After this exercise, students will begin to understand the challenges of living in a society where an entire generation had essentially disappeared.

### Confederate Monument



**Figure 1.3:** This image (ca. 1914) shows the grandson of Confederate General Robert E. Lee speaking at the dedication of a Confederate Monument at Arlington National Cemetery.

Finally, the *Handbook* represents only one part of the larger process of “Lost Cause” memory production. As Karen Cox contends, “UDC members aspired to transform military defeat into a political and cultural victory, where states’ rights and white supremacy remained intact” (1). To that end, Confederate sympathizers manipulated history to serve their purposes. In particular, they would focus on educating children in this ‘new history’ of the South. The question can be posed to students: how does memory impact history? Furthermore, if educators would like to make a broader point about memory they can consult the work *Lone Star Pasts* (2007) edited by Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner. This text contains multiple essays, all of which focus on memory and the production of history. The questioning of history and memory provides a unique opportunity to analyze the constructed nature of historical inquiry.

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Poole, W. Scott. *Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Up-country*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004.

## 1.2 The Civil War Through Contemporary Accounts: The Diary of Alexander Hobbs<sup>4</sup>

The American Civil War generated countless writings from contemporary participants both in the North and South. The conflict witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of private diaries and letters written by soldiers in the field and families and friends on the home front. And, hundreds of post-war memoirs captured the contested recollections and memories of the nation's central crisis. Historians have long utilized these collective accounts as essential elements to craft an historical narrative of the "late unpleasantness." Scholars, thus, have chronicled the course and conduct of the war through the actual voices spoken between 1861 and 1865. These contemporary writings, however, transcend substantive context and underscore the emotion and comprehension of peoples as they endured the chaos, upheaval, and stress of modern war. This module explores the uses and utility of one of these primary accounts: the diary of Alexander Hobbs<sup>5</sup>, which is housed at Rice University's Woodson Research Center in Houston, Texas. Scholars and teachers alike can find much value in this revealing, yet relatively brief journal. Hobbs, a private in the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, reflected on his role as a northern soldier, his first and only journey to the Deep South, the distinct wartime culture of the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coasts, the immorality of slavery, death, the battle of Galveston in January 1863, and life as a prisoner of war.

### Page One of the Hobbs Diary

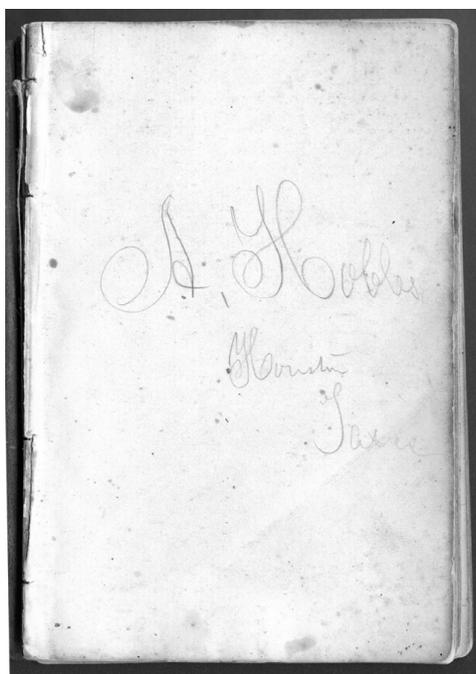


Figure 1.4

At first glance, the Hobbs diary appears somewhat different from "traditional" first-hand accounts of the Civil War. The reader will not find any reference to Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Gettysburg, or the grand military campaigns in Virginia. Hobbs was assigned far from these famous figures, and he instead

<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38587/1.3/>>.

<sup>5</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38587/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/26591>>

chronicled lesser-known Civil War-era names: William Renshaw, the *U. S. S. Harriet Lane*, and Carrollton, Louisiana. Thus, the diary, which covers Hobbs's military service between November 1862 and August 1863, offers an unusually candid window into wartime life along the Gulf Coast, the primary locale in which Hobbs served. His unit was raised in 1862 near Boston, stopped briefly in New York City on its southern journey, and skirted the coast at Key West, Florida, and Ship Island, Mississippi. Hobbs and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts then spent several days in New Orleans, a substantial prize of war captured by the Union several months prior to Hobbs's arrival. In late December 1862, half of Hobbs's unit was assigned to Texas, where, on January 1, 1863, they fought in the battle of Galveston. Hobbs and his comrades were captured and transferred to Houston where they spent the next two months as prisoners of war. In February 1863, Hobbs was paroled and embarked on a journey from Texas to Louisiana over land and water to rejoin the other half of his regiment at New Orleans. Finally, in the summer of 1863, those in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts (including Hobbs) who had survived the diseases garnered by the swampy marsh lands of the Texas and Louisiana coasts were sent back to Boston where their unit was officially disbanded.

### Hobbs's Hand-Drawn Picture of the Battle of Galveston

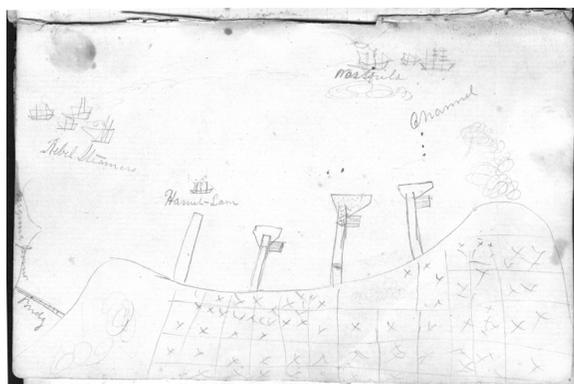


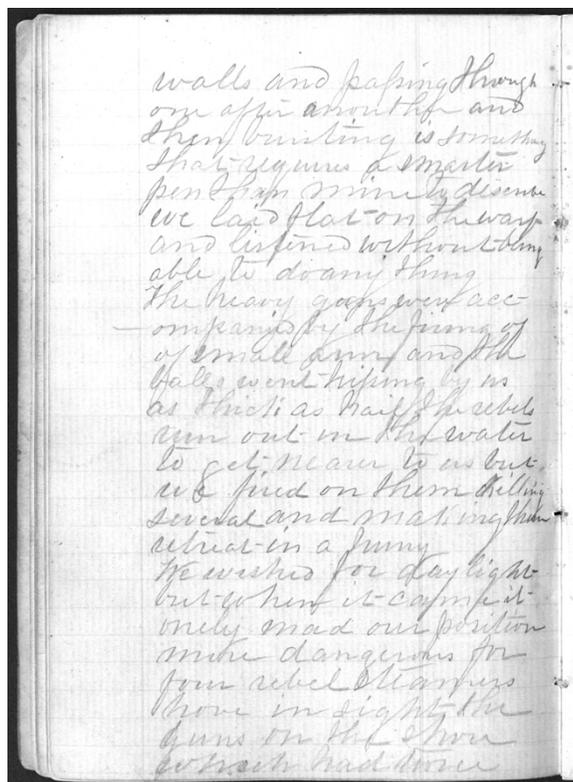
Figure 1.5

Alexander Hobbs's experiences clearly were atypical of many Civil War soldiers. He did not undergo the constant campaigning reflective of military life in Virginia, Tennessee, or Georgia, nor did his unit engage in multiple large-scale battles. Instead, the very nature and day-to-day accounts of his service allowed Hobbs to ruminate on traditionally under-valued aspects of the wartime experience: perceptions of civilian culture in the Gulf South, the nebulous question of Confederate loyalty as perceived through northern eyes, and interactions with civilians in Texas as a prisoner of war. Readers will quickly glean from his writings rich and varied depictions of wartime life in the regions far removed from the "principal" war in Virginia. For example, when his unit sojourned at Key West Hobbs wrote, "to us who had never been at the south the trees and fruit looked really pleasant." And, while he was stationed briefly outside New Orleans, Hobbs commented, "The scenery on the banks of the river for the most part has been delightful. [B]eautiful groves of orange trees which hung full of the golden fruit looked to us very [*sic*] inviting."

Although these perceptions certainly reveal how a young man from Massachusetts witnessed his first trip to the Deep South, Civil War teachers would benefit more from Hobbs's detailed treatment of the war along the Gulf Coast and his explicit criticisms of slavery. Teachers can use Hobbs's entries on the battle of Galveston to compare to more famous Civil War battles such as Shiloh, Antietam, or Gettysburg. Hobbs demonstrates how battles on the Texas coast, such as Galveston, were relatively small, involved joint army, navy, and marine operations, and were sometimes conducted by uninspiring commanders. Based on Hobbs's characterization of the fight at Galveston, teachers can ask students to consider the similarities and differences between battles in the East fought by the enormous Armies of the Potomac and Northern

Virginia and those in the lower Trans-Mississippi Valley waged by small coastal and garrison units.

**Diary Excerpt, January 1, 1863**



**Figure 1.6**

Hobbs's comments on slavery add further texture to the diary and offer a unique perspective to existing historiographical debates. Teachers as well as historians immersed in the current literature on Civil War soldiers' outlooks on slavery will undoubtedly find Hobbs's writings useful and penetrating. Several days after being captured as a prisoner of war, Hobbs commented, "Our negroes have gone to Galveston to build fortifications. The[y] held a prayer meeting last night in our yard and . . . I believe they had the presence of the blessed master. I honestly believe [there] will be more slaves found in heaven than southerners." A few weeks later, Hobbs witnessed and critiqued the following episode: "Six coloured men have been taken away to prison four of them belonging to the *Harriet Lane* and two our Col. & Surgeons's boys. [A]ll but one or two were free born but all are now to be sold together. [S]uch acts only stir up a hatred to the institution of slavery . . . [W]e were never born to be held captive." These comments reflect the central theme in Chandra Manning's recent work, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007). Manning argues that slavery was the most important category to soldiers on both sides of the war. Union soldiers particularly, according to Manning, discovered that emancipation made the Union stronger and worth saving, and came to supported equality for blacks.

Finally, Hobbs's writings raise the murky issue of Confederate loyalty. Scholars have traditionally fallen into two schools of thought on this subject. On the one hand are those who posit that the Confederacy crumbled from within on account of internal fissures combined with a lack of national identity and purpose (Beringer et al., 1986). Other scholars suggest that many white southerners, in spite of hardship and low

morale, remained dedicated Confederate nationalists continually in search of an independent southern nation (Gallagher, 1997). As a prisoner of war in Houston, Hobbs continually commented on his comrades trading goods with Confederate Texans. Although he also suggested that these civilians continued to praise the Confederacy, the existence of trade networks with the enemy for the sake of basic survival raises new questions on the soundness of Confederate loyalty. Teachers can use these selections to ask students to determine the relationships between dedication to country, family, or daily sustenance. Hobbs's writings underscore what Gary W. Gallagher has recently called for in future studies on the Confederate experience. He suggests that historians move beyond the existing binary between "internal defeatist" and "diehard nationalist," and instead define the neutral middle-ground of those white southerners who did their best merely to survive the war (Gallagher, 2009).

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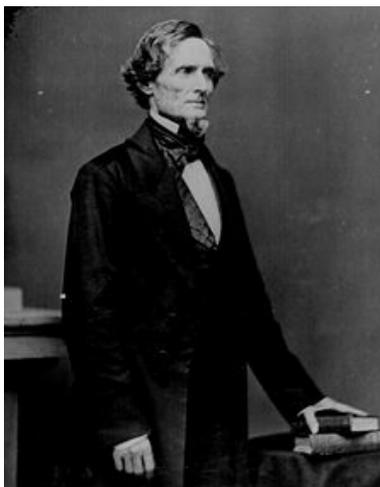
## 1.3 Rare Letters of Jefferson Davis<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3.1 Rare Letters of Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) led a varied career, indicative of the controversial place he occupies within United States history. He spent his early adulthood in the U.S. military, then years later drummed up a volunteer force to fight in the Mexican-American War. After the war, he settled on a life in politics. In his first attempt, he was elected to the U.S. congress as a senator from Mississippi. He served for a brief period as the Secretary of War under Franklin Pierce; when his term ended in 1857, he returned to his seat in the Senate. In the years leading up to the Civil War, he actually opposed secession and fought hard for a compromise to ensure the integrity of the Union. When he learned of Mississippi's decision to secede, however, Davis returned home and was promptly elected to a six-year term as the first (and only) President of the Confederate States of America. After the Confederacy's defeat, he was banned from ever holding political office, yet he was lionized in the South for the remainder of his life. While the nation at large officially branded him a traitor, an entire region continued to deem him a hero. Today, many schools throughout the South are named in his honor. The ambiguity surrounding Davis's legacy ties into the social and political fissures within the U.S. that have formed historically along the lines of race and region.

<sup>6</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/1.2/>>.

### Jefferson Davis



**Figure 1.7:** A photograph of Davis during his time as President of the Confederate States of America.

The ‘Our Americas’ Archive Partnership<sup>7</sup> – a collection of primary documents dedicated to the study of inter-American cultural and historical relations – possesses a set of rare and unpublished letters authored by Davis. Held at Rice University’s Woodson Research Center, which also contains other materials by and about Davis (including a clothing order<sup>8</sup> on his behalf), these letters can be broken down into three chronological periods: a pre-Civil War era that sees Davis as a functionary of the U.S. government (four letters), Davis’s presidency during the Civil War (two letters), and a brief period at the very end of Davis’s life (two letters). These documents form a remarkable, if microscopic, arch to his life and career and will be of great value to the scholar and student alike interested in Davis’s biography. This module will offer a brief overview of each timeframe as well as some of the letters contained therein. For a more detailed examination of Davis and his historical context, see William Davis’s *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* and George Rable’s *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution against Politics*. One can find the majority of his published writings in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, edited by Haskell Monroe, James McIntosh, and Lynda Crist.

The earliest letter in the archive dates from December 10, 1846<sup>9</sup>. It is written from Davis to his wife, Varina “Winnie” Davis, during his time spent fighting in the Mexican-American War. This document offers dual insights into both his early military career and his personal/family life. He describes for his wife the movements of Santa Anna and the Mexican Army, then tells her about another military wife in New Orleans to whom he would like to introduce her. The remaining letters in the pre-Civil War timeframe come from the 1850s, while Davis was serving as an elected official in the federal government. All of them find Davis either recommending or agreeing to recommend someone for a post in the U.S. military. Here we are left to conclude that his opinion was a valued one, especially on military matters, an assumption which is borne out, of course, by his aforementioned position within the War Department under President Pierce.

One of the Civil War-era letters is part of a correspondence between Davis and General Joseph Johnston, and the other contains a set of updates from Davis to Thomas Moore, then governor of Louisiana. Written in response to Johnston’s March 3, 1862 letter,<sup>10</sup> Davis’s brief note<sup>11</sup> addressed the general’s concerns over the inadequacy of the South’s roadways and resources for the logistics of warfare. Davis cannot offer much

<sup>7</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>8</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://dspacetest.rice.edu/handle/1911/7581>>

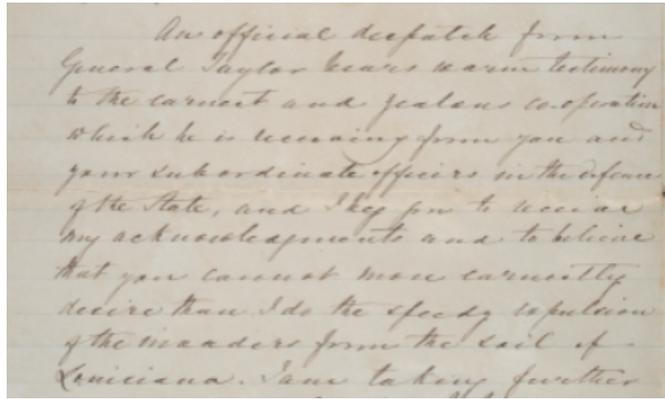
<sup>9</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27218>>

<sup>10</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27262>>

<sup>11</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27262>>

reassurance, and one can sense in this exchange the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of the Confederacy's ambitions. In his letter to Moore dated September 29, 1862<sup>12</sup>, Davis is clearly trying to assuage the governor's anxieties about the vulnerabilities of his state, in particular, to the invading Union forces. Davis writes, "An official dispatch from General Taylor bears warm testimony to the earnest and zealous co-operation which he is receiving from you and your subordinate officers in the defence of the State, and I beg your to receive my acknowledgments and to believe that you cannot more earnestly desire than I do the speedy repulsion of the invaders from the soil of Louisiana" (see Figure 2). The pressure upon Davis is palpable in this document, as he struggles to strengthen the resolve and maintain the loyalty of those under his leadership.

**Letter from Jefferson Davis to Gov. Thomas O. Moore, Sept. 29, 1862**



**Figure 1.8:** A portion of the letter from Davis to Governor Moore<sup>13</sup>.

The final two letters, one from 1887<sup>14</sup> and the other from 1888<sup>15</sup>, were both written at Davis's Beauvoir estate in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he spent his final years. Addressed to Dr. W. H. Sanders, the first letter is a short one simply declining an invitation due to illness. The second letter, to Martin W. Phillips, is a much longer one that finds Davis in a reflective mood. He states early in the text, "Many sad changes have occurred within that time but the saddest of all to me is the tendency in our own people to "harmonize" away the principles for which they gave property + life hoping thereby to preserve what was to them of greater value" (1). Here Davis is lamenting what many supporters of the South after the Civil War termed "The Lost Cause." It is difficult from this brief snippet to determine if at the end of his life Davis remained invested in the specific principles for which the Confederacy fought, or if he was attached in a more romanticized fashion to the idea of the Confederacy itself. Regardless, this relatively lengthy letter (four pages) provides a fascinating peek into the private thoughts of such a major historical figure during his waning days.

These unpublished letters, accessible physically and digitally through the Americas Archive, offer exciting pedagogical opportunities for a variety of classroom settings. They would of course be valuable within any course on nineteenth-century U.S. history, or one more specifically focused on the U.S. South. Biographical approaches to Davis either individually or in concordance with other major U.S. political figures would likewise benefit from these documents. Yet another use for these letters – perhaps a less obvious one – would be in relation to the field of U.S. literary studies. The writings of other political figures, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, have found their way into the literature classroom (and, in fact, Davis authored two books during his later years, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* and *A Short*

<sup>12</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/26582>>

<sup>13</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/26582>>

<sup>14</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27220>>

<sup>15</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38438/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27276>>

*History of the Confederate States of America*). As the category of literature continues to shift to include different figure and various types of texts (letters, diaries, journals, etc.), archives become invaluable tools in providing new material to process, study, and interpret. Archives such as the Americas Archive and letters such as these by Jefferson Davis demand that we question what precisely constitutes “literature” and who exactly counts as the producers of “literature.”

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## Chapter 2

# Caribbean and Latin American



## Chapter 3

# José Martí: A Letter to the Board of Advisors for Key West<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 José Martí: A Letter to the Board of Advisors for Key West

Of the many fascinating documents held in the ‘Our Americas’ Archive Partnership<sup>2</sup> (a digital archive collaboration on the hemispheric Americas), José Martí’s 1893 letter<sup>3</sup> to the Board of Advisors for Key West stands out as particularly special. This observation is borne out by the fact that the archive itself is named after one of Martí’s most famous essays. He published “Our America” in 1891, after years of residence in the United States. A Cuban exile, he spent the entirety of his adult life agitating for Cuban independence from Spanish imperial power. During that time he produced an impressive body of work, including numerous poems, essays, and even a serialized novel. Returning to Cuba in order to participate in an armed insurgency, he died in 1895 on the battlefield at the hands of Spanish colonial forces. He is regarded now as a founding father of Cuban nationalism as well as an early participant in the search for a broader Latin American identity. His centrality to Latin American studies goes without question, while his writings have positioned him as a crucial figure within both history and literature classrooms concerned with the Americas. Christopher Abel’s biography, *José Martí: Revolutionary Democrat*, provides a useful analysis of both his life and his legacy (bibliographical information provided at end of module).

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38434/1.3/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38434/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38434/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/20701>>

José Martí



Figure 3.1: A photograph of José Martí toward the end of his life.

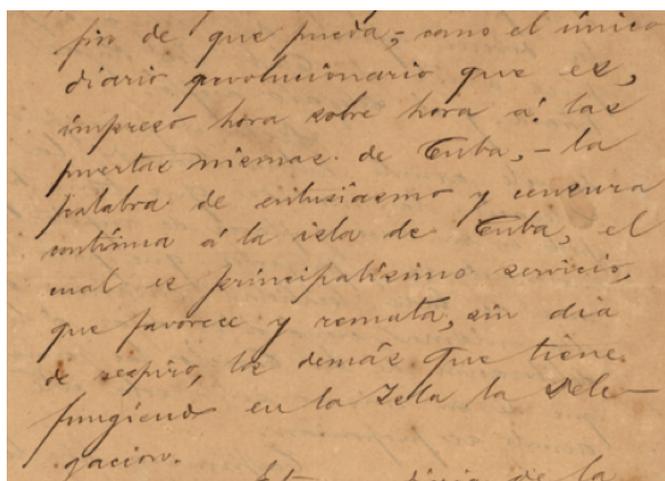
Writing under the authority of the Delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (CRP), which he helped found, Martí penned this 1893 letter (which is held at Rice University) in an attempt to raise funds for the newspaper *El Yara*, published in Key West by a group of Cuban exiles. He spent the final years before his death traveling throughout the United States, Central America, and the Caribbean, garnering support (financial and otherwise) for the procurement of Cuban sovereignty. Moreover, he bore an especially close relationship with the Cuban community in Key West, as detailed by C. Neale Ronning in *José Martí and the Émigré Colony in Key West*. Donating a substantial sum from the coffers of the CRP, Martí goes on in the letter to ask that the public recognize the necessity for *El Yara* and publications like it to remain solvent. He was acutely aware of the difficulties inherent in maintaining a daily paper, his own *Patria* having served for years as a vehicle for Cuban exiles and expatriates wishing to speak out against the injustices in their home country. The letter reveals a deep faith in the power of newspapers to bond a community together and to renew constantly the revolutionary drive: “This resolution must account for the costs and difficulties of running a strictly honorable newspaper, the only Cuban paper which, fueled with nothing more than the fervent patriotism of its editor, provides emigrants with the voice of unity, and Cuba with the voice of the revolution everyday. Do not be afraid of honoring those who merit it!”

In his thoroughgoing work, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States*, Rodrigo Lazo chronicles the publication of several Spanish- and English-language newspapers by Cuban exiles living in the U.S. While Martí serves as a central figure for Lazo’s investigations, it turns out there were a number of Cubans performing similar functions. Taking novels and other forms of writing under consideration as well, Lazo traces the various strategies that the exiles employed in order to voice their dissatisfaction with Spanish dominion, utilizing the U.S.’s own founding revolutionary rhetoric in order to agitate for Cuban freedom. One important point that Lazo makes, among many, concerns the diversity of the audience for these publications. They were written, of course, for the Cuban exile community scattered across the U.S., but that was only one faction to be considered. These publications would also find their way into Cuba and into the hands of the colonized population there. Furthermore, many of these authors wrote with an eye toward garnering the support of European and American audiences. As Lazo smartly unfolds, the rhetorical strategies would shift depending upon which audience was being engaged and to what end.

Martí, in particular, exhibited a fraught relationship with the U.S. He recognized that the U.S., with its vast resources, could serve as a meaningful ally in the fight against Spanish imperial dominion. However,

he was disturbed by the continued talk of Cuban annexation to the U.S., a conversation which had been ongoing since at least the 1850s. Though he vehemently opposed annexation, other Cuban exiles featured in Lazo's book were more open to the possibility as long as it meant freedom from Spain. Capturing perfectly his ambiguous feelings toward the U.S.'s role in Cuba's political future, Martí writes, "This newspaper – as the only daily revolutionary newspaper, printed hour after hour at the very door of Cuba – is printed with the goal of [spreading] continuous words of enthusiasm and criticism [about Cuba] to the Island of Cuba. This latter goal is its most important service, which targets and attacks, without taking a day off, the other newspapers that the Delegation has working on the Island" (see Figure 1). The physical proximity of the U.S. to Cuba makes it an ideal place for the exile community to live, to work, and to publish. Yet this same proximity, from Martí's point of view, gave credence to the possibility that the U.S. would simply usurp Spanish power on the island, leaving Cuba in much the same position as it was before. In "Our America," in addition to his desire for a more unified Latin American politics, Martí expresses an anxiety with regards to the U.S.'s increasing power in the hemisphere that rivals his distrust toward the old European imperial powers.

**Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida,  
Marzo 18, 1893**



**Figure 3.2:** An excerpt from Martí's actual letter<sup>4</sup>.

Martí emerges as a writer who challenges the ascription of national identity to literary figures. Though he was born in Cuba, he produced and circulated much of his most notable work within the U.S. A true cosmopolitan, he is a figure who can force students of Latin American studies, American literature, and the history of the Americas to reevaluate their preconceived notions about nation, region, and citizenship. As seen in this letter, he is also a valuable figure for studying the history of U.S.-Cuban relations. To this end, his writing is featured prominently in the collection *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary Reader*. The letter, like Martí himself, promotes a more hemispherically-minded paradigm for interpreting the Americas. It encourages us to see a series of complex entanglements in lieu of a set of discrete geopolitical entities.

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## Chapter 4

# José Martí: Carta al Cuerpo de consejo de Key West<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 José Martí: Carta al Cuerpo de consejo de Key West

De la multitud de documentos fascinantes incluidos en el ‘Our Americas’ Archive Partnership<sup>2</sup> (una colaboración que produjo un archivo digital enfocado en las Américas hemisféricas), la Carta de Jose Marti a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo, 1893<sup>3</sup> resalta como algo particularmente especial. Esta observación se basa en el hecho de que el mismo archivo lleva el nombre, y fue llamado por, uno de los ensayos más famosos de Martí. Martí publicó ‘Nuestra América’<sup>4</sup> en 1891, después de haber vivido muchos años en los Estados Unidos. Como un cubano exiliado, Martí pasó toda su vida de adulto haciendo campaña para la independencia cubana del poder imperial española. Durante ese tiempo, produjo un conjunto de obra impresionante, incluyendo numerosos poemas, ensayos, y hasta una novela publicada por entregas. Regresando a Cuba para participar en una insurgencia armada, falleció en 1895 en el campo de batalla, a la mano de las fuerzas coloniales de España. Ahora es considerado el padre fundador del nacionalismo cubano, como también uno de los primeros participantes en la búsqueda de una identidad latinoamericana más amplia. Sin duda, es un personaje central en los estudios latinoamericanos, mientras que su obra lo ha colocado como una figura crucial dentro de aulas de historia y literatura, concernidas con las Américas. La biografía de Christopher Abel, José Martí: Revolutionary Democrat (“Demócrata revolucionario”), provee un análisis útil de su vida y su herencia (información bibliográfica se encuentra al fin de este módulo).

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34621/1.3/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9242>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <[http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest/http://www.analitica.com/bitblo/jmarti/nuestra\\_america.asp](http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest/http://www.analitica.com/bitblo/jmarti/nuestra_america.asp)>

## José Martí



Figure 4.1: José Martí, últimos años de su vida

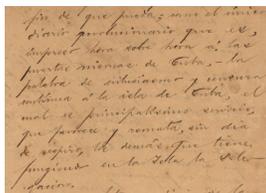
Bajo la autoridad de la Delegación del Partido Revolucionario Cubano (PRC), en cuya fundación participó, Martí escribió esta carta (que se encuentra en Rice University) en 1893, como un intento de levantar fondos para el periódico *El Yara*, publicado en Key West por un grupo de cubanos exiliados. Pasó sus últimos años de vida viajando por los Estados Unidos, Centro América, y el Caribe, obteniendo apoyo (monetario y de otros tipos) para lograr la soberanía cubana. Además, según C. Neale Ronning en *José Martí and the Émigré Colony in Key West* (“José Martí y la colonia de cubanos exiliados en Key West”), Martí mantenía una relación especialmente profunda con la comunidad cubana de Key West. Donando una suma significativa de las arcas del PRC, Martí continúa su carta, pidiéndole al público que reconozca la necesidad de que *El Yara* y publicaciones similares se mantuviesen solventes. Estaba muy conciente de las dificultades inherentes en el mantenimiento de un periódico diario porque su propio periódico, *Patria*, había funcionado como un vehículo para los cubanos exiliados y desterrados que deseaban hablar en contra de las injusticias en su patria. La carta revela una fe profunda en la habilidad de los periódicos de poder unir a una comunidad y constantemente renovar la pasión revolucionaria: “Pero no le basta tomar esta resoluci[ón] y fundarla; sino que quiere dejar aquí testimonio durable de respeto [a] las cualidad de desinterés y energía que han sido necesarias en el patriota cuyo espíritu alienta y mantiene ‘El Yara’ de Key West; para crear y salvar, con los costos y amarguras de un periódico de estricta honradez, el único periódico cubano que, sin m[á]s tesoro que el patriotismo ferviente de su redactor, lleva día [a] día [a] las emigraciones la voz de concordia, y [a] Cuba la voz de la revoluci[ón]. ¡No se tenga miedo de honrar a quien lo merece!”

En su obra profunda, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States*, (“Escribiendo a Cuba: Filibustiendo y los cubanos exiliados en los Estados Unidos”), Rodrigo Lazo relata la publicación de varios periódicos en español y en inglés por exiliados cubanos viviendo en los EEUU. Mientras que Martí funciona como una figura central en las investigaciones de Lazo, resulta que hubo varios cubanos realizando funciones similares. Lazo, también tomando en cuenta novelas y otras formas de escritura, traza las diferentes estrategias que los exiliados emplearon para manifestar su disgusto con el dominio español, utilizando la retórica fundacional estadounidense para hacer campaña para la libertad de Cuba. Un punto importante que hace Lazo, entre muchos, es sobre la diversidad de la audiencia de estas publicaciones. Fueron escritas, por supuesto, para la comunidad cubana dispersada a través de los Estados Unidos, pero eso era

sólo una facción para ser considerada. Estas publicaciones también llegarían de algún modo a Cuba y a las manos de su población colonizada. Es más, muchos de estos autores escribían con la meta de ganar apoyo de audiencias europeas y americanas. Lazo despliega que las estrategias retóricas cambiaban según la audiencia y su meta.

Martí, en particular, exhibía una relación tensa con los EEUU. Reconocía que los EEUU, con sus vastos recursos, podía servir como un aliado significativo en la batalla contra el dominio imperial de España. Sin embargo, le perturbaban las continuas conversaciones sobre la anexión de Cuba a los EEUU, una conversación en curso desde, por lo menos, 1850. Aunque él estaba vehementemente en contra de anexión, otros cubanos exiliados que aparecen en el libro de Lazo estaban más abiertos a la idea de esta posibilidad, con tal de que significaba libertad de España. Perfectamente capturando sus sentimientos ambiguos hacia el papel de los EEUU en el futuro político de Cuba, Martí escribe lo siguiente: “y así lo decide [la Delegación], ayudar de los fondos de acci[ó]n al periódico ‘El Yara’, de Key West...a fin de que pueda, como el único diario revolucionario que es, impreso hora sobre hora a las puertas mismas de Cuba, – la palabra de entusiasmo y censura continua a la Isla de Cuba, el cual es principalísimo servicio, que favorece y remata, sin día de respiro, los demás que tiene fungiendo en la Isla la Delegación” (ver Figura 1). La proximidad física entre los dos países hace que los EEUU sea un lugar ideal para una comunidad exiliada, en donde éstos pueden vivir, trabajar, y publicar. Pero esta misma proximidad, desde el punto de vista de Martí, le da crédito a la posibilidad de que los EEUU sencillamente le usurparía control a España en la isla, dejando a Cuba en relativamente la misma posición que antes. En “Nuestra América”, además del deseo de una política latinoamericana más unida, Martí expresa una ansiedad en cuanto al poder creciente de los EEUU en el hemisferio que compite con su desconfianza hacia los antiguos poderes imperiales europeos.

**Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida,  
18 de marzo 1893**



**Figure 4.2:** Un fragmento de la carta original de Martí<sup>5</sup>

Martí resulta ser un escritor que reta la atribución de identidad nacional a figuras literarias. Aunque nació en Cuba, produjo y publicó la mayoría de su obra dentro de los EEUU. Un cosmopolita verdadero, es una figura que puede forzar a estudiantes de estudios latinoamericanos, literatura americana, y la historia de las Americas a reevaluar sus nociones preconcebidas sobre nación, región y ciudadanía. Como revela esta carta, también es una figura valiosa en el estudio de la historia de relaciones EEUU-Cuba. A este fin, su obra es prominentemente figurada en la colección *Latin America and the United States: A Documentary Reader* (“América Latina y los Estados Unidos: Un libro de lectura documental”). Esta carta, como Martí, promueve una paradigma con una mentalidad más hemisférica para la interpretación de las Americas. Nos anima a ver una serie de enredos complejos en vez de una colección de entidades diferenciadas geopolíticas.

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## Chapter 5

# Slavery, Resistance, and Rebellion across the Americas<sup>1</sup>

### 5.1 Slavery, Resistance, and Rebellion across the Americas

The history of African slavery in the Americas is deeply intertwined with a correspondent history of conspiracy, resistance, and insurrection among the enslaved population. Though not the earliest of these revolts, the Haitian Revolution stands as both the most successful and arguably the most significant one. A series of violent confrontations that lasted over a decade and that involved at various points Saint Domingue's enslaved, mixed race, and Creole populations as well as French, Spanish, and British colonial forces, the revolution saw the emancipation of the island's slaves as well as the establishment of an independent Haitian republic in 1804. Therefore, this monumental event proved to be not only the first and last triumphant slave revolt in the western hemisphere, it also turned into the second successful anti-colonial movement within the Americas, after that of the United States. The Haitian Revolution's larger significance can be measured by its impact on other countries and colonial spaces throughout the Americas. Many of these locales, including the United States as well as British and Spanish colonial holdings in the Caribbean, restricted trade with the new island nation out of fear that Haiti's revolutionary heritage would spread, causing unrest among both colonized and enslaved peoples. The U.S., in particular, experienced a number of foiled slave conspiracies during the first half of the nineteenth century, frequently attributed to the influence of the Haitian Revolution. The most notable of these planned revolts included Gabriel Prosser's aborted rebellion in Richmond in 1800, Denmark Vesey's widespread anti-slavery conspiracy in Charleston in 1822, and Nat Turner's famously defeated revolt in 1831 in Southampton County, Virginia. Vital and vivid histories of the Haitian Revolution have been and continue to be produced, including C.L.R. James's foundational *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Alfred Hunt's examination of Haiti's influence, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean*, and newer historical narratives such as Laurent DuBois' *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*.

George Dunham's travel journal, *A Journey to Brazil*<sup>2</sup> (1853), is a fascinating piece of the 'Our Americas' Archive Partnership<sup>3</sup>, a collection of rare documents focused on a hemispheric approach to the study of the history and literature of the Americas. This journal, physically located in Rice University's Woodson Research Center, offers several valuable instances for the study of slave resistance in either the history or literature classroom. Dunham takes up residence at a plantation belonging to one of the planters for whom he has agreed to work; therefore, he has ample opportunity to observe the relationships, and more specifically the tensions, between the enslaved and free populations. The anxiety is palpable in the following passage: "I got scared a little last night for the first time since I have been here the old man had gone away and not

<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38437/1.2/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38437/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9247>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38437/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

coming back until Monday and the Negroes act different when he is gone and about midnight the farmer White that sleeps in the room with me hollered and waked me up and said he thought there was some one in the room” (see Figure 1). As can easily be detected from this passage, the fear of a violent slave revolt is firmly implanted in the minds of the white population. At various points in his text, Dunham points out slaves’ singing and participating in other forms of alternative communication, a familiar signal that a conspiracy may be simmering under the surface of a seemingly docile plantation setting. These anxieties would have been commonplace for slaveholders in the U.S. South, so it is fascinating to see them manifested so explicitly within a different geopolitical site at the middle of the nineteenth century.

### A Journey to Brazil, 1853

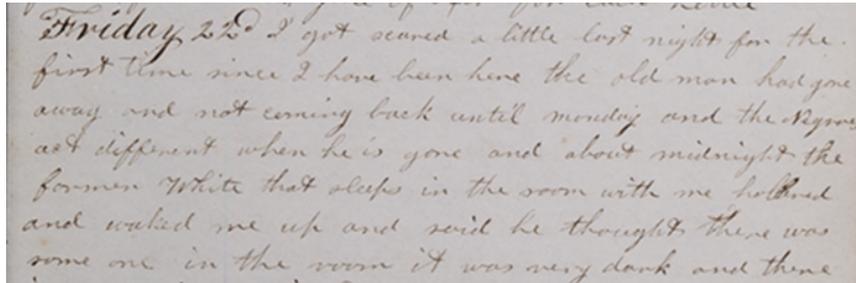


Figure 5.1: An excerpt from page 59 of George Dunham’s travel journal.

While the implications of revolutionary violence in the journal jump out the most to a contemporary reader, Dunham touches upon other forms of slave resistance that are worth noting. He observes behavior among some of the slaves that he seems to interpret as laziness, stating, “there is several negroes lying round sick and some do not appear as sick as they pretend” (89). Many historians of New World slavery have pointed to the pretence of sickness and the refusal to work among slaves as a subtle and effective form of protest, given the circumstances. Slave owners and drivers would, of course, write this behavior off as mere laziness and further evidence of the racial inferiority of blacks to whites. Determining the agency of individual slaves within a system designed to render them so powerless has been a demanding endeavor for these scholars, and primary texts such as *A Journey to Brazil* are crucial in piecing together a comprehensive narrative of slave systems and all their players. Yet another moment that shines a light on the unrest of Brazilian slaves comes in a brief but telling passage: “Three young negroes that belong here took each of them a horse out of the barn here Tuesday night to ride off somewhere and the German that has charge here caught two of them that night and the other run into the woods or some other place and has not come back yet” (109). The history of runaway slaves in the U.S. is a familiar one, primarily represented by the Underground Railroad and its most famous actor, Harriet Tubman. This phenomenon was a common one throughout the slaveholding Americas, resulting in a widespread community of runaway slaves known as “maroons.” Maroons would often flee to mountainous or swampy terrain (not easily accessible to the planters), and they were frequently implicated in the fomenting of anti-slavery conspiracy and potential insurrection.

Utilizing this approach to Dunham’s journal should produce great rewards for the U.S. literature instructor, in particular. The above passages from *Journey to Brazil* can be productively paired with any number of important literary works that touch upon the topic of slave rebellion. Frederick Douglass’s short story “The Heroic Slave” (1852) chronicles the true-life events of a revolt on board the slave ship *Creole*, led by a slave named Madison Washington. The story concludes with the commandeering of the ship by the freed slaves and their successful escape to an island in the recently emancipated British Caribbean, gesturing toward the hemispheric entanglements of slavery and emancipation in the nineteenth century. *Benito Cereno* (1856), the famous novella by Herman Melville, operates similarly to “The Heroic Slave,” recounting an actual over-

throw of a slave ship by its cargo, though in this instance the slaves are recaptured and either resold or sentenced to execution for their “crimes.” Eric Sundquist convincingly argues Melville’s narrative as a sort of metaphorical re-staging of the Haitian Revolution, designed to demonstrate the violence and injustice inherent to the institution of slavery. Of particular interest to a reader of the Dunham travel journal might be Martin Delany’s complex, fragmented novel *Blake; or, The Huts of America* (1859). The protagonist of *Blake* evolves from a slave in the U.S. South to a revolutionary leader in colonial Cuba; the international machinations of Delany’s narrative – with its emphasis on travel, border crossings, and the transnational exchange of institutions and ideologies – mirrors many of the dynamics that we have been tracing in Dunham’s writing. Finally, one cannot forget Harriet Beecher Stowe’s follow-up to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). Many radical abolitionists criticized *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* for a lack of revolutionary content, claiming that its black characters were too passive in the acceptance of their lot. Stowe attempted to answer her critics with the character of Dred, a revolutionary maroon and descendent of Nat Turner living in the swamps and planning an insurrection (which never comes to fruition) against southern slavery.

Though Stowe’s *Dred* comments more directly on the issue of slave revolt, it is the discovery of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in Brazil that occasions Dunham to once again reflect, though somewhat circuitously, on the constant possibility of rebellion within a slaveholding society. He writes, “I find that Uncle Toms Cabin has got into Brazil and the people will read it. It is translated into Portuguese by a French man and several of them have got into the country but the Government has prohibited the sale of it. I have seen a Brazilian that can read English reading a book that he appeared very cautious about any one seeing the title of but I saw on the cover, Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (168-9). Here, Dunham implicitly recognizes the power of this book to incite anger and resentment toward the slave system. The attempt by the Brazilian government to limit its circulation reveals the fear that Stowe’s novel, alone, may lead to the wider spread of violence and other forms of anti-slavery resistance throughout the country. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*’s influence ranged far beyond U.S. borders, contributing to the ongoing struggles against slavery in locations such as Brazil and Cuba. Its sudden and unexpected appearance in Dunham’s journal reminds us that literary texts not only depicted but also played a vital role in the various movements against slavery throughout the nineteenth-century Americas.

## Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852

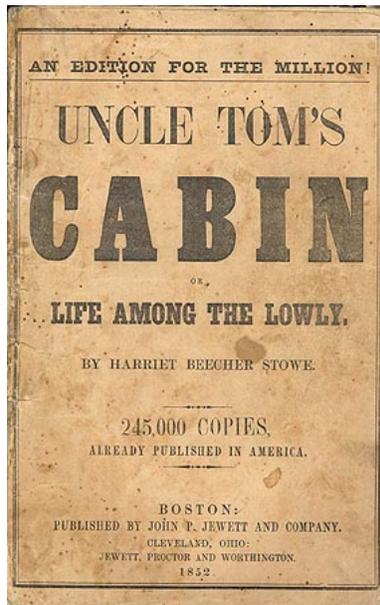


Figure 5.2: An Uncle Tom's Cabin cover contemporaneous with Dunham's trip to Brazil.

This module will conclude with a brief overview of a few of the scholarly works that have contributed to our ever-expanding awareness of the transnational dimensions of African slavery within the Americas. From a literary studies perspective, there is perhaps no better place to start than Sundquist's *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Sundquist takes the Haitian Revolution to be a foundational event in the construction of an American literary tradition. Moreover, as he centralizes slavery and its shaping of racial relations within his analyses of literary texts, he continually charts the connections between U.S. and Caribbean models of slavery and emancipation. Anthropology and history have perhaps done an even better job in charting the crucial interdependencies among national and colonial slave systems in the Americas. More specifically for the questions that we have asked here, there are several important works that look at anti-slavery movements from a transnational perspective. Richard Price's *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* provided an early contribution to this conversation. More recently, in his *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*, Lester Langley investigates the intersections between anti-colonial and anti-slavery movements across a variety of national and colonial locales. Finally, *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, a collection of essays published through Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, examines how both pro-slavery practices and abolitionist sentiment and action traveled along a variety of international routes throughout the nineteenth century. Dunham's *Journey to Brazil* marks another potential moment within this dialogue. It helps to illustrate that, like the institution itself, resistance to slavery possessed a certain type of mobility, a hemispheric circulation.

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## Chapter 6

# U.S.-Mexican War



## Chapter 7

# Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s<sup>1</sup>

### 7.1 Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s

The ‘Our Americas’ Archive Partnership<sup>2</sup>, a collection of rare documents focused on a hemispheric approach to the study of the history and literature of the Americas, contains two letters by a man named James Cramp. The first Cramp letter is dated December 12, 1835<sup>3</sup> and the second letter is dated December 1835<sup>4</sup>. These letters, which are held at Rice University’s Woodson Research Center, detail Cramp’s unwitting involvement in the Tampico Expedition, an early conflict in the Texas War of Independence. Also termed the Texas Revolution, the war erupted in 1835 after the Mexican government overturned the 1824 constitution that had established a Mexican republic independent of Spain and installed a heavily revised constitution in its place. This new constitution gave far more power to the Mexican national government and weakened the influence of the numerous states that made up the young country. The Texas War of Independence, therefore, has been customarily viewed as a confrontation between “centralists” and “federalists,” between those who desired a strong central government and those who saw such a proposition as a violation of their freedoms.

According to his two letters, written in December of 1835, James Cramp had little to no investment in what had grown into a full-blown revolution. He boarded a ship in New Orleans that he assumed was bound for Texas, in hopes of discovering a new livelihood in an underdeveloped region. He professes surprise in his letters upon discovering that the ship is controlled by General José Antonio Mexía, an ardent federalist and a leader in Texas’s fight for independence from Mexico. Cramp details how he and several other men were conscripted against their will into Mexía’s company then spirited away to Tampico, Mexico in order to participate in an uprising there against Mexican national forces. In a tone of bitterness and resignation, he writes, “. . .dressed in the uniform of Mexía’s troops have received the sentence of death with 22 other young men whose lives have been made a sacrifice to villainy and deception” (December 12th, 1835 letter, pg. 2). Mexía’s forces were easily defeated; while he and the other leaders of the attack escaped unharmed, they left behind thirty-one men, all of whom were executed as “pirates.” Cramp wrote both of his letters on the eve of his execution, giving an intimate voice to this violent episode in the histories of Mexico and Texas. The tide would quickly turn in the Texas War of independence. Though the Mexican army would score a victory at the Battle of the Alamo in March of 1836, the Texas Army led by Sam Houston delivered a final defeat to Santa Anna and his men at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21. Helpful sources on the Texas Revolution and related histories include William C. Davis’s *Lone Star Rising: The Revolutionary Birth of the Texas Republic* and Paul D. Lack’s *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History*

<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38436/1.4/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38436/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38436/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9232>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38436/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9247>>

1835–1836 (bibliographical information provided at end of module).

**Lock of hair sewn to piece of paper dated Dec. 13, 1835, Tampico, Mexico**



**Figure 7.1:** Also located in the Americas Archive at Rice University, this lock of hair is most likely from one of the men executed after the Tampico Expedition.

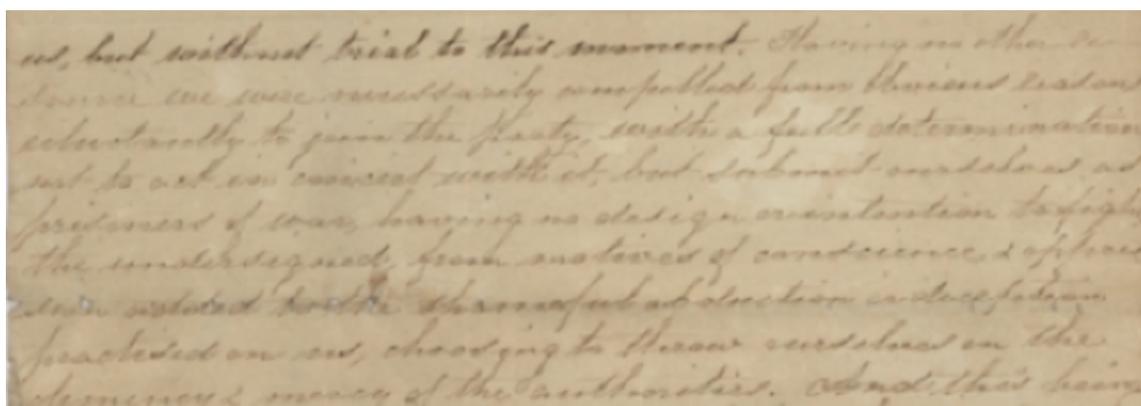
A closer look at portions of the Cramp letters affords some valuable insight into important cultural and political relations among the U.S., Mexico, and Texas during this period. Cramp's first letter, written to his brother on December 12, 1835, points to the influx of Americans into Texas (termed "Texians" before the war) that placed additional strain upon the relationship between the Mexican government and one of its largest states. Again, Cramp planned to go to Texas in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities that it had to offer. As he writes, "I left New Orleans as my last letter home expressed, with a view to go to Texas in company with a great many others who like myself were seeking to better their circumstances" (1). Most Texians felt little, if any, loyalty to the nation of Mexico. The attempt by the Mexican government to broaden its reach violated the sense of independence that many of these settlers had come to Texas in search of in the first place.

The increasingly volatile issue of slavery emerged as a flashpoint for the tensions between Mexico and its swelling citizenry. A number of those who immigrated from the U.S. did so with their slaves, transplanting the plantation economy of the South into Mexican-controlled Texas. Mexico, however, had abolished slavery in its 1824 constitution, as did most newly sovereign Latin American republics upon severing ties with Spain. Slave-holding Texians paid little attention to these laws, but Santa Anna and his fellow government officials planned to enforce them much more earnestly after the passing of the new constitution. Most historians agree that, as with the U.S. Civil War, slavery was a major factor behind the Texas War of Independence. The institution of slavery was not limited to individual countries or colonies, but rather slave holders, their slaves, as well as pro- and anti-slavery ideologies circulated throughout the hemisphere, fostering a transnational network of affiliations and conflicts. As we see in this instance, even non-slaveholding nations could be

directly affected by the powder keg of tensions incited by slavery.

Cramp's letters also suggest the fluidity of national identity and the instability of political affiliations at this point within the nineteenth-century Americas. In his December 12th, 1835 letter Cramp angrily asserts his U.S. citizenship in an attempt to express the full injustice of his situation to his brother: "It ill becomes one so near the point of death to make an expression of hatred to any individual, but will the United States permit their citizens to be abducted by men who are now in the bosom in the midst of affluence and luxury?" (2). Cramp's second December 1835 letter, an explanation of what happened and a declaration of innocence written on behalf of all of the condemned men, highlights the multi-national composition of the abducted individuals: "130 men, composed of Americas, French & Germans two thirds of which being of the first names (including three who are natives of foreign nations but naturalized)" (1). Ironically, due to a combination of geographic and economic circumstances, these men die in the name of a future Texas republic to which most of them feel no commitment. Cramp must have seen his economic plans as somehow separate from Texas's broader political embroilments. He makes his lack of devotion to any sort of "Texas cause" clear when he writes in his undated December 1835 letter, "Having no other resource we were necessarily compelled from obvious reasons reluctantly to join the party, with a full determination not to act in concert with it, but submit ourselves as prisoners of war, having no design or intention to fight, undersigned, from motives of conscience & apprehension added to the shameful abduction or deception practiced on us, choosing to throw ourselves on the clemency & mercy of the authorities" (see Figure 2). It was the overlapping of Mexican, U.S., and Texan sociopolitical realities that enabled the tragedy detailed in Cramp's letters. Examining these complex interconnections more closely, through documents like these, can help us to understand better the transnational, transcolonial historical processes that defined the nineteenth century.

#### Letter from James Cramp, December 1835



**Figure 7.2:** Excerpt from James Cramp's second letter written from Tampico, Mexico.

Texas proved to be a central player in the unfolding of nineteenth-century U.S.-Mexican conflicts. We have already seen how U.S. citizens were instrumental in fostering the tensions that would help define the Texas Revolution. The U.S.'s annexation of Texas in 1845 was a major cause of the U.S. Mexican War, which would commence in 1846. Since Mexico still viewed Texas as its rightful territory, it warned the U.S. that annexation would amount to a declaration of war. The war resulted in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which saw over a million square miles of territory transfer from Mexico to the United States. Though tied to a relatively minor event from the Texas War of Independence, Cramp's letters anticipate and gesture toward these larger tensions between the U.S. and Mexico. These letters could be brought into several classroom situations, especially in the study of Texas history, the Texas Revolution in particular, and the history of U.S.-Mexico relations. As with so many documents in the archive, the Cramp letters place a human face

and voice on what can otherwise seem like remote historical phenomena, an enticing prospect for scholar and student alike.

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## Chapter 8

# Texas y el conflicto entre los EEUU y México en los años 1830<sup>1</sup>

### 8.1 Texas y el conflicto entre los EEUU y México en los años 1830

Este módulo es una traducción de: Ledoux, Cory. "Texas and U.S.-Mexican Conflict in the 1830s." ed. AnaMaria Seglie. Connexions. <http://cnx.org/content/m38436/1.3/>.

El Our Americas Archive Partnership<sup>2</sup> (una colección de documentos pocos comunes que fomentan un enfoque hemisférico hacia el estudio de la historia y literatura de las Américas) contiene dos cartas escritas por un hombre llamado James Cramp: Carta de James Cramp, 12 diciembre 1835<sup>3</sup> (a su hermano) y Carta de James Cramp, diciembre 1835<sup>4</sup>. Estas cartas, que se pueden encontrar en el centro de colecciones especiales, el Woodson Research Center de Rice University, destacan la participación involuntaria de James Cramp en la expedición del General Mexía a Tampico., un conflicto temprano durante la Guerra de Independencia de Texas, también conocida como la Revolución de Texas. La guerra comenzó en 1835 después de que el gobierno mexicano anuló la constitución de 1824, que había establecido la República de México, independiente de España, e instaló una constitución muy redactada en su lugar. Esta nueva constitución le otorgó mucho más poder al gobierno nacional mexicano y redujo la influencia de los estados del país joven. Por consiguiente, la Guerra de Independencia de Texas, se ha considerado como un enfrentamiento entre los “centralistas” y los “federalistas”, entre los que querían un gobierno central fuerte y los que veían esta propuesta como una violación de sus libertades.

Según estas dos cartas escritas en diciembre 1835, James Cramp no tenía ningún interés en lo que se había convertido en plena revolución. Asumió que el buque que abordó en Nueva Orleans iba a Texas, adonde iba con la esperanza de ganarse la vida en una región no desarrollada. Las cartas manifiestan su sorpresa al descubrir que el buque era controlado por el General José Antonio Mexía, un federalista ferviente y un líder en la Revolución de Texas. Cramp destaca cómo él y varios hombres fueron reclutados contra su voluntad para la compañía de Mexía, y luego llevados a Tampico, México para participar en una rebelión contra las fuerzas nacionales mexicanas. En un tono de amargura y resignación, escribe: “vestidos del uniforme de las tropas de Mexía han sido condenados a muerte junto con los otros 22 jóvenes, cuyas vidas han sido sacrificados a la villanía y la decepción” (2). El ejército de Mexía fue derrotado fácilmente; él y otros líderes del ataque escaparon ilesos, dejando atrás treinta un hombres, quienes fueron fusilados como “piratas”. Cramp escribe ambas cartas el día antes de ser fusilado, dando una voz íntima a este episodio violento de las historias de México y Texas. Las tornas se voltearon rápidamente durante la Revolución de Texas. Aunque el ejército mexicano saldría victorioso en la Batalla del Álamo en marzo del 1836, el ejército texano, dirigido por Sam

<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/1.2/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36228>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36245>>

Houston, derrotó a Santa Anna y sus tropas en la Batalla de San Jacinto el 21 de abril.

**Mechón de pelo, cosido a un papel con fecha de 13 de diciembre, 1835, Tampico, México**



**Figure 8.1:** Este mechón de pelo<sup>5</sup> (que se encuentra en el *Americas Archive* de Rice University) probablemente es de uno de los hombres fusilados después de la expedición del General Mexía a Tampico.

Una lectura cuidadosa de porciones de las cartas de Cramp ofrece una perspectiva única hacia las relaciones culturales y políticas importantes entre los EEUU, México, y Texas durante estos años. La primera carta de Cramp<sup>6</sup>, escrita para su hermano el 12 de diciembre 1835, señala el influjo de estadounidenses en Texas que creó más tensiones en la relación entre el gobierno mexicano y uno de sus estados más grandes. Además, Cramp pensaba ir a Texas para aprovecharse de las oportunidades económicas que ofrecía. Escribe: “salí de Nueva Orleáns, como mi última carta a casa expresó, esperando ir a Texas, acompañado por otros que, como yo, buscaban mejorar su situación” (12 de diciembre, 1). Muchos texanos sentían muy poca lealtad hacia México. El intento del gobierno mexicano de ampliarse violó el sentido de independencia que muchos de los pobladores habían venido a Texas para encontrar desde un principio.

La cuestión cada vez más inestable de la esclavitud surgió cómo un detonante para las tensiones entre México y su masa de ciudadanos. Muchos de los que habían inmigrado desde los EEUU habían traído a sus esclavos, trasplantando la economía de la plantación del sur de los EEUU al estado mexicano de Texas. México, sin embargo, había abolido la esclavitud en su constitución de 1824 (como también lo habían hecho la mayoría de las nuevas repúblicas Latinoamericanas al independizarse de España). Los texanos que tenían esclavos le pusieron muy poca atención a estas leyes, pero Santa Anna y sus oficiales gubernamentales planeaban hacerse cumplir dichas leyes después de la ratificación de la nueva constitución. La mayoría de historiadores están de acuerdo de que, como sucedió con la Guerra Civil estadounidense, la esclavitud era el factor más significativo en la Revolución de Texas. La institución de la esclavitud no era limitada a países o colonias individuales, sino a los dueños de esclavos, sus esclavos, como también las ideologías esclavistas y antiesclavistas que circulaban en todo el hemisferio, fomentando una red transnacional de afiliaciones y conflictos. Como se puede ver en esta instancia, hasta las naciones no esclavistas podrían ser afectadas directamente por el polvorín de tensiones creado por la esclavitud.

Las cartas de Cramp también sugieren la fluidez de la identidad nacional y la inestabilidad de afiliaciones políticas en las Américas durante el siglo XIX. En su primera carta<sup>7</sup>, Cramp, enfadado, afirma su ciudadanía estadounidense con el intento de completamente expresar la injusticia de la situación a su hermano: “No es propio que alguien tan cerca a la muerte haga una expresión odiosa hacia cualquier individuo, pero, ¿permitirá los Estados Unidos que sus ciudadanos sean secuestrados por hombres a quien les tienen confianza en medio

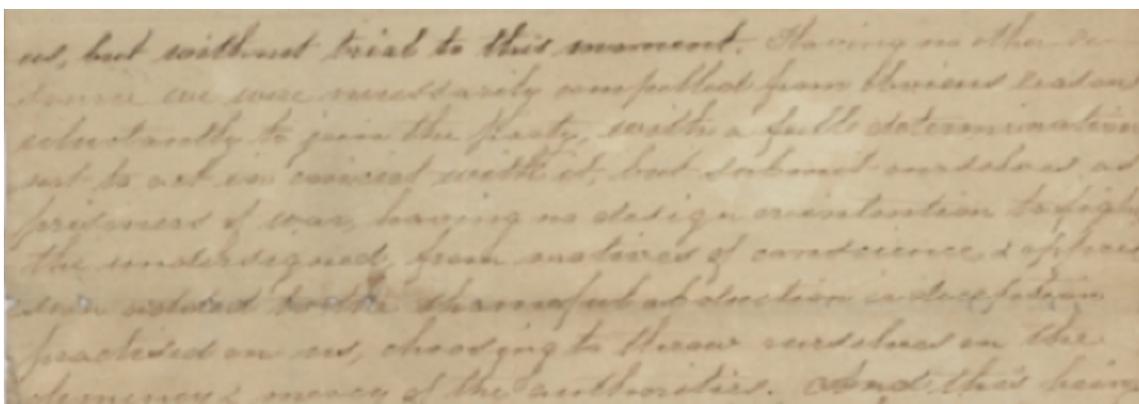
<sup>5</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/21800>>

<sup>6</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36228>>

<sup>7</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36228>>

de abundancia y lujo?” (12 de diciembre, 2). La segunda carta<sup>8</sup> de Cramp, una explicación de lo que pasó y una declaración de inocencia escrita de parte de todos los hombres condenados a muerte, destaca la composición multinacional de los individuos secuestrados: “130 hombres, compuestos de americanos, franceses, y alemanes, de los cuales dos tercios eran de la primera clase mencionada (incluyendo tres que eran nativos de naciones extranjeras naturalizados)” (1). Irónicamente, a causa de una combinación de circunstancias geográficas y económicas, estos hombres mueren en nombre de la futura República de Texas, a la cual la mayoría no sentía ningún compromiso. Cramp ha de haber visto sus planes económicos como algo distinto a los conflictos políticos más grandes de Texas. Deja claro su falta de devoción a cualquier “causa texana” cuando escribe: “Sin ningún otro recurso, fuimos necesariamente obligados por razones obvias a unirnos a regañadientes al grupo, completamente determinados a no actuar en colaboración, sino de rendirnos como prisioneros de guerra, sin objeto ni intención de pelear, los abajo firmantes, por motivos de conciencia y opresión, añadieron al secuestro deshonoroso o la decepción que fue utilizado hacia nosotros, escogiendo nosotros mismos lanzarnos a la clemencia y misericordia de las autoridades” (3) (ver figura 2). Fue la coincidencia de realidades sociopolíticas mexicanas, estadounidenses y texanas la que permitió la tragedia narrada en las cartas de Cramp. Examinar estas interconexiones complejas de cerca, a través de documentos como estos, puede ayudarnos a entender mejor los procesos históricos transnacionales, transcoloniales que definieron el siglo XIX.

#### Carta de James Cramp, diciembre 1835



**Figure 8.2:** Fragmento de la segunda carta<sup>9</sup> de James Cramp, escrita desde Tampico, México.

Texas resultó ser central al desarrollo de los conflictos EEUU-México del siglo XIX. Hemos visto como ciudadanos estadounidenses eran instrumentales en el fomento de tensiones que definirían la Revolución de Texas. La anexión de Texas por los EEUU en 1845 era una de las mayores causas de la Intervención estadounidense en México, que comenzó en 1846. Como México aun veía a Texas como su territorio legal, le advirtió a los EEUU que la anexión resultaría en una declaración de guerra. Esta guerra resultó en el Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), tratado que trasladó más de dos millones de kilómetros cuadrados de territorio mexicano a los EEUU. Aunque las cartas de Cramp están atadas a un evento aparentemente insignificante de la Revolución de Texas, anticipan y articulan estas tensiones más grandes entre los EEUU y México. Estas cartas se podrían usar en varias maneras en la clase, especialmente en el estudio de la historia de Texas, la Revolución de Texas en particular, y la historia de relaciones EEUU-México. Al igual que muchos documentos en el archivo, las cartas de Cramp le dan una cara y una voz humana a lo que de

<sup>8</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36245>>

<sup>9</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38469/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/36245>>

otro modo parecen ser fenómenos históricos lejanos, una posibilidad atractivo tanto para académicos como estudiantes.

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## Chapter 9

# Native Americans in Texas during the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848<sup>1</sup>

### 9.1 Native Americans in Texas during the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848

In recent years, scholars and educators have worked towards more complex depictions of Native Americans, as opposed to reducing the entirety of Native American history to one long Trail of Tears, culminating in present-day reservation life. These advances in scholarship are now appearing in the classroom via discussions of the persistence of Indian culture and identity. Note: Throughout this module I use the terms “Native Americans” and “Indians” interchangeably, as is the current practice in the historical profession. Texas historians, in particular, have embraced the concept of Indian agency and have sought out sources that support this ‘new’ approach to native history. However, the search for sources remains difficult as most Anglo-American, Spanish, French, and Mexican documents silence more Native American voices than they reveal. U.S government documents provide one window into the fraught relations between these groups. A collection of documents in the ‘Our Americas’ Archive Partnership<sup>2</sup> (a digital collaboration on the hemispheric Americas) and gathered under the title, “Communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,”<sup>3</sup> demonstrates how Native Americans in Texas fought for cultural, and actual, survival during the Mexican War period (1846-1848). This module suggests ways to incorporate sections of these official communications into the classroom in order to illuminate the complexity of the Mexican War, the existence of cultural misunderstandings, and the agency of native peoples.

The Texas agency of the Office of Indian Affairs was officially established on March 20, 1847. Robert S. Neighbors was the first special agent for Texas and that is why many of the official communications are to/from him. Neighbors’s responsibilities included maintaining communications with the Indians in the state, providing gifts to the Indians in order to facilitate trade, and evaluating the strengths/weaknesses of various Indian groups. But, he had to be careful not to appear too powerful as Texas prior to 1848 was an area of “undefined relative jurisdiction,” not yet belonging to the United States (March 19, 1847, letter). With the backdrop of the Mexican War, Neighbors, as revealed in these communications, waged a cultural war against Indians in Texas. Therefore, the documents would be best discussed within a lesson on the Mexican War, Manifest Destiny, and expansionism. For a quick, visual synopsis of the Mexican War see the PBS video special “U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848”<sup>4</sup>. Or, students could be assigned Bruce Winder’s *Crisis in the Southwest* (2002) (see full biographical details below), a concise, accurate overview of the war period.

<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m33062/1.5/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m33062/latest/http://oaap.rice.edu/>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m33062/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27072>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <[http://cnx.org/content/m33062/latest/http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index\\_flash.html](http://cnx.org/content/m33062/latest/http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index_flash.html)>

The module, “Using Original Documents on the Mexican American War,”<sup>5</sup> might also prove useful.

### Comanche Camp



**Figure 9.1:** An image of a Comanche camp, similar to one that would have been found in Texas during the Mexican War period.

The idea of the U.S. simultaneously waging a war on two fronts, the official war against Mexico and the cultural war against Indian inhabitants, is an effective way to begin a discussion of this period. With this interpretation in mind, the information gathered by Neighbors regarding Indian numbers, etc., takes on a more sinister tone. The March 19, 1847, letter is particularly important because it demonstrates how he was essentially evaluating the enemy, as the Indians stood in the way of the “expansion of the white population.” One weapon that Neighbors used to subdue the Indian population was gift giving. At one point, the U.S. government provided him with ten thousand dollars to buy presents for Texas Indians (March 20, 1847, letter). Educators can use the gift practices of this U.S. agent as an entry point into a discussion of the multiple meanings of gifts and the possibility for cultural miscommunications. For example, while Neighbors wanted the gifts to demonstrate the power of the U.S. government, the Indians interpreted the gifts in their own way. As Neighbors laments, “every present which they[the Indians] receive they look upon as an additional proof of our fear. . .” (November 3, 1838, report). To add depth to the exploration of the meaning of the gift, see anthropologist M. Mauss’s well-known work *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (2000). In particular, educators should focus on the introduction to *The Gift*, which is quite short, as well as the foreword, which changes depending on the edition/editor.

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<sup>5</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m33062/latest/http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/>>

### A Native American Camp



**Figure 9.2:** The process of drying meat in a Native American camp.

This collection of documents also provides an interesting way to teach critical reading from a historical perspective. After introducing Neighbors as a complex figure striving to please a variety of factions, and to stay alive, educators can ask students to dissect the rest of the communications. For example, students can identify particular phrases that demonstrate prejudice against, or sympathy for, the situation of Indians in Texas. The November 3, 1838, report is one document that contains a range of emotions, including growing frustration on the part of Anglo-American negotiators. Another exercise could focus on trying to find the native ‘voice’ within the documents. Basically, what would a Native American account of the same events/encounters look like? And, once a class feels confident in their ability to ‘read between the lines’ of historical texts, an educator can challenge them with other primary sources, such as those found within Dorman Winfrey’s *The Indian Papers, 1846-1859* (1960). Many of the documents within the Winfrey collection describe accusations of theft made against Indian groups (see Winfrey pg.230 “Newspaper Item Concerning Indian Depredations”), the same issue Neighbors wrestles with in his official communications. Educators can challenge students to explore how stereotypes of Indian thievery might have spread the same way that rumors travel in the present day. And, what purposes do these falsehoods serve in the bigger picture of cultural power struggle?

## Cynthia Ann Parker



**Figure 9.3:** An image of famous Indian captive Cynthia Ann Parker.

One theme regarding Native American scholarship that educators can teach in the classroom is the transition of historical studies from a focus on victimization to an emphasis on native agency and power. For example, Juliana Barr's recent work *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman* (2007) uses gender analysis to argue that Indians in early Texas were able negotiators with the Spanish. A mention of Barr's work during the 'Exploration of North America' part of a course can set the tone for later lectures using the official communications documents. The Indians that appear within these reports and letters are strong and culturally vivid. In particular, it might surprise students to learn that there were Anglo individuals who, after being taken captive and then given the opportunity to return, chose to stay with their Indian captors. The August 8, 1846, letter includes information on captives, as well as the cultural practices of the Indians. The stories of these particular individuals, such as Cynthia Ann Parker (see figure 3), provide a counter-narrative to the popular 'Indian captivity' story. However, educators can also stress that the Indians of Texas were eventually pushed beyond the initial Anglo/Indian boundary line of the Brazos River to emphasize that the Indian story is not one of total triumph or total defeat.

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## Chapter 10

# Personal Narratives and Transatlantic Contexts during the U.S.-Mexican War<sup>1</sup>

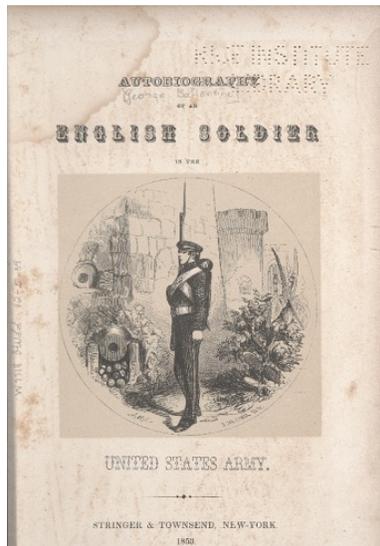
“I LEFT home for the United States in the summer of 1845, for the same reason that yearly sends so many thousands there, want of employment,” writes Scottish immigrant and English soldier George Ballentine. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the U.S. received into its midst waves of immigrants from across the globe. Immigrant experiences like Ballentine’s were often related and recorded through the form of personal narrative and autobiography. Within these narratives, many immigrants continue to reference conditions in their homeland, creating a comparative structure that relates to transatlantic, trans-pacific, and hemispheric histories of circulation and migration. Ballentine’s immigrant experience was a specifically transatlantic experience which adopted hemispheric implications as a result of his travels throughout the U.S. Mexican borderlands. His *Autobiography of an English Soldier*<sup>2</sup> offers a key way through which to highlight his history of immigration and introduce students to an important literary form: the personal narrative.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m39380/1.3/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m39380/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/26929>>

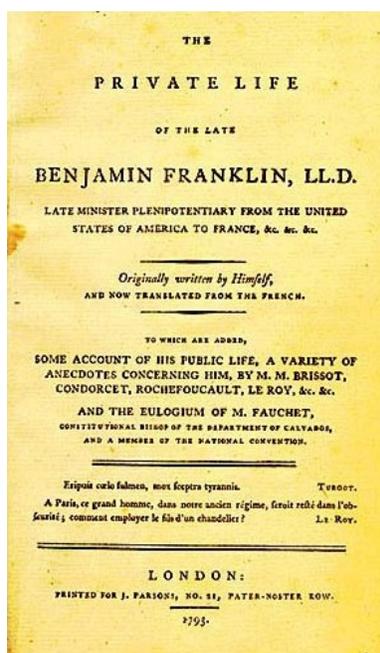
## Autobiography of an English soldiers in the United States Army



**Figure 10.1:** Title page from *Autobiography of an English Soldier in the United States Army*

Teachers can begin by introducing Ballentine's narrative as an example of a multilayered personal narrative that represents genres of autobiography and immigration. Personal narrative, as Jonathan Arac argues in *The Emergence of American Literary Narrative, 1820-1860*, is founded upon displacement – pacific voyages, overland journeys to the frontier, slaves' escapes, or immigrant, Atlantic journeys like Ballentine's (76); however, this displacement is not only physical. It also occurs in the relationship between author and reader. Readers are urged to know the narrator, while realizing that there is a difference between the world in which they live and the world in which the narrator lived historically. More specifically, this difference pertains to how the narrative functions as a representation of historical experience and how the reader experiences that narrative as they read it (Arac 76). This distinction provides a key moment for teachers to help students learn about the internal world of a text. What do certain words, phrases, and experiences mean within Ballentine's narrative? What do they mean in terms of the historical context, and what do they mean to us today? By showing students this process of translation, they can learn the complex layers through which literary narratives convey meaning.

## Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin



**Figure 10.2:** Title page from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. An online version Franklin's autobiography can be found via the OAAP website or directly through the OAAP partner Early Americas Digital Archive<sup>3</sup>.

As a part of the early American literary tradition, Ballentine's narrative joins a long line of 19<sup>th</sup> century autobiographical and first-person narratives, such as the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1771-1790), Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). Personal narratives typically have the "circular shape of descent and return," meaning characters often fall by way of some experience and return to a state of ordinary, civilized life (Arac 77). These narratives function as a way to see another form of life and travel into the past. In addition, Ballentine's narrative can be located within studies of first-person immigrant texts, such as John Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) (an electronic version linked in the OAAP via the Early Americas Digital Archive<sup>4</sup>), Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* (1912), and many more. Frequently, personal narratives are appropriated into national narratives; they are used to understand the nation within a certain space and time (77). Teachers might consider pairing Ballentine's autobiography with one of these canonical American literary narratives, helping students to see the similarities and differences within the genre of personal narrative. For instance, teachers might have students read the first five pages of Ballentine's narrative and the first five pages of Benjamin Franklin's narrative to show the different ways in which authors introduce themselves and their writing. What are the first pieces of information that these authors reveal about themselves? What reasons do they provide for writing their narratives? Such questions can help students understand the formula of personal narratives and how various authors deviate from it.

*Autobiography of an English Solider* begins with a classic immigrant arrival story into the harsh streets of New York, where Ballentine quickly realizes that he is "scarcely prepared to find the scramble for the

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m39380/latest/http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada/>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m39380/latest/http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada/>>

means of living so fierce and incessant, as I found it in New York” (9). Although he attempts to first find employment as a weaver or a whaler, he eventually decides to continue his occupation as a soldier and enlist in the American army. Traveling from Fort Adams, Rhode Island to Pensacola, Florida to Tampico, Mexico, Ballentine eventually participates and observes the siege of Veracruz, which led to the inland march toward Jalapa during the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848). Ballentine’s personal narrative situates his experience in the U.S.-Mexican War as part of his immigration experience, and provides a geographic outline of the U.S. during the war as well as a sense of U.S. politics. Furthermore it calls us to understand his first person narrative as one told and interpreted by a witness. By highlighting that his narrative is both a primary historical source and a literary form using conventions and narrative structures, teachers can help students to understand both the historical and literary nature of the personal narrative. What type of language does Ballentine use? How does he describe the battles? What features of his descriptions point to a first person experience?

### Siege of Veracruz



**Figure 10.3:** Siege of Veracruz originally from *The War Between the United States and Mexico, Illustrated*, 1851

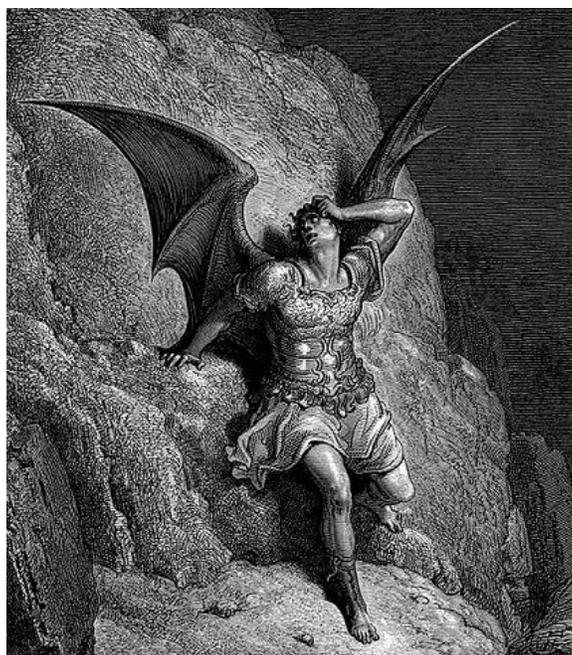
For a more specific example, teachers might draw students’ attention to the historical details surrounding Ballentine’s retelling of the war. His descriptions provide a first-hand account of the siege of Veracruz, and a defense of General Winfield Scott, who received considerable criticism for his fierce bombardment of Veracruz (152). Teachers might have students research Scott and the criticism surrounding his leadership in this battle. In so doing, teachers can remind students that personal narratives, like all narratives to a certain extent, endorse a certain point of view. What is Ballentine’s point of view? Can we discern his political understanding of the war? What does his narrative tell us about U.S. relations with Mexico? Does he seem like a reliable narrator? Such questions can help students to think critically about what they read, how they read it, and the role of the narrator. For instance, Ballentine compares the poor treatment of the American soldiers to his former experience in the British army. He writes in reference to the soldiers transportation aboard a ship, “In the American, service by the bye, soldiers always lie on the boards when on board ship; in the British service, where the health and comfort of a soldier are objects of study and solicitude, a different custom prevails; a clean blanket and mattress being issued to the soldier on his going on board”(89). Like many immigrant novels, Ballentine’s former homeland stands as a place of comparison. How does his British origin influence his narration of the U.S. and the U.S. Mexican War? Studying the relationship between Ballentine’s homeland (Scotland/Britain) and the U.S. can help students to understand how his perspective of the war was primarily developed outside of the U.S. How is this personal narrative representative of Ballentine’s transatlantic crossing? How is it also representative of borderlands and hemispheric narrative?

Teachers can also highlight Ballentine’s British-American perspective by calling attention to his use of

literary references and conventions. For instance, his description of the siege of Veracruz recreates and relies on the sounds of battle, employing a literary allusion and generic convention to enhance his retelling of the event. Stationed at a small village four miles from Veracruz, he hears the terrifying sound of a canon shell whizzing past him. He writes:

*There is no earthly sound bearing the slightest resemblance to its monstrous dissonance; the angriest shriek of the railway whistle, or the most emphatic demonstration of an asthmatic engine at starting of a train, would seem like a strain of heavenly melody by comparison. Perhaps Milton's description of the harsh, thunder-grating of the hinges of the infernal gates, approaches to a faint realization of the indescribable sound, which bears a more intimate relation to the sublime than the beautiful. (155)*

### Portrayal of Satan from *Paradise Lost*



**Figure 10.4:** Satan, as drawn by Gustave Doré, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* .

This description of battle offers a key way for teachers to introduce literary concepts into what appears a straightforward autobiography. The “sublime,” a key concept of British Romanticism and, later, American Romantic literature, was originally used to describe feelings of awe and wonder often inspired by the natural world. Here, Ballentine uses it to describe the sounds of war, throwing in a reference to John Milton’s portrait of hell to dramatize his own terror and the unnerving sounds of battle. What does he compare his experiences to? How does his reference to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667) formulate meaning within the text? What does it mean to locate a 17<sup>th</sup> century British poet within a story of the 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S.–Mexican War? This reference provides a key opportunity to define the literary term “allusion.” An allusion is: “a reference in a literary work to a person, place, or thing in history or another work of literature” (*All American: Glossary of Literary Terms*).

These types of questions can help students to do the investigative work of literary analysis by urging them to find the references and conventions that configure meaning. In fact, Ballentine makes multiple literary

references throughout his autobiography. For instance, he makes allusions to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798), Frederick Marryat's lesser-known novel *Snarleyyow* (1837), and Augustus Jacob Crandolph's gothic novel *The Mysterious Hand; or, Subterranean Horrors!* (1811). Interestingly, these cultural references situate the literature of the British Romantics within the context of the Mexican-American War, allowing these texts to produce new meaning. Furthermore, many of these allusions refer to stories of the sea, and Ballentine's brief experience of travel along the Atlantic and Gulf coastlines. For an exercise, teachers might have their students read a section of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and consider how Ballentine's allusion works within the text. What can we learn from this type of reference? Is it helpful in understanding Ballentine's experience? What new meaning does it add to Coleridge's well-known poem? Although many of Ballentine's references are allusions to British literature, they would not have escaped many of his contemporary American readers. Moreover, he also references American texts, such as Herman Melville's 1851 American epic, *Moby Dick*. His use of both British and American literary references reveals the blending of literary cultures and histories and locates them within a story of shifting national borders.

After presenting a lesson on personal narratives, teachers might present students with the following questions:

1. What is a personal narrative? How does it function? Provide an example.
2. What influences Ballentine's perspective in his autobiography?
3. What can we learn about the U.S. and the U.S.-Mexican War from Ballentine's narrative?
4. What is a literary allusion? Do you think it is important or helpful to research historical references and/or literary allusions? Why or why not? (This is an opinion question).
5. Write your own one page personal narrative. Choose an event from your life and retell the story from your perspective.

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<sup>5</sup>See the file at  
<<http://cnx.org/content/m39380/latest/http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/general/glossary.htm#a>>

# Chapter 11

## Maps from the Mexican American War<sup>1</sup>

### 11.1 Using historical maps in the classroom

These maps can be combined with lessons on the **Mexican American War** as visual aids that drill down and show authentic battle plans, troop positions, and the resulting U.S.-Mexico border. They can also be combined with photographs of the cities or areas, text book readings, and Mexican American War documents, such as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo<sup>2</sup>.

This module provides background information on the following significant battles and a list of links to related maps (in the links sidebar):

- Battle of Monterrey
- Battle of Cerro Gordo
- Battle of El Molino del Rey
- Battle of Chapultepec

### 11.2 Battle of Monterrey (Sept. 25, 1846)

Santa Anna had ordered General Pedro de Ampudia to retreat to Saltillo, yet, Ampudia disobeyed the order and went to the Mexican city of Monterrey, Nuevo León instead.

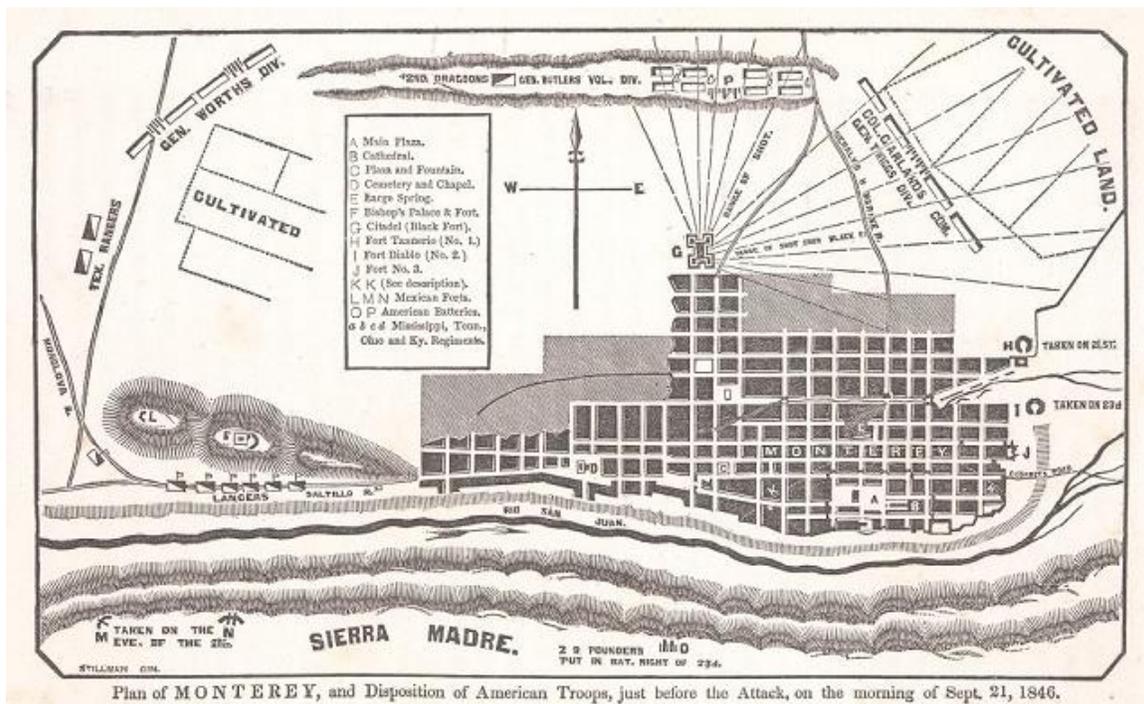
General Zachary Taylor positioned his troops north of Monterrey on Sept. 19 and captured the road leading to Saltillo on Sept. 20, effectively cutting General Ampudia's troops off from reinforcements. The U.S. troops attacked the Mexican troops from two directions— General Taylor's division attacked from the east, while General William Jenkins Worth's division attacked from the west.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/1.4/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <[http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/guadhida.asp](http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/guadhida.asp)>

## Monterrey Battle Plan



**Figure 11.1:** "Plan of MONTERREY, and Disposition of American Troops, just before the Attack, on the morning of Sept. 21, 1846"<sup>3</sup>

The battle culminated with the bombardment of the city by U.S. howitzers (cannons) on Sept. 25. Monterrey was captured after a week of brutal battles. General Ampudia and General Taylor negotiated an 8-week armistice in exchange for the Mexican surrender of Monterrey. This armistice, in turn, earned General Taylor much criticism from President James K. Polk and the federal government, who did not think that the army had the power to negotiate such truces.

### 11.3 Battle of Cerro Gordo (April 17-18, 1847)

After U.S. forces captured the Mexican Port City of Veracruz, Veracruz, U.S. General Winifred Scott led his troops toward Mexico City. General Antonio López de Santa Anna's Mexican troops blocked their route via the national road at the Cerro Gordo mountain pass (near Jalapa, Veracruz), between two large hills, La Atalaya and El Telégrafo. While Santa Anna had heavily defended this pass, he failed to station as many men on his left, an area he assumed to be impassible. Captain Robert E. Lee's reconnaissance revealed this weakness and on April 18, General Scott commanded a flanking of the Mexican army. U.S. General David Twiggs led his men to the lightly defended area and General Gideon Pillow led his smaller troop toward the Mexican front.

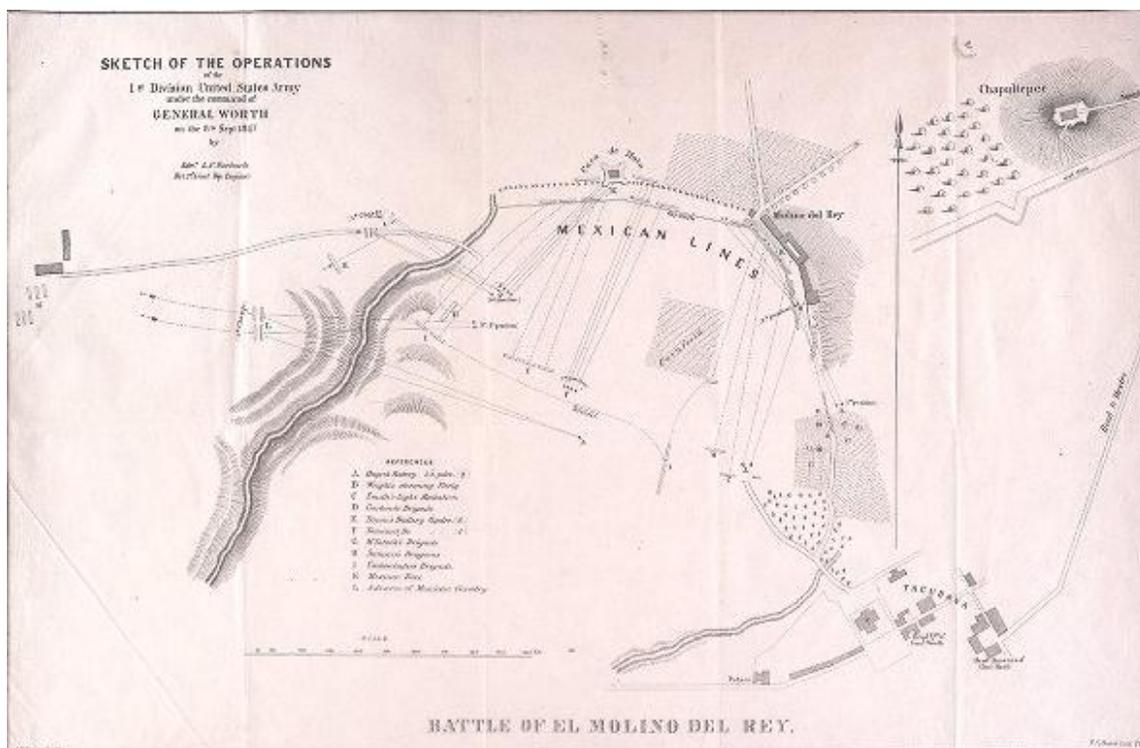
The surprise attack forced Mexican troops to flee; and Santa Anna had to ride off without his wooden leg (which was then captured and kept by the U.S. army). After their victory, the U.S. army pushed forward to Puebla, Puebla in Mexico's interior.

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/35385>>

## 11.4 Battle of El Molino del Rey

At the beginning of September 1847, during the armistice after the Battle of Churubusco, General Winfield Scott, headquartered at the bishop's palace in Tacubaya, received information that Santa Anna was having church and convent bells melted down to cast into cannons at El Molino del Rey ("The King's Mill"). Furnace flames, which were visible from Scott's headquarters, furthered his suspicions; and General Scott ordered General Worth to capture El Molino del Rey and halt the munitions production.

Map of the Battle of El Molino del Rey



**Figure 11.2:** "Map of Battle of El Molino del Rey<sup>4</sup>." Map detail includes: Tacubaya, Casa Mata gunpowder storehouse, artillery fire, infantry advances, Chapultepec castle and surrounding forest, and the road to Mexico City.

General Worth's attack on Molino del Rey and Casa Mata (a stone building used as a gun powder depository, located about 400 yards from the Mill complex), on September 8 was "one of the bloodiest days for American forces" during this war (*The U.S.-Mexican War*). The U.S. troops walked right into an ambush, barraged by hidden cannons and gunfire coming from Chapultepec. Of the 3,400 men commanded by U.S. General Worth, about 800 of them were killed or wounded. General John Garland's troops to the right of El Molino del Rey finally managed to break through the Mexican line and the forced the Mexican troops to retreat.

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/21772>>

## 11.5 Battle of Chapultepec (Sept. 12-13, 1847)

After the U.S. victory at the Battle of El Molino, Chapultepec stood as Mexico City's last defensive line. This castle-fortress stood atop Chapultepec hill some 150 feet above the surrounding land. Both the castle and the outlying forts and stone buildings were surrounded by two stone walls, which stood 10 feet apart and were 12-15 feet high ("The Mexican War"). Mexican General Nicolás Bravo commanded the Chapultepec complex.

U.S. forces strategically located four heavy cannon batteries on a hill between Tacabaya and Chapultepec. On the morning of Sept. 12, they opened fire on Chapultepec, and the Mexican army returned the fire all day long. Generals Pillow and Quitman sprung their attacks on the weakest points at 8am on Sept. 13. General Pillow's troops marched from Molino del Rey to Chapultepec, while General Quitman's troops attempted to cut the Mexican troops off from reinforcements. Mexican General Joaquin Rangel's brigade managed to hold back Quitman's advance toward Mexico City. In response, Quitman ordered General James Shields to lead his brigade to join Pillow's attack on Chapultepec. Together with Pillow's men, they scaled the walls and raised the U.S. flag over the ramparts.

Map of the Vicinity of Mexico

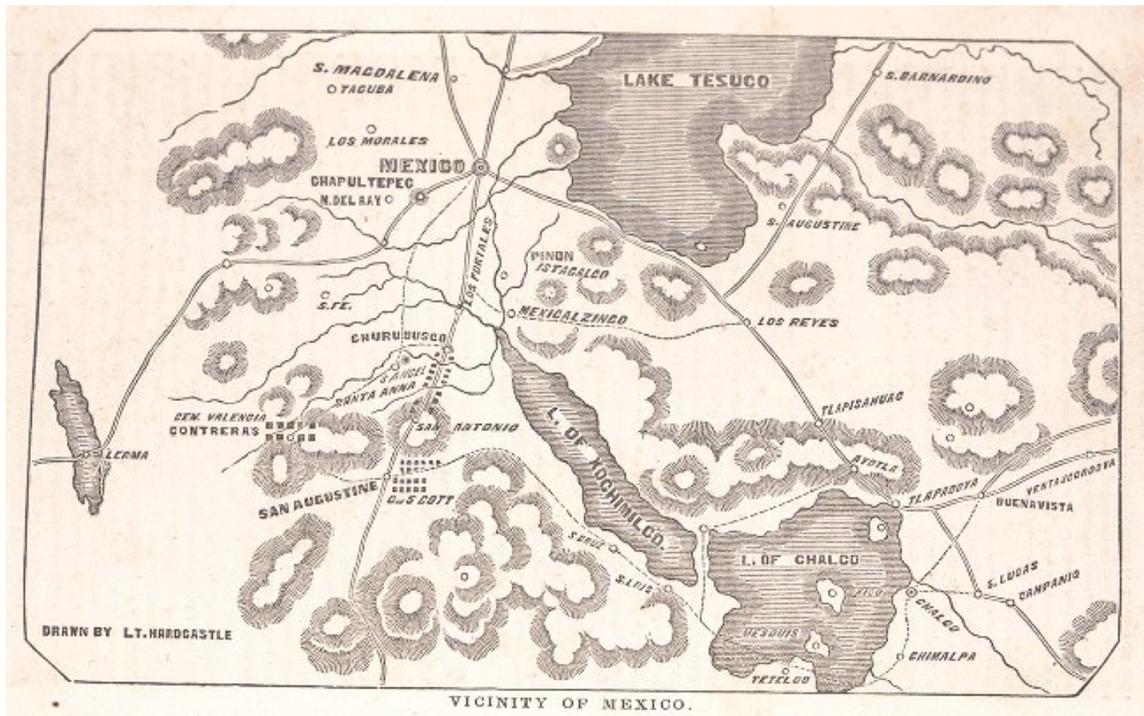


Figure 11.3: "Vicinity of Mexico"<sup>5</sup>.

At the time of the war, Chapultepec had been serving as Mexico's Military Academy. Mexican legend holds that 6 teenage cadets enrolled in the academy died fighting as the U.S. troops attacked Chapultepec. The last survivor, Juan Escutia, wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and jumped from the castle roof to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemies. These cadets are known as the *Niños Héroes* (Boy Heroes).

<sup>5</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/35822>>

The U.S. successfully captured Chapultepec by mid-morning on Sept. 13. Divisions led by General William Worth and General Quitman then captured the Garita San Cosme and Garita de Belén (the gates to the city), respectively.

At 4:00 am on Sept. 14, General Scott marched into Mexico City and was met by a city council delegation, which reported the retreat of the government and wished to negotiate terms of surrender. Scott refused to make any concessions, forcing them to surrender the city unconditionally. He then ordered Worth and Quitman to advance toward the city. The latter then raised the U.S. flag above Mexico's National Palace (Butler).

## 11.6 Bibliography

Butler, Steven R., ed. "Major-General Winfield Scott, at Mexico City, to William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, at Washington, D.C. Dispatch communicating Scott's report of the battles for, and occupation of, Mexico City." *A Documentary History of the Mexican War*. (Richardson, Texas: Descendants of Mexican War Veterans, 1995). Web. 18 June 2011. <http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/documents/mexcity.htm><sup>6</sup>

"The Mexican War." "The Civil War." Sons of the South. Web. 17 June 2011. <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/mexican-war/war.htm><sup>7</sup>

*The U.S.-Mexican War*. PBS: Public Broadcasting Service. Web. 17 June 2011. [http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index\\_flash.html](http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index_flash.html)<sup>8</sup>.

## 11.7 Further Reading

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United States. War Dept. *Report of the Secretary of War, Showing the number of troops in the service of the United States in Mexico since the commencement of the war, the killed and wounded, &c.*<sup>16</sup> 1848.

<sup>6</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/documents/mexcity.htm>>

<sup>7</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://www.sonofthesouth.net/mexican-war/war.htm>>

<sup>8</sup>See the file at <[http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index\\_flash.html](http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/index_flash.html)>

<sup>9</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/26929>>

<sup>10</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27093>>

<sup>11</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27066>>

<sup>12</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27449>>

<sup>13</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/22027>>

<sup>14</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27450>>

<sup>15</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27058>>

<sup>16</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m38574/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/27256>>



## Chapter 12

# Using original documents on the Mexican American War<sup>1</sup>

### What are these texts?

These texts are digitized versions of documents found in Rice University's Woodson Research Center. They are part of several hundred documents that comprise Rice's Americas Archive. The small selection of texts used in this Connexions module all relate to the Mexican American War. I refer to a couple of the documents throughout the module but you may wish to browse through all six of the documents listed in the upper left corner. They would all be of use to someone writing a research paper on the Mexican American War.

The documents discussed in this module include a letter<sup>2</sup>, a piece of currency<sup>3</sup>, a message from U.S. President Polk<sup>4</sup>, and government documents regarding the Independence of Texas<sup>5</sup>, the annexation of Texas, and the slave trade<sup>6</sup>.

### Why use these texts?

Many of the texts found in this archive were purchased by Rice University from private collections. They have not been used in scholarly studies before. In looking at the documents – either on-line here or by going to Fondren Library's Woodson Research Center and viewing them in person - you are tapping into new materials in the field of Hemispheric Studies. By including information you find in them in research papers, you are contributing new ideas to the field.

### What am I looking at when I click on the links to these documents?

The links on the left sidebar take you to a page that describes the document in detail. For example, the page for the Independence of Texas document says that it was written by the US Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1837. There are several key terms that are associated with the document and a paragraph that gives some historical background on its creation. There's also a link to this research module, a link to a module that contains more in-depth background information, and a link to the Americas Digital Archive home page. From the Americas Digital Archive home page, you can access many other documents and learn more about the collection.

At the bottom of the page, there are two links to the document. I recommend accessing the document via the top button that says "Full text with images." (The other option is not very reader-friendly.) This button takes you to a page with an easy-to-read transcription of the Independence of Texas and small images of the corresponding pages of the actual document. If you click on the small images, a new screen will open with a large image of the document page.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/1.18/>>.

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9241>>

<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9236>>

<sup>4</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9252>>

<sup>5</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9228>>

<sup>6</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13831/latest/http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9237>>

**Is there an advantage to looking at the actual document instead of the digitized version?**

If you can, I'd recommend using both the digitized and the actual document. It's exciting to get to see and hold important historical documents. You can feel the quality of the paper on which they were written, examine how they were bound, and look at their comparative sizes. The documents themselves are truly historical artifacts.

The digitized versions of the documents are clearly advantageous to people unable to visit the paper documents in Rice University's library. They are also much easier to work with over extended periods of time. (It's also easier on the documents if you do most of your work from the digitized versions.)

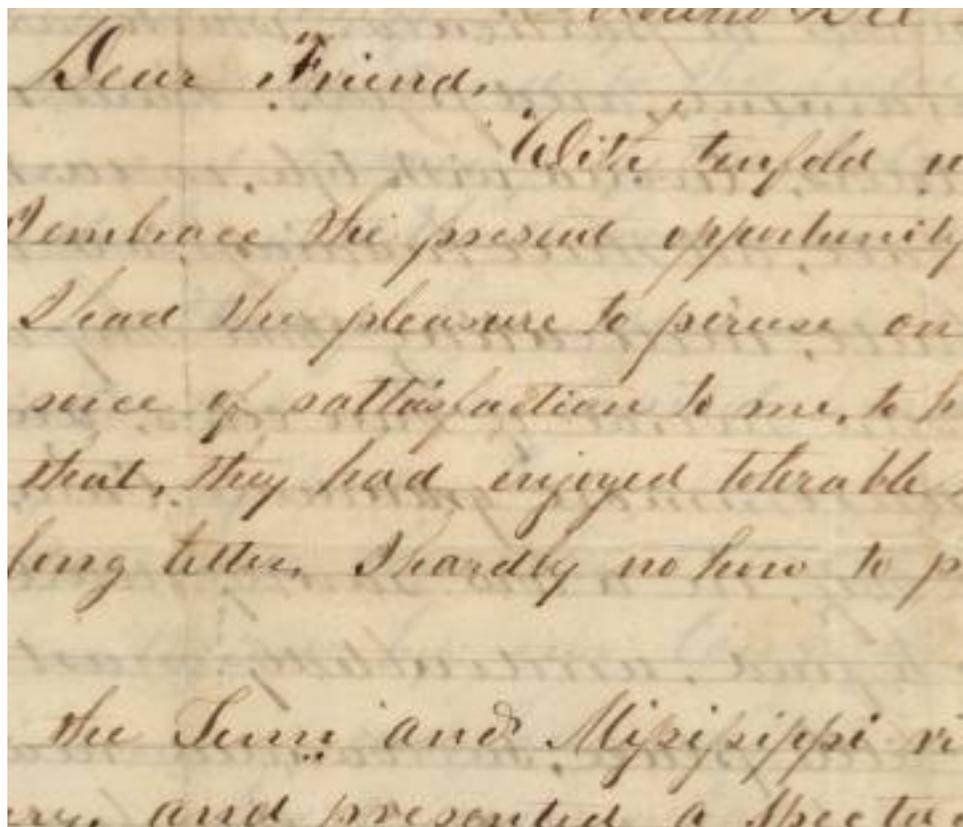
**If I'm working from the digital archive, should I look at the transcription or images of the actual document?**

Both the transcription and the original version have something to offer. The transcriptions are often easier to read. You can probably skim through a transcription a lot faster than a handwritten letter from 150 years ago to determine if the document will be of interest to you. In preparing a paper for a class, you may not have time to peruse all the texts that might be loosely related to your topic in their original format, but you could probably skim through a lot of their transcriptions and narrow your selection.

If you find that a particular text will be useful in your research, looking at the original document is of great value. Sometimes a handwritten letter can tell you about its author: if s/he was in a hurry, if s/he possessed the handwriting of a well-educated (and hence usually wealthy) person, if s/he experienced trouble in writing sections of the document with crossed out words, among other things. For example, the letter written by Mattock contains many spelling errors, which have been noted in the transcription. But the steady handwriting would not suggest that the writer wrote in haste; perhaps he simply did not know how to spell well.

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### Mattock Handwriting Sample



**Figure 12.1:** A sample of Mattock's handwriting

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Even a typed document that is more official in nature than a handwritten letter is worthwhile looking at in its original format. For example, take a look at the Texas currency document. You can easily see that the front and back are in fact two different documents by the different typefaces and formats used. In the transcription, this difference is not visually noticeable. Yet the difference between the two texts is great: one side is a papal bull printed in 1784 and the other states that the paper has an exchange value. The currency was printed in 1823 on the back of the out-dated papal bull because of a severe paper shortage in Mexico.

## Segment of the Papal bull side of the document

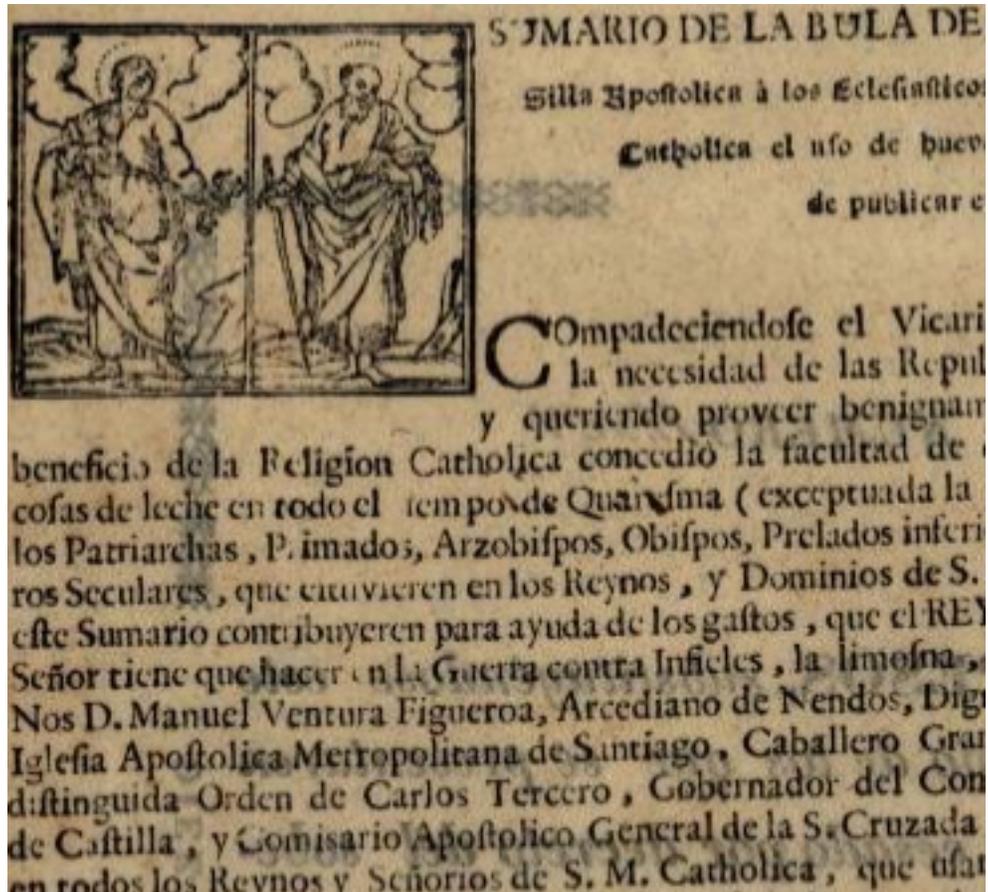
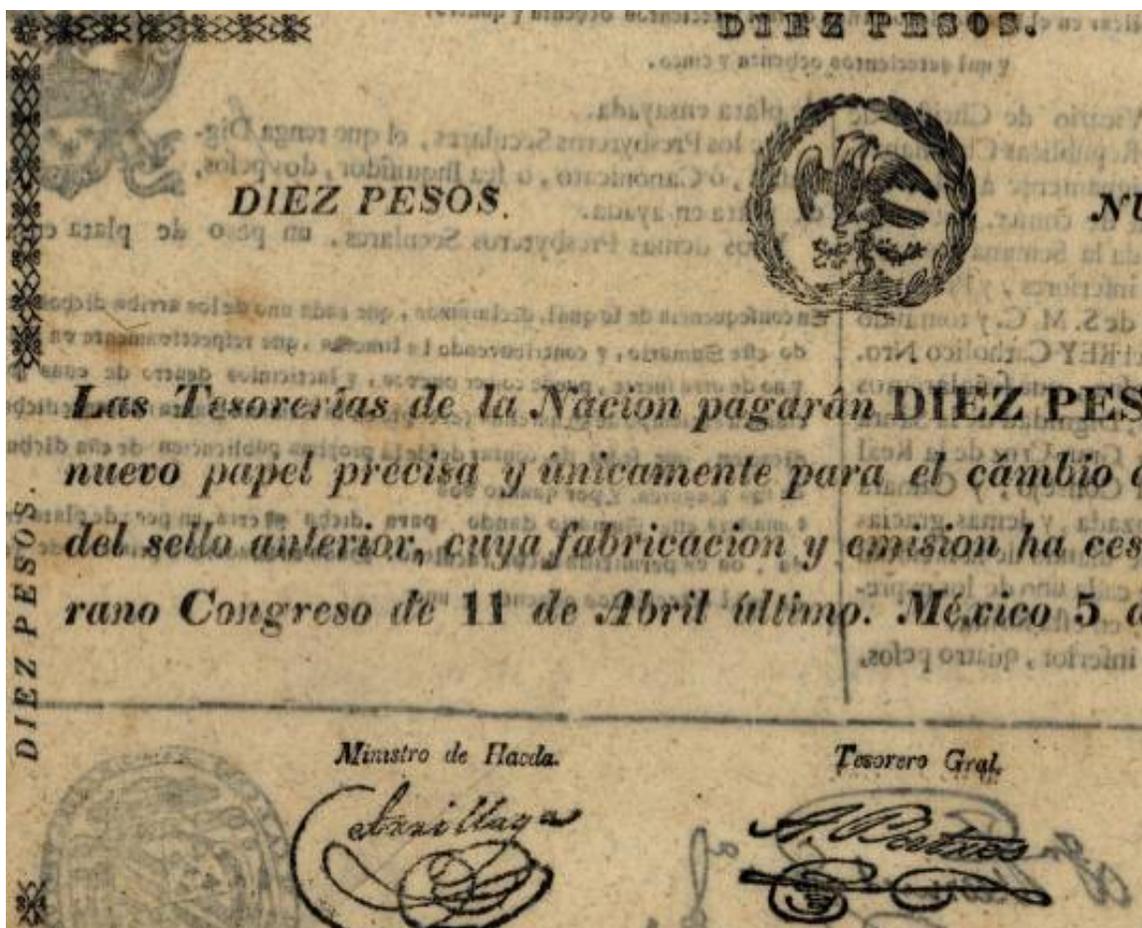


Figure 12.2: This is a segment from one side of the document.

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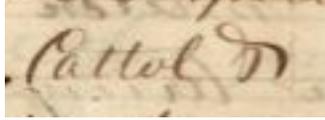
Currency side of the document



**Figure 12.3:** This side of the document notes its exchange value. It was printed on the back of the papal bull nearly 40 years after the papal bull was published. The two sides are visibly different documents with different typefaces and styles.

---

Another advantage to looking at the original text in a digitized format is that transcriptions are interpretations. If you work from a transcription, you must cite the transcription – not the original document – as your source. A transcription might have typos or (as is more likely with today's spell checking features) might correct errors in the original. In addition, the transcriber might not have devoted as much time to his/her interpretation of the original as you would like to and might have left some words marked as illegible. You may wish to put in a little more research to decipher what such words are if the document is of particular importance. For example, in the Mattock letter again, there is a word the transcriber interpreted as "(attol)". However, it might make sense as "Cattol," a misspelling of "cattle." You might have still other ideas about what the writer meant.

**Unclear word from Mattock letter**

**Figure 12.4:** The transcription may have one interpretation of this word, but you may have another.

---

If you notice any errors or “corrected” errors or decipher any words marked as illegible, please let us know!

**For more information on the relative value of transcriptions and original documents in research projects, please refer to the module "Using Untranslated Materials in Research."**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Using untranslated materials in research" <<http://cnx.org/content/m13830/latest/>>

## Index of Keywords and Terms

**Keywords** are listed by the section with that keyword (page numbers are in parentheses). Keywords do not necessarily appear in the text of the page. They are merely associated with that section. *Ex.* apples, § 1.1 (1) **Terms** are referenced by the page they appear on. *Ex.* apples, 1

- 'Our Americas' Archive Partnership, § 1.3(8), § 3(15), § 4(19), § 5(23), § 7(31)
- A** America Latina, § 4(19)  
American literature, § 3(15), § 5(23)
- B** battle plan map, § 11(49)  
battles, § 11(49)  
Brazil, § 5(23)
- C** Civil War, § 1.1(1), § 1.3(8)  
Civil War, Gulf Coast, Union soldiers, diary, prisoner of war, Galveston, New Orleans, § 1.2(5)  
Confederacy, § 1.1(1), § 1.3(8)  
Cuba, § 3(15), § 4(19)
- D** Diplomacy, § 11(49)
- G** globalization, § 11(49)
- H** historia, § 8(35)
- I** imperialism, § 11(49)  
Indians, § 9(39)
- J** James Cramp, § 7(31), § 8(35)  
Jefferson Davis, § 1.3(8)
- L** literatura americana, § 4(19)  
literatura latinoamericana, § 4(19)
- M** Manifest Destiny, § 11(49)  
map, § 11(49)  
Marti, § 3(15), § 4(19)
- memory, § 1.1(1)  
Mexican American War, § 11(49)  
Mexican War, § 11(49)  
Mexico, § 7(31), § 8(35)
- N** Native Americans, § 9(39)  
Nuestra America, § 4(19)
- O** Office of Indian Affairs, § 9(39)  
Osterhout, John Patterson, § 1.1(1)  
Our Americas Archive Partnership, § 8(35)
- P** Personal Narrative, U.S.-Mexican War, Mexican-American War, Narrative, Borderlands, Atlantic, Transatlantic, Immigration, War, § 10(43)  
Politics, § 11(49)
- R** Reconstruction, § 1.1(1)  
Revolución de Texas, § 8(35)  
Robert S. Neighbors, § 9(39)
- S** slave revolt, § 5(23)  
slavery, § 5(23)
- T** territorial acquisition, § 11(49)  
territorial expansion, § 11(49)  
Texas, § 7(31), § 9(39)
- U** U.S.-Mexican War, § 9(39)  
Uncle Tom's Cabin, § 5(23)  
US-Mexican War, § 11(49)
- W** War, § 11(49)

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