

The Kentucky Regiment that Invaded Cuba in 1850

by Antonio Rafael de la Cova

A bust of Cuban independence leader José Martí (1853-95), was ceremoniously unveiled at Shively Park, Louisville, Kentucky, in 1955. It was a gift from the Cuban government of Major General Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar to “the Youth Ambassadors of Jefferson County, Kentucky.” Its plaque was dedicated “as a tribute to the valiant Kentuckians who fought for the liberation of Cuba in 1850.” The Kentucky Regiment, led by Colonel Theodore O’Hara, comprised 230 volunteers in a filibuster expedition of 620 men that captured Cárdenas, Cuba, on May 19, 1850. The invasion, headed by General Narciso López, failed to overthrow the Spanish colonial regime, but the expedition’s battle flag, carried by Kentuckian William Redding, later became the Cuban national emblem on May 20, 1902. Filibusters kept few records of their activities because they were violating U.S. law, the Neutrality Act of 1808. They used code names, worked in secrecy, and their correspondence was delivered by confidential couriers. This article examines the background, composition, combat significance, and eventual fate of the members of the Kentucky Regiment, a symbolic expression of antebellum Kentucky culture which has been previously generalized or overlooked by historians.¹

Dr. de la Cova is Visiting Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. He is the author of *Cuban Confederate Colonel: The Life of Ambrosio José Gonzales* (2003) and *The Moncada Attack: Birth of the Cuban Revolution* (2007). He thanks the Kentucky Historical Society for their 2006 Scholarly Research Fellowship that contributed to the completion of this research.

¹ General Narciso López organized four filibuster expeditions against Cuba between 1849 and 1851. The U.S. government disbanded two of them, and two others landed on the island with disastrous results. It is difficult to ascertain names of all Kentuckians in the filibuster movement, because López destroyed the muster roll to avoid implicating his followers in this violation of the Neutrality Act of 1818. I have been able to identify 171 of the 610 filibusters from manuscripts, memoirs, court documents, and newspapers. Theodore O’Hara cited 230 Kentucky Regiment participants. William Hardy calculated the number at 245 when they left New

The Kentucky Regiment incorporated some officers who were scions of historic families. They plotted the Cuba invasion with General López and his adjutant Ambrosio José Gonzales in the Galt House in Louisville. Recruits were mostly Mexican War veterans and Freemasons drawn largely from the cities of Louisville, Shelbyville, Covington, Frankfort, and other areas, including northern Campbell and Scott counties. Volunteers also came from across the Ohio River in Cincinnati and the southwestern Ohio counties of Hamilton, Clermont, Butler, and Warren.

Cuban filibusters planned to emulate the Texas Republic model of development: acquire American volunteers, weapons, and funds to obtain independence and subsequently petition for admission to the Union. They were supported by expansionist Democrats and proslavery Whigs who under the banner of Manifest Destiny coveted Cuba's three provinces as new southern states. Northern Whigs and abolitionists opposed to territorial acquisition and slavery denounced the filibusters as pirates and mercenaries of a slaveocracy conspiracy.²

Orleans. "Report of Col. O'Hara, Kentucky Reg't.," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 28, 1850, 1; "Statement of the Kentucky Regiment," *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, June 11, 1850, 2; "The Attack on Cárdenas: A Reliable and Authentic Account by Officers Engaged in the Expedition," *Missouri Republican*, June 23, 1850, 2. For the López expeditions of 1850 and 1851, see de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel*, chap. 3; Jeffrey A. Zemler, "The Texas Press and the Filibusters of the 1850s: López, Carvajal, and Walker" (master's thesis, North Texas State University, 1983); Robert Granville Caldwell, *The López Expeditions to Cuba, 1848-1851* (1987, 1915; PhD. diss., Princeton University, 1912); Anderson Chenault Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions to Cuba, 1850 and 1851* (Louisville, 1906). See also de la Cova, "Cuban Filibuster Movement (1849-1856)" at (<http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/filibusters.htm>); de la Cova, review of Tom Chaffin, *Fatal Glory: Narciso López and the First Clandestine U.S. War against Cuba* (Charlottesville, 1996), in *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 76 (1997): 88-90, for an evaluation of this well-publicized but fatally flawed work.

²The filibuster movement, in its post-Mexican War form, intended to annex parts of Mexico, Cuba, and Nicaragua to the United States. Its adherents believed that it was America's manifest destiny to extend its territory and institutions throughout the Western Hemisphere. Although the filibusters garnered some popular support, the federal government repeatedly suppressed the movement until its demise was brought on by the Civil War. For recent scholarship on Manifest Destiny and the filibusters, see Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, 2002, 2004); May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire, 1854-1861* (Gainesville, 1989, 2002); Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York, 2005); Rodrigo Lazo, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States* (Chapel Hill, 2005). See also Charles Henry Brown,



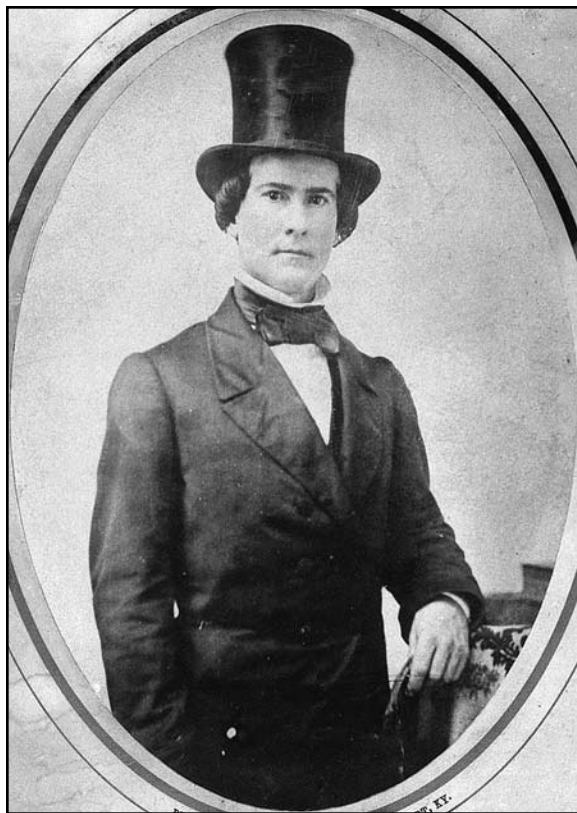
Courtesy of Antonio de la Cova

This bust of Cuban independence leader José Martí (1853-95) once graced Shively Park in Louisville. No longer standing, it honored the Kentucky Regiment led by Colonel Theodore O'Hara that captured Cárdenas, Cuba, in a failed 1850 attempt by General Narciso López to overthrow Spanish colonial rule.

* * *

In the summer of 1849, Narciso López, attorney Ambrosio José Gonzales, wealthy planter Cristóbal Mádán, and other

Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Life and Times of the Filibusters (Chapel Hill, 1980); C. Stanley Urban, "A Local Study in 'Manifest Destiny': New Orleans and the Cuban Question during the López Expeditions of 1848-1851" (master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1938).



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Colonel Theodore O'Hara (1820-67), in 1850 a thirty-year-old newspaper editor from Frankfort, led the Kentucky Regiment in López's attempt to overthrow Spanish colonial rule in Cuba. Later renowned for his elegy, "The Bivouac of the Dead," O'Hara commanded the most militarily effective unit in López's army.

Cuban separatists conspired to overthrow the Spanish colonial regime on the island. For some Americans, the success of the Mexican War had "engendered a jingoism which demanded even more grand accomplishments." These activists were mostly discontented youths within the Democratic Party, dubbed Young America, who regarded participation in world affairs as an urgent formula for action against despotism. A spokesman for this group was Kentuckian George Nicholas Sanders, who in 1844 had agitated in his state for the annexation of Texas,

even though the Whig Party, which at the time dominated Kentucky politics, opposed expansionism and denounced the filibusters.³

Recruitment efforts to liberate Cuba attracted a number of Mexican War veterans, including promising, young Kentuckians Theodore O'Hara, John Thomas Pickett, and Edgar Basil Gaither. O'Hara was a twenty-eight-year-old attorney and Democratic newspaper editor in Frankfort, with a law practice there and in Washington, D.C. Commissioned a captain in the U.S. Army in 1846 during the Mexican War, he had served as a quartermaster at the siege of Veracruz and the battles of Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec.⁴

³ The fifty-two-year-old Venezuelan-born Narciso López was a disgruntled former Spanish army general married to a Cuban aristocrat. His motivations are difficult to ascertain because his proclamations to Americans, Cubans, and Spaniards on the island all had different interpretations. See López's sixteen-hundred-page biography by Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, 3 vols. (Havana, 1930-58). The biography of Gonzales is Antonio Rafael de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel: The Life of Ambrosio José Gonzales* (Columbia, 2003). See also Robert E. May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny: The United States Army as a Cultural Mirror," *The Journal of American History* 78 (1991): 857-86; M. E. Curti, "Young America," *The American Historical Review* 31 (1926): 35 (quote), 37.

⁴ Theodore O'Hara (February 11, 1820-June 6, 1867), an inveterate bachelor born in Danville, Kentucky, was the son of Kean O'Hara, an Irish political exile and educator. After the Cárdenas expedition, he was one of the six editors of the *Louisville Times* and became involved in the John Quitman filibuster conspiracy to invade Cuba that was aborted in 1855. O'Hara was then appointed a captain in the U.S. Army's Second Cavalry, but resigned on December 1, 1856. He afterward edited the *Mobile Register* until the Civil War, when he was appointed colonel of the Twelfth Alabama Infantry Regiment. O'Hara later served on the staffs of Confederate major generals Albert Sidney Johnston and John C. Breckinridge until August 1863. After the cessation of hostilities, he engaged in the cotton business in Columbus, Georgia, and died of bilious fever at a friend's plantation near Gerrytown, Alabama. In 1874, by joint resolution of the Kentucky General Assembly, O'Hara's remains were reinterred in the State Mound, a military memorial in the state cemetery at Frankfort, Kentucky. Ten years later, also by a joint mandate of the state legislature, the body of Major Thomas Theodore Hawkins, who led the Kentucky Regiment at Cárdenas after the wounding of O'Hara, was buried next to the poet-soldier, by then a Kentucky icon. The two filibusters now lie near the graves of Kentucky Mexican War casualties, for whom O'Hara penned his famous elegy, "The Bivouac of the Dead." In 1913, the Kentucky Historical Society erected an elaborate stone over O'Hara's grave. Jennie C. Morton, "Theodore O'Hara," *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society* 1 (September 1903): 49-62 (hereafter *Register*); Morton, "Inscription for Theodore O'Hara's Tomb," *Register* 11 (May 1913): 43; J. Stoddard Johnston, "Sketch of Theodore O'Hara," *ibid.*, 11 (September 1913): 67-72; Richardson Hardy, *The History and Adventures of the Cuban Expedition* (Cincinnati, 1850), 20-21; Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. and Thomas C. Ware, *Theodore O'Hara: Poet-Soldier of the Old South* (Knoxville, 1998), 22, 25, 29, 33;

Twenty-seven-year-old Pickett, “a striking-looking man, fully six feet two inches in height,” had studied law at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, and, like O’Hara, was a member of Young America. Pickett entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1841, but had too “wild and erratic a disposition to remain long enough to graduate.” In April 1846, he was appointed U.S. consul at Turks Island, a post he resigned to join the expedition.⁵

Gaither, O’Hara’s thirty-one-year-old law partner, had graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1839 and served as a captain in the Third Dragoons of

Kentucky Senate Journal (1873), 518, 973, 979; (1874), 681; *Kentucky House Journal* (1873), 1200; (1873-74), 624, 736; *Kentucky Senate Journal* (1883-84), 1220, 1295, 1348, 1373; *Kentucky House Journal* (1883-84), 1515, 1600, 1639, 1671; Russell Hatter and Nicky Hughes, *Frankfort Cemetery: The Westminster Abbey of Kentucky* (Frankfort, 2007), 9, 140, 145, 148-49; Russell Hatter, email message to editor, September 3, 2008; Thomas C. Ware, “Camping Out with Theodore O’Hara,” *Kentucky Humanities Magazine*, October 2006, 24.

⁵ John Thomas Pickett (October 9, 1823–October 18, 1884) was born near Maysville, Kentucky. His great-grandfather, William S. Pickett, was a Virginia planter and a captain in the American Revolution. His grandfather, General Joseph Desha (1768-1842), was a veteran of the Indian War of 1794 and the War of 1812, and served as U.S. representative, 1807-19, as well as governor of Kentucky, 1824-28. His father, John Chamberlayne Pickett (1793-1872), was an army artillery captain in the War of 1812, lawyer, and editor of the *Congressional Globe*, and served as an American diplomat in South America, 1829-33 and 1838-45. After the Cuba invasion, Pickett resided with his uncle, Dr. John R. Desha, and his family in Lexington, Kentucky. He later settled in Newport, Kentucky, and in 1853 was appointed U.S. consul to Veracruz, Mexico. Pickett married Catherine “Kate” Keyworth (1836-88) of Washington, D.C., on October 18, 1853. She was the daughter of Major Robert Keyworth, a War of 1812 veteran, Masonic Grand Master of the District of Columbia, and a clock and watch maker and jeweler. They had four children, only two surviving into adulthood. Pickett resigned his post after Abraham Lincoln’s election and in May 1861 was named Confederate commissioner to Mexico. A year later, Pickett was appointed colonel and chief of staff for Major General John C. Breckinridge, until he left the general’s service and retired in 1863 because of poor health. In 1864, Pickett lost the election to represent the Confederate Eighth Congressional District of northern Kentucky. After the war, Pickett practiced law in Washington, D.C., and resided with his family at 2142 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. He was afflicted with paralysis in 1878 and died of apoplexy six years later. Quisenberry, *López’s Expeditions to Cuba*, 37-40 (first quote p. 40), 44; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 21 (second quote); “Suspicious Military Enterprises,” *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, September 8, 1849, 2; “The Cuban Expedition,” *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, January 16, 1850, 3; Rossiter Johnson, ed., *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, vol. 8 (Boston, 1904); 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Fayette County, 189; W. M. Paxton, *The Marshall Family* (Cincinnati, 1885), 56; “To the Army and the People of Kentucky,” John Hunt Morgan Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Quisenberry, Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba (1906)
Lieutenant Colonel John Thomas Pickett (1823-84), of Maysville, was the grandson of Kentucky governor Joseph Desha (1824-28), a former Transylvania law student, and a failed West Point cadet. Twenty-seven in 1850, he and Colonel O'Hara belonged to Young America, a Democratic Party faction that sought overseas activism.

the U.S. Army in the Mexican War. For the Cuban expedition, he was promised the rank of colonel and the appointment of his regimental officers if he raised five hundred filibuster volunteers in Kentucky. Gaither left Washington, D.C., on July 1 to recruit farmers in his native Columbia, Kentucky, who would comprise "a more moral, honorable, and respectful body of men." Their purpose was to "aid a nation of oppressed brethren to secure their freedom."⁶

⁶ Edgar Basil Gaither (1818-September 18, 1855) was the grandson of Revolutionary War major Nicholas Gaither, who commanded a battalion at the battle of King's Mountain. His father, Dr. Nathan Gaither, served as assistant surgeon in the War of 1812 and was a Jacksonian representative from Kentucky, 1829-33. Edgar was commissioned

Many of the Kentucky officers who volunteered for the Mexican War were descendants of colonial Indian fighters and heroes of the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Thus, emulating their forefathers' patriotism and valor became a rite of passage for the filibuster generation. Homeland defense, glory, honor, distinction, romantic notions of chivalry, adventure, excitement, and travel abroad beckoned the youthful volunteers to the battlefield in Mexico. The officers were from "the best families" and the "leading citizens of the community." Political opportunities, job possibilities, and better marriage prospects awaited many veterans. Kentucky sent two infantry regiments and one of cavalry during the first national war requisition of 1846.⁷

The First Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers participated in the battle of Monterrey, and the Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, along with the commonwealth's lone cavalry unit, the First Kentucky Mounted Volunteers, were in the battle of Buena Vista. A one-year tour of duty was required, and most of the veterans did not reenlist. Two other infantry regiments, the Third and the Fourth, were raised in 1847 during the second requisition but arrived after Mexico City had surrendered and did mostly garrison duty. (Company B in the Third Kentucky Foot Volunteers nevertheless boasted that its men were all at least six feet tall, in contrast to the national average height of five-feet-six-inches.) Many of the volunteers were from the urban regions of Frankfort, Louisville, and Covington, where

on July 1, 1839, as second lieutenant in the First Dragoons, U.S. Army, resigning on October 31, 1840, to study law with the Hon. Thomas B. Monroe in Frankfort, and afterward practiced his profession in Burkesville and Columbia, Kentucky. He mustered a company of Kentucky volunteers in May 1846 for the Mexican War and was elected lieutenant colonel, but not called into service by the state. Gaither was commissioned captain, Third Dragoons, U.S. Army, on April 9, 1847, to fight in Mexico. He married Emily R. Hutchison of Mercer County in 1850, and the same year was elected to one term in the Kentucky house of representatives. Gaither then served as commonwealth attorney, Ninth Judicial District of Kentucky, until his death. George P. Sanger, *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge, for the Year 1854* (Boston, 1854), 292; Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. and Timothy D. Johnson, eds., *A Fighter From Way Back: The Mexican War Diary of Lt. Daniel Harvey Hill, 4th Artillery, USA* (Kent, Ohio, 2002), 216n30; "Cuban Affairs," *The Hinds County Gazette* (Raymond, Mississippi), October 5, 1849 (both quotes).

⁷ Damon Eubank, *The Response of Kentucky to the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (Lewiston, N.Y., 2004), 5, 15 (quote), 23, 58; Peter J. Sehlinger, *Kentucky's Last Cavalier: General William Preston, 1816-1887* (Frankfort, 2004), 55.

Cuba filibusters would also draw large recruitments and tall men.⁸

The motivations of the Mexican War volunteers and the Cuba filibusters were very similar. Some youths had a spirit of élan and allegiance to local leaders, to whom they were more loyal than to state and national governments. Also, López and Gonzales were Freemasons and fraternal bonds also attracted Kentuckians into the movement. The pay offered was the same as that of the officers and soldiers of the U.S. Army and a bounty in Cuban lands, or in lieu thereof, a \$1,000 bond signed by López as “Commander in chief of the Liberating Army,” redeemable by the Republic of Cuba. Many Kentucky Mexican War veterans, including filibuster leaders Thomas Theodore Hawkins, John Allen, and William Hardy, had previously filed claims for 160-acre federal bounty land warrants, but Kentucky never honored them. They now sought in Cuba more viable homestead opportunities.⁹

Edgar Gaither described himself as “neither a Dugald Dalgetty nor a knight of La Mancha, not wholly mercenary nor wholly an errant knight.” He indicated that “the motives of those who engaged in the expedition, like all human motives, were mixed.” Richardson Hardy credited their inspiration as “Nothing less than a deep conviction of the rectitude of their

⁸ Eubank, *Response of Kentucky to the Mexican War*, 13, 31-36, 39-40; Richard V. Salisbury, “Kentuckians at the Battle of Buena Vista,” *The Filson Club History Quarterly* 61 (1987): 34-53.

⁹ Mexican War soldiers who enlisted for one year were entitled to 160 acres of public land for sale or a \$100 bond at 6 percent interest. Veterans overwhelmingly preferred receiving land. Kentucky did not honor federal bounty land warrants for service in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, or subsequent conflicts due to exhausted public-domain lands. Some veteran assignees relocated to Illinois or Missouri, where the acreage was available. Jerry A. O’Callaghan, “The War Veteran and the Public Lands,” *Agricultural History* 28 (1954): 165, 167; *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, August 30, 1849, 1; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época* (Havana, 1952), 2: 467n276; Robert M. Ireland, *The County in Kentucky History* (Lexington, 1976), 28; Antonio Rafael de la Cova, “Filibusters and Freemasons: The Sworn Obligation,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17 (1997): 95-120; “Cuban Affairs,” *The Hinds County Gazette* (Raymond, Mississippi), October 5, 1849; Land Warrant No. 47,396 for 160 acres, cited in Joseph Clark Dear, Certificate 8777, Mexican War Service Case Files (hereafter MWS), RG 15, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NA), Washington, D.C.; Bounty Land Claims 21,908-160-50, cited in John S. Williams, Certificate 11,756; Claim 56,006-160-47, cited in Thomas T. Hawkins, Certificate 1,448; Claim 39,548-160-47, cited in Leonard Crisler, Certificate 8,786; Claim 1637-160-47, cited in John F. Higgins, Certificate 4,113; William Hardy, Certificate 2474, all in MWS.

course—a solemn consecration of their lives to the cause of human freedom and national independence.” His brother William wanted “to do for Cuba, what Lafayette and a host of foreigners did for our own country during her struggle for independence, and for which their names are immortal in American history.” Chatham Wheat told his men that they were “giving liberty and equality to an oppressed and degraded people, oppressed by heavy taxes and arbitrary exactions, degraded, because they have neither religious nor political liberty.”¹⁰

The first attempt to invade Cuba by López and American filibusters had been neutralized by Whig president Zachary Taylor, when the U.S. Navy blockaded the expeditionary rendezvous of 450 volunteers at Round Island, Mississippi, in August 1849. Two filibuster vessels loaded with weapons and supplies were confiscated by the U.S. attorney in New York City. The expeditionary steamer *Fanny* was seized in New Orleans, and the last of the men on Round Island departed on October 11. In consequence, the leader of the Kentucky contingent, Edgar Gaither, was ordered by López to postpone the departure of the men from the Bluegrass State. When the young diplomat from Kentucky, John Pickett, was soon implicated in the affair, his politically prominent father publicly denounced the expedition plans and vowed that it was “not in anywise [*sic*] aided or promoted, either by my money or my services, by my counsels or my prayers.”¹¹

Cristóbal Mádan afterward traveled to Frankfort, Kentucky, where on November 2, he wrote to a distinguished friend of Theodore O’Hara’s. That connection, Lieutenant Colonel William Preston, was a wealthy Louisville attorney and veteran of the Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers in the Mexican War from whom, six months earlier, Mádan had negotiated obtaining a pair of five-year-old mares. On the recommendation of a “distinguished military advisor,” Mádan now propositioned Preston “in the name of General López and the Board of proprietors and influential patriots of Cuba to organize a force

¹⁰ *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, January 16, 1850, 3 (first and second quotes); Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 18 (third quote), 58 (fourth quote), 83 (fifth quote).

¹¹ For a detailed account of the first López expedition, see Antonio Rafael de la Cova, “The Taylor Administration versus Mississippi Sovereignty: The Round Island Expedition of 1849,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 62 (2000): 1-33; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, September 3, 1849, 3 (quote), and January 16, 1850, 3.



Baez, ed., *La Enciclopedia de Cuba*, 2nd ed. (1975)
General Narciso López (center) and bearded Kentuckians wearing Mexican War-era caps. William Redding, a twenty-six-year-old laborer from Scott County, bears their battle flag, which in 1902 became Cuba's national banner.

of from two to four thousand men to be landed on that island in company and with the concurrence of said General who as you are aware, is already known and expected in the country as the living standard of independence and annexation to the U.S. and whose prestige among the Spanish troops is certainly great."¹²

Preston responded from Frankfort the next day that in Cuba there was "no struggle, no actual resort to arms, which would authorize me to embark in the enterprise. The laws of my

¹² Cristóbal Mádán to William Preston, April 10, November 2, 1849, box 46, Wickliffe-Preston Family Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky; Sehlinger, *Kentucky's Last Cavalier*, 101.

country prohibit it." If, however, Cuba was "now involved in a contest for independence were its situation similar to that of my own country when it received assistance from France, were it, in one word, possible for me to do so, without infringing the duty I owe my country, I would in a moment embrace the alluring offer you have made; but under existing circumstances I decline it." Mádan immediately acknowledged Preston's letter and requested his "candid report on the capacity of Col. John Williams for the organization of the same." Preston replied the next day in glowing terms regarding Williams, his former Mexican War regimental commander, and his "skill in controlling his men, and in all the essentials of a good officer. . . I do not believe there are ten men in Kentucky who could properly organize a division of four thousand men, completely, and I believe the Colonel can."¹³

Mádan then met with the twenty-nine-year-old Williams, a six-foot-four-inch tall, grey-eyed lawyer, a Freemason, who had participated with a volunteer company from Clark County in the siege of Veracruz and the battle of Cerro Gordo. Williams, Preston, and O'Hara were members of the exclusive Aztec Club, founded by army officers in Mexico City in October 1847, patterned on the hereditary Society of the Cincinnati. Williams requested from Mádan \$8 million to raise four thousand volunteers. The Cuban proceeded to Louisville, where on November 8 he relayed to Preston recent news that General López was in direct contact with Theodore O'Hara and "is in capacity of acting and will do everything without me." When Mádan returned to New York City, he formed a rival and separatist clandestine organization, the Council of Superior Government. On November 13, the council signed an agreement giving Williams the rank of major general of a future expeditionary force. A week later, López announced his own Cuban Council of Organization and Government to proceed with his separate invasion plan.¹⁴

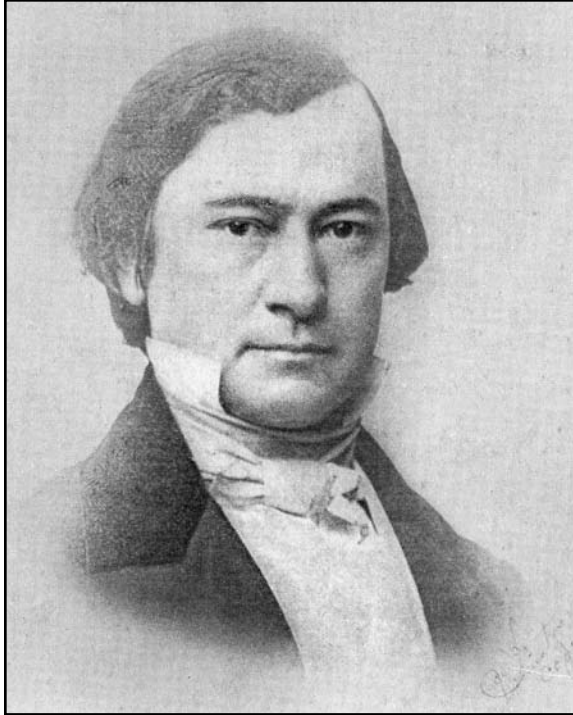
¹³ Preston to Mádan, November 3 (first and second quotes), November 4 (fourth quote); Mádan to Preston, November 3 (third quote), 1849, *ibid.*

¹⁴ John Stuart Williams (July 18, 1820–July 17, 1898) was a widower raising a daughter when elected to the Kentucky legislature in 1851 and 1853. He engaged in agricultural pursuits at his home in Winchester, Kentucky, and at an estate in Illinois. Having raised an independent company of riflemen at the beginning of the Mexican

A few days before Christmas 1849, Ambrosio Gonzales met in the Irving Hotel in Washington, D.C., with O'Hara and Pickett, who introduced him to thirty-year-old Thomas Theodore Hawkins, a Freemason from a prominent family in Newport, Kentucky. Hawkins had been an adjutant of the Field and Staff of the First Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers at the battle of Buena Vista and was afterward promoted to second lieutenant of Company K, Sixteenth Regiment, U.S. Infantry. The Kentuckians agreed to raise and pay for a regiment from their state and promised to meet later with Gonzales and López in Louisville. A week later, on New Year's Day, Robert S. Triplett, a twenty-year-old Kentuckian, reached the capital and met with Gonzales and López, who had returned to the Irving Hotel three days earlier. Mádan was also in Washington, D.C., in January, after informing Colonel Williams that the Cuban Council had annulled his contract after agreeing to postpone further invasion plans until President Taylor's term expired in 1853.¹⁵

War, he served with distinction at the battle of Cerro Gordo and bore the nickname "Cerro Gordo" thereafter. Williams enlisted in Confederate service on November 16, 1861, as a colonel of the Fifth Kentucky Infantry. Five months later, he was promoted to brigadier general and in late 1863 commanded the Department of East Tennessee. The following year, he was attached to the Army of Tennessee in Joseph Wheeler's Cavalry Corps. After the war, Williams returned to farming in Montgomery County where he married the widow Henrietta L. Hamilton on January 19, 1870. He was elected to the Kentucky house of representatives in 1873 and 1875 and to the U.S. Senate as a Democrat in 1879. Williams was a member of Masonic Winchester Lodge No. 20, Winchester, Kentucky. When filling out his Mexican War pension application in 1887, he listed his date of birth as July 18, 1820, which differs from that published in biographical notes. John S. Williams, Certificate 11,756, MWS; de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel*, 26-27; Sehlinger, *Kentucky's Last Cavalier*, 62; Eubank, *The Response of Kentucky to the Mexican War*, 38-39; United States Senate, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989* (Washington, D.C., 1989), 2058-59; William R. Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, vol. 4 (Independence, Missouri, 1957), 330; John E. Kleber, ed., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, 1992), 956-57; Cristóbal Mádan to William Preston, November 3, 4, 8, 1849, box 46, Wickliffe-Preston Family Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 98.

¹⁵ Thomas Theodore Hawkins (1820-September 6, 1879) married seventeen-year-old Mary D. Neir in Louisville on January 9, 1854, and had three daughters. He appears to have been involved in the later Quitman filibuster conspiracy, arriving with him at the City Hotel in New Orleans on December 4, 1854. In 1860, Hawkins worked at a foundry in Louisville. He served the Confederacy as lieutenant and aide-de-camp to Major General John C. Breckinridge. After the battle of Shiloh, Hawkins was promoted to colonel and continued on the general's staff until the end of the



Quisenberry, Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba (1906)

Major Thomas Theodore Hawkins (1820-79), thirty-year-old scion of a prominent Newport family, assumed command of the Kentucky Regiment in combat when Colonel O'Hara was wounded. To cover the filibusters' retreat, Hawkins led a rearguard stand against Spanish lancers. He is buried next to O'Hara in Frankfort, Kentucky.

war. He then returned to Louisville and was employed as a tobacco inspector until his death. In 1884, the Kentucky General Assembly directed that Hawkins's remains be interned in the State Mound, a site honoring Kentucky military dead in Frankfort Cemetery, next to the grave of Colonel Theodore O'Hara. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky: Mexican War Veterans* (Frankfort, 1889), 2, 28, 166 (hereafter *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*); *Kentucky Senate Journal* (1883-84), 1220, 1295, 1348, 1373; *Kentucky House Journal*, (1883-84), 1515, 1600, 1639, 1671; O.D.D.O. [J. C. Davis], *The History of the Late Expedition to Cuba* (New Orleans, 1850), 50; *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, June 4, 1850, 2; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 22; Thomas T. Hawkins, Certificate 1,448, MWS; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 44-45; Rob Morris, *The History of Freemasonry in Kentucky, in its Relations to the Symbolic Degrees* (Louisville, 1859), 562; *New Orleans Picayune*, December 5, 1854, 2; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville Ward 5, Jefferson County, 142; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville

López and Gonzales left the capital by railroad and stage-coach for Pittsburgh. They boarded Ohio River steamers to Louisville, where López signed the Louisville Hotel registry on February 27, 1850, as "N. Oriola" and Gonzales penned his own name. The next day, they met with O'Hara, Pickett, and Hawkins, and López "exhibited correspondence with some of the leading citizens of Cuba, urging him to come to their assistance as soon as possible—*alone*, if need be." The landing was planned for "where a large number of the people were already organized and armed" in readiness to join the invaders. This would be "a signal for a general rising of the people." The Kentuckians were promised military commissions and agreed to raise a skeleton regiment that on the island would fill up with local volunteers. The Cubans then headed down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.¹⁶

Meanwhile, on March 12, Colonel O'Hara wrote from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, to militia captain William Hardy, a twenty-five-year-old "tall and athletic" Democrat activist in Covington, Kentucky, instructing him to "recruit a number of men to aid in revolutionizing the Island of Cuba." Hardy had been a sergeant in Company B, Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers and received a face wound during the siege of Veracruz. He agreed to raise a contingent of five hundred men in northern Kentucky and southwestern Ohio and to procure one hundred thousand dollars, one thousand muskets, five hundred uniforms, one hundred swords, and one hundred kegs of gunpowder. To avoid charges of violating the Neutrality Act, Hardy used a recruitment ruse by advertising in the newspapers and stating at a public meeting in Covington that he was organizing a company to work in the gold mines in California

Ward 7, Jefferson County, 36; Gonzales, "On To Cuba," *New Orleans Times Democrat*, March 30, 1884, 9; "Arrivals at the Hotels," *Washington Republic*, December 30, 1849, 2, January 2, 3, 4, 1850, 3; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 98, 210; de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel*, 29.

¹⁶ Gonzales, "On to Cuba"; "Transportation," *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 13, 1850, 3; "Arrivals at the Principal Hotels," *Cincinnati Commercial*, February 27, 1850, 1; "Steam Boat Register," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 28, 1850, 3; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 219, 471; "Statement of the Kentucky Regiment," *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, June 11, 1850, 2 (all quotes); Vidal Morales y Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires de la revolución cubana*, vol. 2 (Havana, 1931), 195.

that would soon depart for New Orleans.¹⁷

In the Crescent City, the filibuster leaders were assisted by prominent sympathizers, including Mississippi governor John Anthony Quitman, a Mexican War hero renowned as the “Father of Mississippi Masonry”; Louisiana Legion militia general Donatien Augustin; and Laurent Sigur, the publisher of the *New Orleans Delta*. Revolutionary bonds were sold at ten cents on the dollar to raise funds. The state arsenals of Louisiana and Mississippi provided most of the filibuster weapons and the conspirators purchased the 165-foot, 306-ton steamer *Creole* for \$16,000. Two more filibuster skeleton regiments commanded by Mexican War veterans were mustered in the Crescent City: the Louisiana Regiment, under Chatham Roberdeau Wheat, and the Mississippi Regiment, led by McDonough J. Bunch, of Memphis, Tennessee. Bunch had fought with the First Regiment, Kentucky Cavalry, at Buena Vista¹⁸

¹⁷ William Hardy wed nineteen-year-old Margaret E. Peak, from Boone County, Kentucky, on December 21, 1858, in Cincinnati. He soon settled in Boone County, worked as a physician, and raised five children before passing away in Gallatin County, Kentucky, on February 23, 1875. William Hardy, Certificate 2474, MWS; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Boone County, 387; 1870 *ibid.*, 153; 1880 *ibid.*, 321; *United States v. William Hardy*, Indictment, November 1, 1851, U.S. Circuit Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division (Cincinnati), Law Records [old series], 1851-1863, vol. 1 (5), Records of the District Courts of the United States, RG 21, NA; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 32; United States House of Representatives, *Barque Georgiana and Brig Susan Loud*, Executive Document 83, 32d Congress, 1st Session, March 23, 1852 (Washington, 1852), 116; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 4-6 (first quote 6), 75 (second quote).

¹⁸ John A. Quitman had been the first president of the Aztec Club, which included his Mexican War brigade quartermaster, Theodore O’Hara. He was Masonic Grand Sovereign of South West, Grand Inspector General of the 33rd Degree of the Southern Division of the United States, for the State of Mississippi, and a founder of the Supreme Council. Quitman had been elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, 1826-38, 1840, and 1845-46. McDonough J. Bunch was appointed by the president on August 18, 1846, as assistant commissary, with the rank of captain, in the Commissary Department of the U.S. Army. He was discharged on June 30, 1847, and then served as major of the Fourth Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers until August 1848. He practiced law in Mississippi until his death in Aberdeen on November 2, 1857. Robert E. May, *John Anthony Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, 1985), 197-99; Gonzales, “On to Cuba”; *New Orleans Crescent*, January 13, 1851, 2; *New Orleans Delta*, January 3, 1851, 3 and January 14, 1851, 2; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, 4: 3; Albert Pike, “John Anthony Quitman,” *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons* (Jackson, Mississippi, 1882), x-xvi, 626; *U.S. v. Narciso López et al.*, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, New Orleans Circuit Court, General Case Files (E-121), Case 1965, “Enrollment No. 183,” RG 21, NA; Biographical

Gonzales wrote from New Orleans to the Kentucky conspirators of the latest developments and they, in turn, informed William Hardy in Cincinnati to be prepared to depart by April 1. O'Hara instructed Hardy: "We want the best quality of young, adventurous *Americans*. No Dutch or foreigners of any kind, and as many Kentuckians as possible. Men who can be relied on in all emergencies." The letter promised Hardy: "You shall be Major in rank for your excellent services, with rapid promotion." Hardy recruited his brother Richardson and Henry Robinson, an Irish twenty-five-year-old huckster and Democrat activist from Cincinnati, who left behind a pregnant Irish wife. Robinson had been a first lieutenant of Company I, Fourth Regiment, Ohio Volunteers in the Mexican War, and was described as having "a pleasing face, and well proportioned frame." Richardson Hardy was a member of the Queen City Guards militia and the editor and one of eight publishers of the *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, a Democratic, prolabor, and antislavery newspaper that advocated the popular-sovereignty ideology of Senator Stephen A. Douglas. He received the rank of filibuster lieutenant and that summer penned his account of the expedition in a *Cincinnati Nonpareil* series which was afterward published in the 94-page booklet, *The History and Adventures of the Cuban Expedition*.¹⁹

Gonzales informed Governor Quitman on April 5 that the Kentucky "emigrants" would not arrive until the day of departure to avoid arousing suspicion. They were commanded by efficient men who were Mexican War veterans; some had West Point military training and all belonged "to the best families in

sketch of Chatham Roberdeau Wheat by his father John Thomas Wheat, John Thomas Wheat Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Charles L. Dufour, *Gentle Tiger: The Gallant Life of Roberdeau Wheat* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 37; William Hugh Robarts, *A Complete Roster of the Regular and Volunteer Troops in the War Between the United States and Mexico, from 1846 to 1848* (Washington, D.C., 1887), 73; "Appointments by the President," *Boston Daily Atlas*, December 26, 1846; "Official," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, August 11, 1847; "A Card," *Jackson Mississippian*, August 9, September 6, 1850.

¹⁹ The *Cincinnati Nonpareil* was "printed and published under the firm of Deffenbauch, Winchester & Co.," comprised of A. Deffenbaugh, C. C. Winchester, Charles H. Bingham, Richardson Hardy, William H. Deffenbaugh, Enos B. Reed, Joseph T. Bennet, and George T. Brown. Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 4-7 (first quote 5; third quote 7), 76 (second quote); "What do you Mean!" *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, May 15, 1850, 2.

the State." The Kentucky Regiment was drawn mostly from the northern counties of Jefferson, Shelby, Franklin, Scott, Boone, Kenton, and Campbell. These counties were all connected by dirt roads or macadamized turnpikes that led to the ports of Louisville and Covington on the Ohio River. There was a significant Democratic strength in Jefferson and Campbell counties sympathetic to Young America. Other enthusiastic volunteers joined the expedition after their steamers heading down the Ohio River stopped in Owensboro, Kentucky, and Evansville, Indiana.²⁰

The officers of the Kentucky Regiment were Colonel Theodore O'Hara, Lieutenant Colonel John Thomas Pickett, majors Thomas Theodore Hawkins and William Hardy, Adjutant Henry Theodore Titus, Quartermaster Thomas P. Hoy, Surgeon Dr. Samuel S. Scott, and Chaplain Reverend John McFarland McCann. Their six companies were led by captains John Allen of Shelbyville, Company A; W. T. Knight of Shelbyville, Company B; John Allen Logan of Shelbyville, Company C; Albert W. Johnson, of Scott County, Company D; Henry H. Robinson of Covington, Company E; Fielding C. Wilson, of Louisville, Company F. There were also an additional twenty lieutenants.²¹

Captain John "Jack" Allen was a thirty-nine-year-old "fine, soldierly-looking" veteran of the battle of San Jacinto in the Texas Revolution. He was five-feet-eleven-inches tall, had brown hair, gray eyes, and a fair complexion. Allen volunteered for the Mexican War in June 1846 as a second lieutenant of Company G, First Regiment, Kentucky Mounted Volunteers. He fought with his dismounted unit at the battle of Buena Vista on February 22, 1847, before being mustered out four months later at New Orleans. His wife and infant son had passed away by the time he returned home. Allen lacked an occupation and resided with his physician brother and wife on the family farm, nine miles southwest of Shelbyville. He raised his company of filibusters in Shelby County.²²

²⁰ A. J. Gonzales to John Quitman, April 5, 1850, John A. Quitman Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi (quote).

²¹ Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 121-22; de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel*, 369-74.

²² John Allen (October 25, 1811–November 5, 1871) inherited from his father in 1835 a farm on Plum Creek, Shelby County, the slave Peter Lige, and "one horse and saddle and bridle." His first wife June died on January 5, 1841, at the age of

The other captains included John A. Logan, scion of an historic family, who was a Shelbyville lawyer, former state legislator, and first lieutenant commissary in the Third Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers during the Mexican War. He was accompanied by Agustín Martínez, a Mexican lad who had followed him to Shelbyville two years earlier. Logan left behind a wife and five children. Fielding C. Wilson was a

twenty-seven, and was interred in the family graveyard on their farm. Allen married nineteen-year-old Lucretia Harwood on November 15, 1841. After the failure of the López expeditions of 1849-51, Allen was indicted in the U.S. for being a leader of the José Carbajal filibuster movement against Mexico. He afterward "organized fifteen hundred Kentuckians, eager to avenge the death of Crittenden, Logan, and other brave men" who perished in Cuba. The plot was headed by General John A. Quitman, but its followers were disbanded in 1855 after their conspirators on the island were arrested and executed. On May 21, 1856, Allen left Louisville with some 150 Kentucky volunteers for William Walker's filibuster army in Nicaragua. Some of them, like A. W. Marsh, were veterans of the López expeditions. When Allen arrived in Granada on June 29 with 104 men, Walker appointed him colonel of the Second Battalion of Rifles, replacing Hungarian Louis Schlessinger, a former Cuba filibuster. Allen returned to Louisville on August 16 on furlough, going back to Nicaragua on October 6 with some one hundred recruits. A week later, Allen and his force, wielding a howitzer, fought at the battles of Masaya and Granada, repulsing a body of lancers at the latter. Allen returned to the U.S. soon after and on December 30, 1856, was married by a Baptist minister to twenty-five-year-old Ruth M. Thomas at her father's home in Taylorsville, Kentucky. He returned to farming in Shelby County, where his daughter Mildred was born two years later. In December 1857, Allen, his brother Joseph, and five other men were acquitted in a Louisville court of the murder the previous year of Paschal D. Craddock, a counterfeiter and horse thief. John Allen appears as captain on the rolls of Company B, Second Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, CSA, organized in October 1861 under Captain John Hunt Morgan. He was promoted on June 1, 1862, to lieutenant colonel of the First Kentucky Cavalry Regiment. After the Civil War, Allen returned to his farm, which he sold in 1870 and moved with his family to Louisville. He died in Sulphur Springs, Texas, on November 5, 1871. The Allen farm, located today at 2581 Fisherville Road, Finchville, Kentucky, still has the family cemetery with nine grave markers, including those of six children. Will of John Allen, June 25, 1835, Will Book 11, 176-77, Marriage Book 5-B 1838-43, No. 1046, and Deed Book B3, 535-36, all in Shelby County Courthouse, Shelbyville, Kentucky; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, District 2, Shelby County, 387; *Louisville Journal*, September 20, 1851, 3; *Florida Republican*, November 3, 1854, 2; May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld*, 282; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, August 6, 1853; William C. Smeades to unidentified recipient, January 10, 1857, and Jack Allen to Thomas Marshall, February 24, 1857, Marshall Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville; *Columbus Enquirer*, May 29, 1856, 2; William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua* (Mobile, 1860), 230, 290; *El Nicaraguense*, July 12, 2; October 11, 3; October 18, 3, 6; November 1, 1856, 1; John Allen, Certificate No. 1061, MWS; *New Albany Daily Ledger* (Indiana), December 5, 1857, 2; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Shelby County, 159; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky, Confederate Kentucky Volunteers, War, 1861-65*, vol. 1 (Frankfort, 1915), 486, 548-49, 594; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville 6th Ward, 84; "An Old Filibuster," *Trenton Daily State Gazette*, November 13, 1871, 1.



Punch, Vol. 9, 1850

This cartoon from the English humor magazine *Punch* expressed the dim view Europeans held of American filibustering expeditions such as General López's failed 1850 campaign.

twenty-eight-year-old engineer who left in Louisville a wife and infant daughter. Albert W. Johnson was an unemployed nineteen-year-old son of a prosperous Scott County farmer.²³

²³ John Allen Logan was the grandson of General Benjamin Logan (1742-1802), a Kentucky pioneer, politician, and Revolutionary War officer. His maternal grand uncle was General George Rogers Clark (1752-1818), leader of the Kentucky militia during the American Revolution. His maternal grandfather, Colonel Richard Anderson, served on the staff of Lafayette during the Revolutionary War. His mother, Anna C. Anderson, was the sister of Major Robert Anderson, of Fort Sumter fame, and Charles Anderson, the governor of Ohio. Logan married Rebecca M. Bristow in Shelby County on June 20, 1837. Four of their five children died before reaching adulthood. Logan served in the Kentucky legislature in 1839. His oldest son, Richard Francis Logan, was born on September 6, 1839, and received a medical degree from the University of Louisville. In

Adjutant Henry Theodore Titus was a twenty-seven-year-old Philadelphia postal employee born in New Jersey and raised in Pennsylvania, where he had joined the state militia. He was described as having “dark brown eyes and hair; standing well over six feet in height and weighing 250 pounds.” Quartermaster Thomas P. Hoy was a Kentucky native and former Texas Ranger with a law practice in Galveston. He was a “tall, gaunt fellow, and comparatively rather desperate adventurer,” who adored “bowie-knives and five-shooters.” Surgeon Samuel S. Scott, a twenty-nine-year-old, six-foot-two-inch-tall physician, had a wife and four-year-old son, and property worth \$1,200 in Florence, Kentucky. Chaplain John McFarland McCann was a twenty-one-year-old bachelor born in Paris, Kentucky. He studied mathematics, surveying, and theology in Cincinnati, where he was ordained an Episcopal minister at St. Xavier’s College. McCann had worked as a typesetter in the *Western Citizen* newspaper in Paris and the *Cincinnati Nonpareil*.²⁴

1861, he became first surgeon of the Union Fifteenth Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. After the Civil War, he returned to Shelbyville to practice medicine. Fielding C. Wilson and his wife eventually had nine children. They moved to Indiana in 1854 and during the Civil War settled in Boonville, Missouri. Fielding became a steamboat captain and his two oldest sons worked on the vessel with him. Albert W. Johnson inherited his father’s wealth. In 1860, he resided in a hotel in Georgetown, Kentucky, with his wife Helen and two sons. Johnson owned \$22,500 in real estate and \$43,450 in personal property. That summer, the family moved to Searcy, Arkansas, where he worked as a manager and another son was born in 1861. The Civil War wiped out Johnson’s fortune. By 1870, the family had moved to Louisville, where Johnson was a superintendent of the mule-drawn Louisville Railway Company and owned \$1,000 in personal property. A decade later, the Johnsons were living at 159 Christian Avenue, Indianapolis, while he labored as a superintendent of the Citizens’ Street Railway Company and his youngest son was a clerk in their office. 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Scott County, 452; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Georgetown, Scott County, 128; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville Ward 11, Jefferson, 499; 1880 Indiana Federal Census, Indianapolis, Marion County, 226; Thomas Marshall Green, *Historic Families of Kentucky* (Cincinnati, 1889), 175; Roy Duane Bristow, *The Bristow Family* (n.p., 1986); William Henry Perrin, *Kentucky: A History of the State* (Louisville, 1887); Quisenberry, *López’s Expeditions*, 58, 121; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville Ward 8, Jefferson, 398; 1860 Missouri Federal Census, Boonville, Cooper County, 449; 1880 Missouri Federal Census, Boonville, Cooper County, 293; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 82; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 22.

²⁴ Henry Theodore Titus (February 13, 1823–August 7, 1881) was born in Trenton, New Jersey, the first of nine children whose parents owned a 400-acre farm with forty slaves, a gristmill, and a brewery. In the 1830s, the family moved to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, where Titus later joined the local militia before moving to Philadelphia in 1845 to work as a postal inspector. There, he became involved in the first failed López

Two filibuster lieutenants had been with the army of occupation in Mexico: Joseph Clark Dear, a six-foot-one-inch-tall, blue-eyed, twenty-five-year-old mechanic born in Shelby County, who served as second lieutenant in Company I, Third Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers with John A. Logan; and Benjamin Mills Harney, a twenty-one-year-old Louisville school teacher, five-feet-eleven-inches tall, with a light complexion, light hair, blue eyes. He was a former private in Company A, Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, and son of John

expedition of 1849. In 1852, he married Mary Evelina Hopkins, daughter of Florida militia general Edward Hopkins, and settled on their 1250-acre cotton plantation in Jacksonville, Florida. Titus became a proslavery leader in Bleeding Kansas against abolitionist John Brown in 1856. The following year, he joined William Walker's filibusters in Nicaragua. During the Civil War, Titus was assistant quartermaster of the Florida militia. In 1867, he settled in Sand Point, Florida, became its postmaster, and changed the name of the town to Titusville, (presently the gateway to the John F. Kennedy Space Center). Titus, confined to a wheelchair because of rheumatoid arthritis, became a developer, citrus grower, and administrator of a general store and the Titus House, "one of the finest combinations of saloons and hotels on the east coast of Florida." Thomas P. Hoy (October 9, 1824-January 6, 1903) moved to Pike County, Missouri, in 1853 to practice law and by 1860 owned \$6,000 in real estate and \$5,000 in personal property. When the Civil War began, he was on the staff of Confederate raider Merriwether Jefferson Thompson and afterward served as aide-de-camp to Major General Earl Van Dorn, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. Hoy was appointed colonel and special recruiting officer, raising two regiments and a battalion in southern Missouri and Arkansas. He was wounded at the battle of Corinth. After the war, he continued his law practice in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and moved to St. Louis in 1868. He settled in Sedalia, Missouri, in 1884, and six years later, was elected probate judge of Pettis County. Hoy was active in organizing Mexican War and Confederate veteran reunions. The perpetual bachelor died of dropsy at the Elks Hotel in Sedalia. "Robert Titus - Emigrant to Massachusetts, 1635, to Henry Theodore Titus, Founder of Titusville, Florida," typed manuscript in Henry Theodore Titus Collection, North Brevard Public Library, Titusville, Florida; "Early Recollections of Minnie Titus Ensey, Youngest Daughter of Colonel Henry Theodore Titus, as Told to Her Daughter Fedora Ensey Grey" [1945], *ibid.* (first quote); "Henry Theodore Titus: Famous or Infamous," *ibid.*; U.S. Department of State, *Register of all Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington, 1845), 432; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 7, 22 (second and third quotes), 46; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 121; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Boone County, 170; 1860 Missouri Federal Census, Louisiana, Pike County, 299; 1870 Mississippi Federal Census, Kosciusko, Attala County, 40; "Mexican Veterans," *The Atchison Daily Globe* (Kansas), August 30, 1889; "Opening of the Reunion," *Montgomery Advertiser*, May 29, 1901; "Was a Veteran of Two Wars," *The Kansas City Star*, January 6, 1903, 11; William R. McCann, *Some Descendants of John Keand of Whithorn, Scotland* (n.p., 1953), 8-9; 1840 Kentucky Federal Census, Paris, Bourbon County, 303.

Hopkins Harney, editor of the *Louisville Democrat*.²⁵

Lieutenant Thomas M. Winston was a jobless twenty-four-year-old son of a widow with five children in Newport, Kentucky, who had entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1842. He had been a second lieutenant, along with Thomas Theodore Hawkins, in Company K, Sixteenth Regiment, U.S. Infantry, during the Mexican War. Lieutenant John B. Reading, an illiterate twenty-year-old carpenter from Shelbyville, had been rejected from Mexican War service for being "too feeble, by reason of injury received from falling from his horse." John Carl Johnson, a Shelby County native, later claimed to have been a West Point graduate, a Mexican War veteran, and a filibuster lieutenant, but the historical record

²⁵ Benjamin Mills Harney (October 17, 1829–March 11, 1899), born in Bloomington, Indiana, was the son of John Hopkins Harney (February 20, 1806–January 26, 1868) and Martha Wallace Rankin, a minister's daughter. His grandfather R. Shelby Harney, was a Revolutionary War soldier who for his services received a 250-acre warrant in Bourbon County. Benjamin's father was a professor of mathematics at Indiana University, Hanover College in Indiana, and Louisville College in Kentucky until 1843. He then began editing the *Louisville Democrat*, and was a member of Masonic Clarke Lodge No. 51 in Louisville. After Benjamin Harney returned from the Cuba expedition, he taught school, married Mary Decker in Middletown, Kentucky, on August 5, 1854, and had three children before the marriage ended in divorce. An ardent Unionist like his father, who served in the state legislature during 1861–62, Benjamin was commissioned captain of Company A, Ninth Kentucky Cavalry (U.S.) on August 22, 1862, and mustered out a year later in Eminence, Kentucky. He wed twenty-five-year-old Margaret Wellington Draffen, whose father John Draffen was a major in the Union army, at Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, on May 18, 1864. The couple resided on Guthrie Street in Louisville while he worked as a bookkeeper at his father's publishing company. Two years later, Harney was defeated in the election for superintendent of public instruction. He and his wife then moved to the small settlement of Garden Valley, Texas, where they worked as teachers. On their return to Louisville, their son Benjamin Robertson Harney (March 6, 1871–March 2, 1938) was born aboard a Mississippi River steamboat. He was later renowned as the "Father of Ragtime." The *Louisville City Directory* of 1873 indicated that Benjamin Mills was an associate of Harney and Randolph Civil Engineers. His second marriage had ended in divorce by 1880 and he returned to teaching. Benjamin Mills then resided with relatives in Orlando, Florida, where he passed away and was interred in the Grand Army of the Republic plot in Greenwood Cemetery. Joseph Clark Dear (1825–December 1, 1889) became a carpenter, married in 1853, and settled in Owensboro, Kentucky, where he raised seven children. "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2; William H. Tallmadge, "Ben Harney: The Middlesborough Years, 1890-93," *American Music* 13 (1995): 167-94; Joseph Clark Dear, Certificate No. 8777, MWS; AG Report, *Mexican War Veterans*, 110; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Owensboro, Daviess County, 269; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Jefferson County, 1100; 1870 Texas Federal Census, Garden Valley, Smith County, 312; 1880 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville, Jefferson County, 468.

does not substantiate these assertions.²⁶

Louisville produced three lieutenants for the expedition: William H. Barton, was an eighteen-year-old New Yorker studying medicine; William Harnley, a twenty-six-year-old Irish laborer residing with his pregnant wife in an Irish boardinghouse; and Carroll H. Rawlings, a nineteen-year-old student and son of General Moses M. Rawlings. The Rawlings lived next door to Fielding C. Wilson.²⁷

Two filibuster lieutenants were from Frankfort: Clark H. Knott, a Pennsylvania-born, twenty-one-year-old merchant's clerk who had served as a corporal, under Sergeant William Hardy, in Company B, Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, in the Mexican War; and Burwell Bassett Sayre, a

²⁶ John B. Reading (sometimes spelled Redding) settled in Frankfort after the expedition, where he owned three slaves and resided in a boardinghouse with seven other carpenters. In 1859, he moved to Owen County and married the widow Nancy Tackett, who had five children. They eventually had five additional children. In 1906, Anderson C. Quisenberry interviewed John Carl Johnston, born in "Shelby County, Kentucky, on November 19, 1829," who purported to have been a lieutenant and "the last survivor" of the López expedition. He was the son of Judge George W. Johnston and alleged to have been an 1846 West Point graduate and a second lieutenant in the Mexican War. Johnston indicated that after the invaders retreated from Cuba, he provided a shirt with his name etched in indelible ink to a mortally wounded filibuster, who died in Key West. The remains were then shipped to Louisville and interred in the Western Cemetery under a headstone with the name John Carl Johnston. Historical records do not substantiate most of these claims. There was a "J. C. Johnston" who arrived in the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans days prior to the expedition with Theodore O'Hara and other Kentucky filibuster officers. Kentucky Federal census records from 1840 to 1880 indicate that John Carl Johnston was born ca., 1834-36, and therefore would have been too young to hold the record he claimed. In the 1900 census, while residing with his son, his birth year was changed to 1829. Johnston's name does not appear in the *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, or in George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from Its Establishment, in 1802, to 1890* (Boston, 1891). Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 13-14, 121; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 18-19 (quote 19), 166; "Official," *Boston Daily Atlas*, May 13, 1842; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, District 1, Franklin County, 41; 1850 Kentucky Federal Slave Census, Franklin County, 868; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Owen County, 37; 1880 Kentucky Federal Census, Harmony, Owen County, 184; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Campbell County, Newport, 37; "West Point Cadets," *New-York Spectator*, May 7, 1842.

²⁷ During the Civil War, Confederate captain Carroll H. Rawlings raised in Kentucky a company of volunteers from Mound City, Illinois. *The Natchez Weekly Courier* (Mississippi), October 23, 1861; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Jefferson County, Louisville, 235, 352, 398; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 122.

thirty-nine-year-old widower born in Hamilton County, Virginia. In 1835, Sayre began teaching at the Frankfort Academy and eight years later founded Sayre's Institute for Boys. The school produced outstanding future leaders, including a U.S. senator, a Missouri governor, and an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Sayre was regarded as "one of the most celebrated teachers in Kentucky" and "a man of marked character and eccentricities." He seems to have been previously involved in the Round Island expedition.²⁸

Other filibuster lieutenants included John McDerman, a twenty-eight-year-old New York physician residing in Boone

²⁸ Clark H. Knott was quartermaster general of the Kentucky State Militia during 1851-53. He served as a sergeant in Company E, Thirteenth Regiment, U.S. Infantry, during the Civil War. Knott received a military pension in 1879 and retired at Blairsville, Pennsylvania. Burwell Bassett Sayre (December 10, 1810–April 28, 1879) studied at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, and the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. His gifted students included George G. Vest, John Marshall Harlan, and B. Gratz Brown. Sayre married Ruth Ann Theobald of Lexington, Kentucky, on December 5, 1844, in Frankfort. She died in Washington County, Mississippi, on December 24, 1847, after giving birth to their daughter Virginia. Sayre arrived in New York City on August 24, 1849, the same day that filibuster leaders chartered the steamer *New Orleans*, a former Mexican War troop transport. After the failed 1850 Cuba expedition, Sayre returned to teaching in Frankfort and had personal property worth \$900. He wed Mildred Campbell Ruffin on October 4, 1859, in Virginia, and his wealth dramatically increased through dowry and inheritance. In 1860, Sayre was still teaching high school in Frankfort, owned \$37,000 in personal property, mostly consisting of seventeen slaves, and had real estate worth \$8,500. His wife had combined assets totaling \$19,600, and his thirteen-year-old daughter owned personal property valued at \$7,000. By 1870, Sayre continued teaching, was widowed again, and was raising an eight-year-old daughter. He owned \$30,000 in personal property, \$22,000 in real estate, employed two African American servants, and had six people residing in his home on a hilltop overlooking the capital city. 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Franklin County, 53; U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865, M-233, roll 27, NA; Civil War Pension Records, Certificate 165,874, NA; 1880 Pennsylvania Federal Census, Blairsville, Indiana County, 72; correspondence between George Washington Bassett and Burwell Bassett Sayre, Bassett Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; *New York Herald*, August 25, 1849; de la Cova, "The Taylor Administration Versus Mississippi Sovereignty," 310; Burwell Bassett Sayre biographical file, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort; L. F. Johnson, *The History of Franklin County, Kentucky* (Frankfort, 1912), 102 (first quote); "Three Red-Headed Boys," *Grand Forks Herald* (North Dakota), July 4, 1883, 2 (second quote); 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, District 2, Franklin, 56; Immanuel Episcopal Church, St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia, Record Book, 1815-1926 (Accession 1980), 14; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Frankfort, Franklin County, 393; 1860 Kentucky Federal Slave Census, Frankfort, Franklin County, 501; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Frankfort, Franklin County, 157.

County with a Kentucky wife and two infant daughters; Robert S. Triplett, a twenty-year-old clerk from Owensboro; and John C. McGuffin, a twenty-four-year-old farmer from Scott County, who left behind a wife and three children.²⁹

There were three sergeants from Louisville: Sergeant Major Edmund H. McDonald, a twenty-year-old clerk and former sergeant in Company A, Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers in the Mexican War; Sergeant Joseph W. Taylor, a twenty-three-year-old boatman who had been a private in Company H, First Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers during the Mexican War; and Orderly Sergeant Joseph A. Smith, a twenty-year-old lawyer. Other noncommissioned officers included sergeants Henry Cruse and Robert Wheeling, and Corporal Thomas Work.³⁰

Some filibuster privates with Mexican War experience included Thomas J. Kennedy, a twenty-three-year-old Louisville physician. He had been a private in Company A, Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, being detached to hospital duty at Jalapa until the end of the war. Leonard Crisler, a twen-

²⁹ Five unidentified lieutenants of the Kentucky Regiment were ___ Bayne from Cincinnati, ___ Greenlee, J. Harkins, C. O. Horton, and ___ Woolfolk. Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 122; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Daviess County, 901; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Boone County, 170; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Owensboro, Daviess County, 353; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Scott County, 454; *New York Tribune*, June 1, 1850, 2; *Kentucky Yeoman* (Frankfort), September 6, 1851, 3.

³⁰ Edmund H. McDonald, the son of a Louisville widow, was a lieutenant in Company A, Sigur Guards, in Robert Downman's First Regiment, during the last López expedition in August 1851. He was captured along with 171 filibusters who were sent to prison in Ceuta to labor in the quicksilver mines. Freed under a Spanish royal amnesty, McDonald arrived in the U.S. on March 8, 1852, on the ship *Montezuma*. He followed Colonel John Allen to Nicaragua to join William Walker's filibuster army, where he was commissioned lieutenant colonel of Allen's Second Battalion of Rifles on June 13, 1856. During the Civil War, McDonald was a Confederate major of the Eleventh Virginia Cavalry. Joseph A. Smith afterward settled in Russellville, Kentucky, where he served as a deputy clerk, married, and continued his law practice. Sergeant Henry Cruse of Company D, Kentucky Regiment, was killed in action in Cuba and Sergeant Robert Wheeling, of the same company, was wounded. *Boletín de los Archivos de la República de Cuba*, enero/febrero (1904), 14; MLDS, September 23, 1851; Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, 1820-97, M-237, 110, U.S. Customs Service, RG 36, NA; *El Nicaraguense*, November 1, 1856, 1; *AG Report, Confederate Volunteers*, vol. 2 (Frankfort, 1918), 302-3; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 122; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 76, 116; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville, Jefferson County, 54, 362; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Logan County, 475; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Russellville, Logan County, 501.



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

In this satiric, contemporary portrait, General Narciso López, leader of a failed 1850 expedition to liberate Cuba, says, "Well, we have not revolutionized Cuba, but then we have Got what we came for, my Comrades came for Glory, I came for Cash . . . & I suppose we're all satisfied."

ty-three-year-old, five-foot-nine-inch-tall farmer from Boone County, was a former private in Company D, Third Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers. John F. Higgins, a twenty-nine-year-old Cincinnati lawyer, participated in the battle of Buena Vista as a sergeant in Company G, Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers. He was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky, and was described as being five-feet-ten-and-a-half-inches tall, dark hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion.³¹

³¹ Thomas J. Kennedy (1827–August 25, 1876) married thirty-two-year-old school-teacher Lucy L. Lauderdale on July 7, 1870, at Castilian Springs, Sumner County, Tennessee, where he later passed way. Leonard Crisler (1827–1904) moved to a farm

The filibuster contingent led by Major William Hardy included some 120 "California immigrants" from southwestern Ohio. They left Cincinnati for New Orleans on the evening of April 4, on the steamer *Martha Washington*. Across the river at Covington, about fifty Kentucky filibusters boarded the vessel. Among the expeditionaries were nineteen-year-old James Balser and his twenty-year-old brother William, both farmers residing with their parents and four sisters in Salem township, Warren County, Ohio. The siblings were privates in Company H of the Kentucky Regiment. The steamer stopped at Louisville the following day and boarded about forty volunteers from that city and from nearby Shelby and Scott counties. A group from Shelbyville, led by John Allen, included twenty-seven-year-old private Marion Cartright Taylor, a former U.S. mail carrier,

by Salt River, in Ralls County, Missouri, in the spring of 1858, where he and his wife Polly raised seven children. During the Civil War, "He did not at any time aid or abet the Rebellion against the United States." John F. Higgins (November 1, 1822-April 15, 1893) returned to Cincinnati after the expedition. He settled in Crab Orchard, Kentucky, where on September 30, 1850, he married thirty-five-year-old Sarah Ann Burch, a widow with four children, who owned thirteen slaves worth \$12,500. On January 6, 1851, Higgins was the first prosecution witness at the New Orleans federal trial against the filibuster leaders for violation of the Neutrality Act. He gave a detailed account of the affair and stated that he "did not expect to go to Cuba when he left" Cincinnati. A decade later, Higgins was practicing law in Crab Orchard, had four slaves, and owned \$5,000 in real estate and \$3,600 in personal property. He and his wife had separated by 1870 and the 1880 census listed them as divorced. Higgins had not worked for more than a year and lived in a boardinghouse. In 1887, he began receiving an eight-dollar-a-month Mexican War pension. Two weeks after Higgins died, his ex-wife filed a sworn affidavit claiming his pension, in which she falsely stated having "lived with her said husband from the date of her said marriage until the date of his death." Her son Stephen Burch gave a sworn affidavit supporting her false claim. Sarah Higgins received the pension until her death on January 11, 1899. Thomas J. Kennedy, Certificate 2852, MWS; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 118; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville District 3, Jefferson County, 252; 1870 Tennessee Federal Census, Sumner County, 585; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Boone County, 159; Leonard Crisler, Certificate 8,786, MWS; 1880 Missouri Federal Census, Saline, Ralls County, 701; John F. Higgins, Certificate 4113, MWS; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, District 2, Lincoln County, 298; 1850 Kentucky Federal Slave Census, Lincoln County, 253; "U.S. Circuit Court," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, January 6, 1851, 1; "Circuit Court of the United States," *New Orleans Daily Delta*, January 7, 1851, 2; 1860 Kentucky Federal Census, Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, 56; 1860 Kentucky Federal Slave Census, Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, 347; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Walnut Flat, Lincoln County, 133; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, 24; 1880 Kentucky Federal Census, Crab Orchard, Lincoln County, 194, 217.

Green River ferryman, and Shelby County schoolteacher and lawyer. They departed at dusk on the 6th, on the steamer *Saladin*, from the Louisville neighborhood of Portland. That day, the *Louisville Courier* announced that “180 adventurers” were going “to New Orleans en route for California – or are on another secret expedition.” The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported on the 6th that “Several old farmers from Clermont county and Warren county, in this State, were here yesterday and the day before, on the hunt of sons who had slipped off from home quietly, and who are supposed to be on some secret expedition.”³²

Further downstream, at Evansville, Indiana, those on the *Martha Washington* encountered Colonel O’Hara and a “little squad” from Frankfort on the steamer *Saladin*. The Cincinnati recruits received saber instruction from a gymnast named Dumm who, mounted on a chicken coop on deck, had them mimicking his fencing motions with canes, sticks, and umbrellas. The *Saladin* stopped at Henderson, Kentucky, where the unemployed twenty-two-year-old William Starling and his brother Charles,

³² James Balser (1831–December 17, 1909) served as a private in Company I, 153rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and Company H, 175th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, during the last year of the Civil War. He afterward settled in Wayne, Clermont County, Ohio, and worked as a huckster to provide for his wife and four children. Marion Cartright Taylor (October 30, 1822–January 4, 1871) was a native of Ohio County, Kentucky, and son of Nicholas Curlet Taylor and Eliza Statler. He returned to his law practice after the expedition and resided in Armstrong’s Hotel in Shelbyville. During the Civil War, Taylor enrolled on September 23, 1861, as captain of Company A, Fifteenth Kentucky Infantry Regiment, for three years in United States service. He was detailed as aide-de-camp on the staff of Major General William Rosecrans in August 1862 and promoted to colonel of his regiment on January 1, 1863. Rosecrans’s chief of staff was Lieutenant Colonel Julio Pedro Garesche, a Cuban who graduated from West Point in 1842. Taylor was wounded in action on May 14, 1864, during the Atlanta campaign. After the war, he returned to Armstrong’s Hotel, where Dr. Richard F. Logan, the son of martyred Captain John Allen Logan, also resided with his family. Taylor practiced law in Shelbyville until his death. Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 6, 8; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, quoted in “The Cuba Hunt,” *Louisville Courier*, April 8, 1850 (both quotes), 3; Quisenberry, *López’s Expeditions*, 46; “Col. M. C. Taylor’s Diary in López Cárdenas Expedition, 1850,” *Register* 19 (September 1921): 79-80; Goddard to Ewing, June 15, 1850, Records Concerning the Cuban Expedition, RG 48, NA; 1850 Ohio Federal Census, Salem, Warren County, 121; Bureau of the Census, Special Schedules of the Eleventh Census (1890) Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War, M123, Roll 65, 4, NA; 1870 Ohio Federal Census, Wayne, Clermont County, 410; Marion C. Taylor, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Kentucky, Fifteenth Infantry, M-397, roll 287, RG 94, NA.

a farmer two years his junior, joined the filibusters. The *Martha Washington* arrived on April 11 at Freeport, Louisiana, three miles north of New Orleans, where the expeditionaries disembarked and acquired lodgings.³³

The next morning, the *Saladin* arrived at New Orleans. Pickett was there to greet them and accompanied O'Hara, Clark Knott, Dr. Thomas J. Kennedy, J. Harkins, Albert W. Johnson, and John Henry Johnson to lodgings in the St. Charles Hotel, where they met with Gonzales. Most of the Kentuckians relocated to boardinghouses, with a group of over a dozen staying in one on the corner of Circus and Gravier streets. The Louisville volunteers lodged with Mrs. Ann Stone at 76 Poydras, who advertised in the *Picayune* for "day, transient or permanent boarders." The Shelby and Scott County men stayed for two days with Mrs. Hughes, at 30 Tchoupitoulas, and then found cheaper quarters with a Madam Bram.³⁴

On April 13, General López met with the expedition officers and ordered everything ready for departure. The next morning, the *New Orleans Picayune* indicated that "some sort of an expedition is about to start against Cuba," headed by López. The three volunteer regiments were to leave New Orleans on the barque *Georgiana*, the brigantine *Susan Loud*, and the steamer *Creole* to rendezvous at Contoy Island, off the coast of Yucatan, before going to Cárdenas, Cuba. Further departure delays prompted two hundred members of the Kentucky Regiment to protest

³³ *United States v. William Hardy*, Indictment, November 1, 1851, U.S. Circuit Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division (Cincinnati), Law Records [old series], 1851-1863, vol. 1 (5), RG 21, Records of the District Courts of the United States, NA; "Steam Boat Register," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 5, 1850, 3; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 8-9 (quote 9), 75; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 80; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 46; *Louisville Courier*, April 5, 6, 1850, 2, 3; U.S. House, *Barque Georgiana*, 96; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Henderson County, 301.

³⁴ The twenty-two-year-old John Henry Johnson was described as "five feet nine inches high; slender built; fair complexion." He had been a first sergeant in Company A, Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, in the Mexican War. Johnson was rejected from joining Masonic Clarke Lodge No. 51 in Louisville because he was unemployed. He appears in the 1850 Federal census as a "soldier" residing with his father in Louisville. "Steamers," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, April 12, 1850, 1; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky at a Grand Annual Communication in the City of Lexington, Commencing August Twenty-Sixth, 1850* (Frankfort, 1850), 62-63; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville District 1, Jefferson, 206; AG Report, *Mexican War Veterans*, 32, 116; "Arrivals at the Principal Hotels," *New Orleans Picayune*, April 13, 1850, 2 (quote); "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 80.

by marching in formation from the suburb of Lafayette to their officers' headquarters at the St. Charles Hotel. The imprudent display, which left many residents "astonished," was ordered to disperse. Richardson Hardy did not regard the manifestation as harmful since the filibusters "had been the subject of several newspaper notices, and the Cuba expedition was the barroom conversation all over the city." Six disillusioned Kentuckians soon returned home along with others from Cincinnati. To stop further desertions among his recruits, Captain Hardy "pledged his honor that they were not going to Cuba, but to California."³⁵

On April 25, Captain William Hardy's men received 220 steerage passage tickets for the barque *Georgiana* when they reported to "Smith's House" in small squads. Hardy and Colonel O'Hara were joined at 5:00 p.m. on the Lafayette wharf by captains John Allen and John A. Logan with some thirty Kentuckians. The entire Kentucky Regiment, except Lieutenant Colonel Pickett who was accompanying López, cleared port on the *Georgiana* at 9:00 p.m. A large crowd gave them three parting cheers, which was enthusiastically returned by the passengers.³⁶

The next morning, the *Georgiana* stopped six miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River. A customs officer went on board, greeted William Hardy, and cleared the vessel for departure. The barque then anchored further downstream, where at 2:00 a.m. a fishing smack appeared alongside, piloted by Laurent Sigur and Kentucky Regiment passengers Major Hawkins and Lieutenant Albert W. Johnson. The filibuster officers boarded the *Georgiana* along with ten boxes containing 250 Louisiana Arsenal brown muskets with bayonets, which were stowed in the hold, and some ten thousand ball cartridges that went in the captain's cabin.³⁷

³⁵ "The Suspected Invasion of Cuba," *New Orleans Picayune*, April 14, 1850, 2 (first quote); Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 11(second quote), 12 (third quote); Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 155, 267; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 80; "The Cuban Movement," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, May 6, 1850, 4; "United States Circuit Court," *New Orleans Crescent*, January 11, 1851, 2 (fourth quote).

³⁶ "Report of Col. O'Hara, Kentucky Reg't.," Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 16 (quote); "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 81.

³⁷ "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 81; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 18-19; "Cuban Expedition," *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, June 17, 1850, 2; "Barque Georgiana, and Brig Susan

The weapons startled some passengers who, in spite of all the hints and insinuations that they were on a Cuba expedition, glibly believed Hardy's recruiting subterfuge of going to work in the California gold fields. Seventeen men, led by Irishman John W. Winter from Cincinnati, demanded an explanation from Colonel O'Hara, who replied that "the expedition was going to Cuba to engage in a revolution." Those indisposed to partake could return to New Orleans on the steamer that would pull the *Georgiana* out to sea the next day. The tug arrived at 10:00 a.m. on April 27, briefly remaining alongside, and "no opportunity was given them to get on board the tow-boat to go back." The *Georgiana* then hoisted its sails and departed for Yucatan.³⁸

The brigantine *Susan Loud* left New Orleans on May 1 with 170 Louisiana Regiment volunteers followed a week later by the *Creole* with the rest of the expedition. The *Creole* departed from Bull's Head, a Lafayette suburb, with about 170 men of the Mississippi Regiment and some twenty stragglers from Kentucky and Louisiana. Kentucky officers in the Louisiana Regiment included Newton Colbert Breckinridge, William E. Woodruff, and George F. Sartain. Breckinridge was a twenty-two-year-old Kentucky farmer and member of Masonic Clarke Lodge No. 51, in Louisville, who was commissioned captain of Company G, Louisiana Regiment. Woodruff, a twenty-three-year-old Louisville artist, was a lieutenant in Company F of the Louisiana Regiment. He had been a first lieutenant of Company A in the Fourth Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers in the Mexican War. Sartain was a twenty-four-year-old attorney and former schoolmate of Marion Taylor, who left a wife and infant daughter in Lancaster, Kentucky. He was a lieutenant in Company I of the Louisiana Regiment and had been a second lieutenant in Company A of the First Regiment, Kentucky Mounted Volunteers during the Mexican War.³⁹

Loud," 96, 116; "United States Circuit Court," *New Orleans Delta*, January 14, 1851, 2; "U.S. Circuit Court," *New Orleans Crescent*, January 11, 1851, 2.

³⁸ "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 81; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 19-20 (first quote 19); "Barque *Georgiana*, and Brig *Susan Loud*," 96-99 (quote 96), 111, 116-17.

³⁹ Newton Colbert Breckinridge later joined the William Walker filibusters in Nicaragua and was killed during the battle of Rivas on April 11, 1856. William E. Woodruff (June 1827-February 5, 1914) was an attorney residing in Louisville with his wife and four children. As a Union colonel during the Civil War, on June 10,



Courtesy of Antonio de la Cova

Colonel Theodore O'Hara's grave in Frankfort Cemetery. Placed by the Kentucky Historical Society in 1913, this handsome stone stands near the graves of Kentuckians killed in the Mexican War, whom O'Hara's elegy, "Bivouac of the Dead," was written to commemorate.

1861, he organized the Second Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, at Camp Clay, Pendleton, Ohio, composed entirely of Ohio men. Woodruff was taken prisoner with his staff during the battle of Scary Creek, (West) Virginia, on July 17, 1861, when they mistakenly rode up to a Confederate line. He was sent to Libby Prison until exchanged. Woodruff transferred to a skeleton regiment until he resigned on February 28, 1863. He returned to Louisville, where he later passed away. George F. Sartain ran for the U.S. House of Representatives on the Free-Soil ticket in 1852. Shortly thereafter, he was confined in the Pulaski County jail and charged with murder. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky, United States Army, 1861-1866*, vol. 1 (Frankfort, 1866), pt. 2: 556-57, 593; Edward A. Pollard, *Southern History of the Great Civil War in the United States* (Toronto, 1863), 172; "War-Time Reminiscences of James D. Sedinger

The three filibuster vessels finally gathered under the lee of Contoy Island on May 14. Some of the men drilled on the beach while others went on the *Creole* to Mujeres Island to obtain provisions and water. At night, Joseph Smith of Louisville would entertain playing the fiddle and John Reading of Shelbyville harmonized "a fine song." O'Hara formed the Kentucky Regiment into six companies and appointed the officers. Two days later, General López instructed the volunteers that those who "did not wish to go to Cuba could now have permission to return to the United States in the *Georgiana*." Thirty-eight men remained behind, including only two Kentuckians. Captain W. T. Knight addressed the deserters on the *Georgiana* from the deck of the *Creole*, "in the most scornful and condemnatory terms."⁴⁰

The *Creole* then departed for Cuba at 1:00 a.m. on the 17th, as Marion Taylor silently prayed: "May God guide and direct our steps." A filibuster report showed that the Liberation Army consisted of 610 men, including 230 in the Kentucky Regiment, whose "long beards and dusky countenances gave them a fierce, uncivilized aspect." The 170 men of the Louisiana Regiment were divided into ten equal companies, each led by a captain and two lieutenants. The Mississippi Regiment had about the same number, but very few were from that state. The expeditionaries were described as "mostly young men . . . Three-fourths of them have served with distinction in Mexico" and included a grandson of Davy Crockett.⁴¹

Uniforms and arms were distributed as the *Creole* headed for Cuba. The best weapons, fifty 54-caliber "Mississippi" rifles,

Company E, Eighth Virginia Cavalry (Border Rangers)," *West Virginia History Journal*, 51 (1992): 55; W. E. Woodruff, Affidavit of Witness, in Thomas J. Kennedy, Certificate 2852, MWS; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville District 2, Jefferson County, 225; 1870 Kentucky Federal Census, Louisville 7th Ward, Jefferson County, 63; *AG Report, Mexican War Veterans*, 2, 116; Robert Granville Caldwell, *The López Expeditions to Cuba, 1848-1851* (Princeton, 1915), 62; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 84; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Garrard County, 266; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, Meade County, 173; Caldwell, *López Expeditions*, 62.

⁴⁰ O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 31, 44-45; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 30 (first quote), 32, 35 (second quote); Gonzales, "On to Cuba;" "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 84.

⁴¹ "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 85 (first quote); O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 19; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 32, 36 (second quote), 53, 56 (third quote), 83; Carlos Hellberg, *Historia Estadística de Cárdenas* (rprnt., Cárdenas, 1957), 62; Gonzales, "On to Cuba"; "Official Reports of the Expedition to Cuba," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 28, 1850, 1.

were assigned to the Kentucky Regiment, which had the best leadership and organization. The old flint muskets went to the Louisianans and the Jennings' breech-loading 54-caliber rifles to the Mississippians. The expeditionaries were issued red flannel shirts and "a black cloth cap, with a Lone Star cockade." The pants were white for the captains, black for the lieutenants, and the troops wore them of various shades and stripes. Almost every man carried a Bowie knife or a revolver and received sixty rounds of ammunition. At night, the men huddled in groups on deck, passing around liquor demijohns and "recounting their deeds of daring in the Mexican war," and their Texas adventures.⁴²

After nearly two days of sailing at a speed of ten knots, the *Creole* entered the fifteen-mile-long Cárdenas Harbor. The steamer docked at the city's longest pier at 2:30 a.m. on May 19. The 610 expeditionaries were delayed over an hour disembarking in single file over a narrow plank. The six companies of Colonel O'Hara's Kentucky Regiment landed first and silently assumed formation. Their color bearer, William Redding, a twenty-six-year-old laborer from Scott County, "carried the only flag," donated by New Orleans ladies, "which the invaders had at Cárdenas." O'Hara quickly detached sixty men under Lieutenant Colonel Pickett, to occupy the railroad yard, a mile-and-a-half from the steamer, on the outskirts of town. This group consisted of Captain John Allen's company and a portion of Captain Albert W. Johnson's company, accompanied by translator Francisco de la Cruz Rivero, and included train engineers to conduct the expedition to Matanzas. Pickett's unit impressed a watchman and an old fisherman on the street, who speedily led them to their objective. O'Hara was waiting for interpreter Juan Manuel Macías when López ordered him to immediately march into town and seize the infantry garrison. The Kentuckians forced a passerby to take them to the barracks

⁴² The U.S. Model 1841 Harpers Ferry (Yager or Jaeger) Rifle was the first-issued percussion cap, rifled-barrel musket. Its state sobriquet resulted from the excellent performance of the weapon in the hands of Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Regiment at the battle of Buena Vista. Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 34 (first quote); O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 26, 64 (second quote); Gonzales, "On to Cuba"; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 85; F. C. M. Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars* (Arcadia, Florida, 1900), 10-11.

which, unknown to the expeditionaries, was not at the main square, Quintayros Plaza, but three blocks further away. O'Hara later erroneously claimed that the frightened man led them in the wrong direction.⁴³

The Louisiana Regiment, guided by two impressed citizens, proceeded in the darkness to Quintayros Plaza, on a street parallel to the right flank of O'Hara. They were followed by the Mississippi Regiment, headed in the same direction, one block to the left of the Kentucky column. When O'Hara assumed that he was being led astray, he countermarched his regiment until encountering López and his general staff, who provided new directions. O'Hara's guide then led the Kentuckians to the main square.⁴⁴

As the Kentucky Regiment approached Quintayros Plaza, O'Hara thought that his guide, "either from fright or stupidity," gave confusing directions on the location of the infantry barracks. The guide indicated that the massive stone jailhouse building at the plaza was not the military barracks, but his captors assumed otherwise. The frightened man was goaded toward the prison gate, where the sentinel pronounced three rapid challenges before discharging his musket. The Kentuckians responded with a deadly barrage. The fifteen soldiers inside the jail fired a volley at the advancing column, disabling

⁴³ After returning to America, Theodore O'Hara penned "Primus in Cuba" on the battle flag carried by the Kentucky Regiment at Cárdenas. The banner was safeguarded by expeditionary Juan Manuel Macías, who draped it over the casket of Francisco Vicente Aguilera, president of the insurrectionary Government of Cuba, at his funeral at City Hall in New York City on February 26, 1877. Aguilera's family gave the flag to General Mario García Menocal, who later passed it on to General Manuel Sanguily. The flag became a permanent fixture in the Cuban Chamber of Representatives in the late 1940s. "Report of Col. O'Hara"; "Report of Lieut. Col. Pickett, Kentucky Reg't.," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 28, 1850, 1; "The Late Piratical Assault on Cuba," *Washington National Intelligencer*, May 29, 1850, 3; "Primera página de la historia de la revolución de Cuba," *La Verdad*, July 7, 1850, 1; John H. Goddard to Alexander H. H. Stuart, December 12, 1850, Records Concerning the Cuban Expedition 1850-51, RG 48, NA (quote); Hellberg, *Historia Estadística de Cárdenas*, 63; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 65-66; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 7, 39; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 85; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 137-38, 308-10; 1850 Kentucky Federal Census, District 2, Scott County, 472.

⁴⁴ "Report of Col. O'Hara"; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 65-66, 68; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 39; "The Late Piratical Assault on Cuba," 3; Gonzales, "On to Cuba."



Courtesy of Antonio de la Cova

Present-day monument and flagpole where the filibusters landed in Cárdenas, Cuba.

a few filibusters, including O'Hara, who was shot in the thigh. Command of the Kentucky Regiment passed to Major Hawkins, instead of disgruntled Major William Hardy. (The role of Hardy during the battle is not mentioned in his brother's book nor in the three official reports by the Kentucky Regiment officers. Hardy later filed his own report, stating the actions of the regiment, but omitting details of his own participation.)⁴⁵

López attached the Kentuckians in Captain Henry H. Robinson's company and the Mississippians of Captain Mizell's Independent Company to the Louisiana Regiment, and ordered them to attack the Capitular House, the headquarters of Lieutenant Governor Florencio Ceruti, across from the jailhouse. He sent the rest of the Kentucky Regiment under Major Hawkins

⁴⁵ Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 39-40, 75-78; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 66-67; "Report of Col. O'Hara" (quote); Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 308-10; Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cárdenas* (Havana, 1928), 90; Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 14; "From Cárdenas," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 8, 1850, 1; "The Late Piratical Assault on Cuba," 3; "Cuban Expedition," *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, June 17, 1850, 2; José Ahumada y Centurión, *Memoria Histórico Política de la Isla de Cuba* (Havana, 1874), 272; Gonzales, "On to Cuba"; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2.

four blocks away to the O'Donnell Street intersection connecting the eastern and western entrances into the city. Command of Captain Knight's company passed to First Lieutenant Joseph Dear and the Kentuckians formed a battle line across the street from the Capitular House.⁴⁶

Captain Robinson's company, in a home across the street, fired on the governor's residence. López ordered torching the Capitular House at about seven o'clock. Ceruti and his men put up a fierce resistance before the flames and smoke forced them to capitulate and surrender the city. Richardson Hardy estimated the toll at "some six or eight killed, and twelve or fifteen wounded; the Spanish loss was probably about the same, notwithstanding that they had fought most of the time behind impenetrable walls." Major Hawkins reported that the Kentucky Regiment "lost eight, killed and wounded," while Lieutenant Colonel Bell indicated "some twenty" Louisianan casualties.⁴⁷

The Kentucky Regiment returned from O'Donnell Street. The troops pitched a field tent in the plaza and stacked their arms; pickets were stationed at a jewelry store and in the outskirts, while a squad buried the dead in the municipal cemetery. The expeditionaries, who had not eaten or slept in twenty-four hours, searched for food and drink or took a nap. General López ceremoniously raised the Cuban flag at Quintayros Plaza and called on the citizens to gather in the square. López distributed proclamations, gave a patriotic speech, and invited the crowd to fight for their country, but none volunteered to take up arms. Resistance against the invaders by Spanish loyalists occurred with sporadic ambushes. General López rode on horseback around town, checking the position of his troops and the situation at the railroad station and the docks. He was unsure of his next move. His undisciplined troops were scattered, four

⁴⁶ Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 15; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 68; "Report of Major Hawkins, Kentucky Reg't.," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 28, 1850, 1; "Report of Lieut. Col. Bell," *ibid.*; "Primera página de la historia de la revolución de Cuba," *La Verdad*, July 7, 1850, 1; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 77; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2.

⁴⁷ Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 15, 17; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 41 (first quote), 44-45; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 85; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 314-15; Sumario, May 22, 1850, Legajo 43, No. 52, Archivo Nacional, Havana, Cuba; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 70-71; "Report of Major Hawkins" (second quote); "Report of Lieut. Col. Bell," *ibid.*

of his principal officers, regimental leaders O'Hara and Wheat, and staff members Ambrosio Gonzales and Captain Murry, lay wounded, and the populace had not rallied to his cause.⁴⁸

At 4:00 p.m., a messenger from Matanzas informed López that all the local troops and artillery were heading for Cárdenas and would arrive in nine hours. Having failed to take Cárdenas by surprise, López decided to reboard his men on the *Creole* and go to the Vuelta Abajo region of western Pinar del Río, where "he would find a force organized and ready to support him." Lieutenant Colonel Pickett and the Kentuckians were recalled from their position at the railroad yard outside of town.⁴⁹

The general relayed to Major Hawkins information that an enemy force of infantry and lancers from the nearby countryside was bearing down on the city. Hawkins was ordered to form the Kentuckians on Quintayros Plaza as a rear guard, and a bugler would signal their return to the steamer. Before Hawkins could post the Kentuckians throughout the plaza, Spanish infantry stealthily gained cover in the nearby houses and alleys and opened fire. John McCann, in chaplain garb, was exiting an eatery one block away, when mortally wounded in the breast. While a group of Spaniards jabbed the fallen preacher with bayonets and lances, Captain Albert Johnson ordered his Kentuckians to fire on them, and "all five fell upon the body of McCann, who expired at that same moment." Major Hawkins hastened the movement of Lieutenant Dear's company to that flank, "and they were just in time to effect their object."⁵⁰

A company of the King's Lancers Cavalry Regiment then rushed the Kentuckians on the plaza. They dashed through the companies of Knight, Johnson, and Wilson, who assembled "in

⁴⁸ Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 17; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 41-42; *La Verdad*, September 25, 1850, 2; Justo Zaragoza, *Las Insurrecciones en Cuba*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1872), 596; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 312, 324, 326-28, 342-47; Hellberg, *Historia Estadística de Cárdenas*, 48-49, 65; *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 8, 1850, 1.

⁴⁹ *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 28, 1850, 1 (quote); "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 85-86; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 356; Boggess, *A Veteran of Four Wars*, 20; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 42; Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 57; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2.

⁵⁰ "Report of Major Hawkins"; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 42-43; Zaragoza, *Las Insurrecciones en Cuba*, 597; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 353-56; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2 (quote).



Soldiers of the Liberating Expedition of Cuba!

The noble mission on which we have started together, is one which would alone suffice to nerve to heroism the arm of every one holding a place in our ranks, even if you were not already the men of the field of Palo Alto and Cheruscos, or brethren and worthy peers of the men of those immortal victories.

Citizens of the great Republic, you are going to give to Cuba that freedom for which your example has taught her to sigh; to strike from the beautiful limbs of the Queen of the Antilles the chains which have too long degraded her, in subjection to a foreign tyranny which is an outrage upon the age; to do for your Cuban brethren what a LAFAYETTE, a STEUBEN, a KOSCIUSKO and a PULASKI are deathless in history for having aided to do for you; and eventually to add another glorious Star to the banner which already waves, to the admiration of the whole world, over "The land of the Free and the home of the Brave."

The people of Cuba would not need that the first guard of honor around the Flag of her nascent independence should be mainly composed of their future fellow-citizens from the United States, but for the peculiar circumstances which have hitherto given to her tyrants a paralyzing clutch upon the throat of their prostrate victim. Unarmed, unable to effect the first beginning of organization for insurrection, and menaced by Spain's perpetual threat of converting into a worse than San Domingo, the richest and loveliest of Islands beneath the sun; your Cuban brethren have been compelled to wait and long for the hour when a first nucleus for their revolution shall be afforded them by a gallant band of sympathizing friends, like that which I esteem it now the highest honor of my life to lead to this brilliant enterprise. The Flag on which you behold the Tri-color of Liberty, the Triangle of

Strength and Order, the Star of the future State, and the Stripes of the three departments of Cuba, once unfurled to the wind on her shores, and guarded by a legion of choice spirits amply powerful to deal Buena-Vista fashion with any force which the detested Spanish Government in Cuba will be able to bring against it; the patriotic people of Cuba will rally in joy and exultation to its support; while you leave behind you untold thousands, eager to tread in your glorious track, under the bend of one of the most eminent chiefs of the unparalleled Mexican campaign, unless indeed we anticipate them by consummating our splendid task before they have time to follow.

Soldiers of the Liberating Expedition of Cuba! Our first act on arrival shall be the establishment of a Provisional Constitution, founded on American principles and adapted to the emergencies of the occasion. This Constitution you will unite with your brethren of Cuba in swearing to support, in its principles as well as on the Field of Battle. You have all been chosen by your Officers as men individually worthy of so honorable an undertaking. I rely implicitly on your presenting to Cuba and the world, a signal example of all the virtues as well as all the valor of the American Citizen-Soldier; and cannot be deceived in my confidence that by your discipline, good order, moderation in victory, and sacred respect for all private rights, you will put to shame every insolent calumny of your enemies. And when the hour arrives for repose on the laurels which await your grasp, you will all, I trust, establish permanent and happy homes on the beautiful soil of the Island, you go to free, and there long enjoy the gratitude which Cuba will never fail generously to bestow on those to whom she will owe the sacred and immeasurable debt of her LIBERTY.

NARCISO LOPEZ.

National Archives and Records Administration
Once in Cuba, General López urged his 610-man army, which included 230 Kentuckians, to "do for your Cuban brethren what Lafayette" had done for the U.S. during the Revolutionary War. The effort in Cuba, López assured, "would eventually . . . add another glorious Star" to the American flag.

simple line along the pavements next to the houses, and fired upon them as they passed," until clashing with Captain Logan's men. Some twenty lancers got through and seven or eight reached Captain Allen's company, including their commanding officer, who was "riddled by more than fifty balls." Logan was "terrible mangled" being "shot through the calves of both

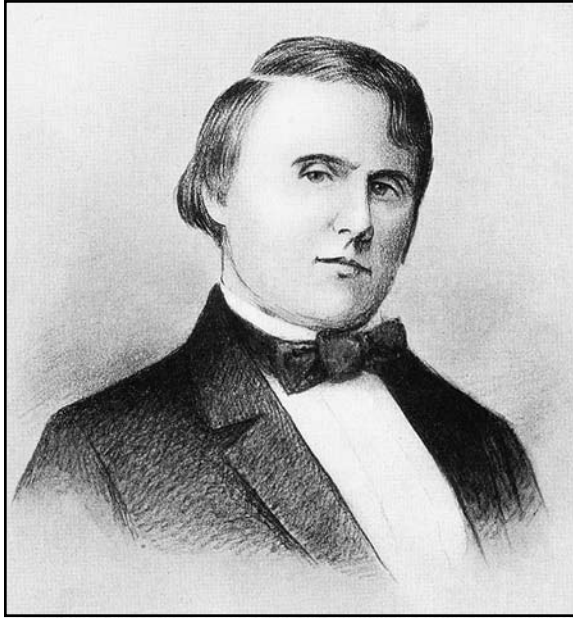
legs" and was carried to the *Creole*. Among the wounded from Louisville were orderly William Barton and Lieutenant Harney, who was "slightly wounded by a lance, in his leg."⁵¹

Private Marion Taylor, of Captain Allen's company, claimed that his unit killed seven lancers, and that the filibusters had forty casualties that afternoon. Pickett and Hawkins reported losses of three officers and five privates killed, and nineteen wounded. Among the dead was Lieutenant James J. Garnett, a Virginian who had settled in Scott County, Kentucky, shot in the forehead. Major Hawkins was accidentally wounded in the leg and two aides were also injured on the *Creole* by the discharge of pistols dropped on deck. The final toll for the filibusters was twenty-six killed, some sixty wounded, and seven deserters. The ten Spaniards killed that day were interred in La Cabaña Fortress in Havana under an obelisk bearing their names. Cárdenas physician Antonio García Ortega assisted fifteen wounded Spaniards.⁵²

After the invaders reembarked at 9:00 p.m., López held a war council, expressing his desire to land at Mantua, in the Vuelta Abajo region. He was initially supported by Gonzales and the other Cubans, Colonel Wheat, Major Hardy, Captain John Allen, and Adjutant Henry Titus but "the greater part of the company officers and consequently nearly all the rank and file, would not assent." Colonel O'Hara "declared the proposition to be madness." The Hardy brothers later described the general's plan as "desperate and reckless." Only seven Louisianans and some fifteen or twenty Kentuckians expressed their willingness to follow López. The dissidents cited "the scarcity of ammunition, the absence of artillery, the scant supply of

⁵¹ Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 43; "Statement of the Kentucky Regiment," *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, June 11, 1850, 2; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2 (all quotes).

⁵² The obelisk honoring the Spaniards who died at Cárdenas on May 19, 1850, lists only six members of the León Infantry Regiment and four soldiers of the King's Lancers Cavalry Regiment. Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, 2: 361-62; Hellberg, *Historia Estadística de Cárdenas*, 66-67; Robert Campbell to John Clayton, May 22, 1850, Dispatches from United States Consuls in Havana, RG 59, NA; "Report of Major Hawkins"; "Report of Lieut. Col. Pickett"; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 43, 45-46; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 86; Caldwell, *López Expeditions*, 72; W. R. Hackley to Solicitor of the Treasury, May 22, 1850, Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State, RG 59, NA.



Quisenberry, Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba (1906)
Colonel William Logan Crittenden (1823-51), nephew of Kentucky governor (1848-50) and U.S. senator John Jordan Crittenden, was a West Point graduate, Mexican War veteran, and commander of a regiment in López's 1851 expedition. When the hastily organized effort failed, he was captured and executed by the Spanish.

coal for the vessel, the limited quantity of water, and the tardiness with which the Cubans at Cárdenas joined the liberating standard." Logan died at midnight "in a composed and quiet manner," after giving Allen directions "with regards to certain matters." Twelve hours later, his remains were "sowed up in a blanket, with thirty pounds of lead at the foot," and consigned to the Florida Straits. The *Creole* was spotted on the morning of the twenty-first by the Spanish war steamer *Pizarro*, but the filibusters reached the safety of Key West one hundred yards ahead of their pursuer.⁵³

⁵³ "Report of Lieut. Col. Pickett" (first quote); Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 31, 46 (second quote), 47, 57 (third quote), 59; "The Late Piratical Assault on Cuba," 3 (fourth quote); "Statement of the Kentucky Regiment," *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, June 11, 1850, 2; "Col. M. C. Taylor's Diary," 86; "The Attack on Cárdenas," 2 (fifth and sixth quotes); Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 62; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 77-80 (seventh quote 78).

Lieutenant Richardson Hardy blamed the failure of the expedition on “the fatal error of landing at Cárdenas, instead of going to Mantua in the first place” and described the entire campaign as “a harum-scarum business.” O’Hara faulted “the fatal consequence of an indiscriminate enlistment of men,” especially the “riffraff” and “blackguard rowdies” who joined the Louisiana Regiment. Cristóbal Mádan questioned how O’Hara “embarked in a movement having only Gen. López for a leader,” instead of an experienced American officer. The U.S. government arrested the expedition leaders, including Kentuckians O’Hara, Pickett, and Hawkins, for violating the Neutrality Act. Charges were dropped in March 1851 after three consecutive trials in New Orleans ended in hung juries.⁵⁴

Five months later, General López hastily organized a final expedition to Cuba in an attempt to support a brief internal uprising. He had previously made arrangements with Major Hawkins to raise a regiment of six hundred carefully chosen Kentuckians to serve as his main force. Instead of waiting for them to arrive in New Orleans, López departed with 468 mostly inexperienced men mustered within forty-eight hours on the streets of the Crescent City. Hawkins and Pickett reached New Orleans on August 3, 1851, the day after the expedition sailed, and the Kentucky Regiment arrived a week later. They were unable to join the filibusters who had landed in Cuba on the eleventh. Within two weeks, nearly three hundred invaders were killed in action or executed, including Kentuckian William Logan Crittenden and Gen. López. The remaining 174 prisoners were sent to Ceuta to labor in the quicksilver mines until amnestied a year later.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 57 (first quote), 72 (second quote); Theodore O’Hara to William Nelson, March 18, December 17, 1854, John A. Quitman Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi (third quote); Cristóbal Mádan to W. Preston, June 5, 1850, box 46, Wickliffe-Preston Family Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky (fourth quote); “U.S. District Court,” *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, June 17, 20, and 21, 1850, 1; “The López Case,” *ibid.*, June 18, 19, 1850, 1; *U.S. v. Narciso López et al.*, cases 1965-1970, RG 21, NA; “Finale of the Cuban Trials,” *New Orleans Delta*, March 8, 1851, 2; “The Late Cuba State Trials,” *Democratic Review*, April 1852, 307.

⁵⁵ William Logan Crittenden (1823-51) graduated last in the West Point class of 1845 and fought in the Mexican War. He relinquished his U.S. Army commission to join the expedition. His uncle, John J. Crittenden, had just resigned as governor of Kentucky for the post of U.S. attorney general. In Cuba, Crittenden led the First Regiment of Artillery, a unit without cannons, even though there were some howitzers

The Kentucky filibusters were a heterogeneous group, ranging from the illiterate to renown teachers, and from the unemployed to lawyers and legislators. All social levels were represented, including laborers, farmers, carpenters, clerks, printers, mechanics, students, engineers, and physicians. Some of the officers came from the best families in the state and were financially secure. Physical descriptions available indicate that the volunteers were taller and more robust than average Americans. Many were bachelors, some were widowers, and others left behind wives and children. After returning from Cuba, some filibusters moved west to Indiana, Missouri, and Arkansas to start homesteads.

A few filibusters had been rejected from Mexican War service, and those who had participated in the second requisition of 1847 arrived in Mexico too late to win glory and honor on the battlefield. Others sought further action by joining William Walker's Nicaragua campaign of 1856-57. During the American Civil War, former López filibusters showed divided loyalties after Kentucky declared itself a neutral state. Some served as volunteer officers in the Union army, others in the Confederate military. Still others did not perform active service in the conflict. A few filibusters were slave owners; most of this group supported the Confederacy and lost their assets during the war.

The Kentucky Regiment that invaded Cuba in 1850 provided the greatest number of Mexican War veterans in the expedi-

in Florida the filibusters hoped to transport at a later time. Captured and slated for execution, Crittenden was ordered, according to Spanish firing-squad tradition, to face away from the rifles and get on his knees. His last words, variously reported, became a minor icon of nineteenth-century military romanticism: "A Kentuckian turns his back on no enemy and kneels only to God." West Point Alumni Association, *Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy*, rev. ed. (Chicago, 1970), 237; Hardy, *History and Adventures*, 47-48; O.D.D.O., *History of the Late Expedition*, 80-81; *New Orleans Picayune*, August 9, 1851, 2; "Expedición del General Narciso López," *Boletín de los Archivos de la República de Cuba*, January/February 1904, 13-14; "Personal Narrative of Louis Schlesinger, of Adventures in Cuba and Ceuta," *Democratic Review*, September 1852, 214-15; Gonzales, "On to Cuba;" Quisenberry, *López's Expeditions*, 69, 73, 89; de la Cova, *Cuban Confederate Colonel*, 98-99; Foxhall Parker to Daniel Webster, September 12, 1851, Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State, RG 59, NA; Filibuster tally in correspondence on the López Expedition to Cuba, 1849-51, State Department Miscellaneous Correspondence 1784-1906, box 1, entry 121, *ibid*; James S. Robbins, *Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett, and the Goats of West Point* (New York, 2006), 133-34, 142-44.



Missouri Valley Collection, Kansas City Museum

This artist's conception of the 1851 death of Kentuckian William Logan Crittenden and his fellow filibusters before a Spanish firing squad became a hallmark of nineteenth-century military romanticism.

tion, was the largest, best trained and organized unit, and had the smallest number of deserters, only two, at Contoy Island. The Kentuckians were the first to land in Cuba, were the only unit that carried the Cuban flag, and served as the vanguard in combat. They were assigned to occupy key defensive positions at the railroad yard and the crossroads leading into the city. The Kentucky Regiment was at the forefront of the attack on the Capituluar House, which prompted the surrender of Cárdenas. They stemmed the final lancer attack and covered the withdrawal in an orderly fashion. The Kentuckians were the first to fall in battle and proportionately represented one-third of the casualties. The Kentucky Regiment came close to changing the destiny of Cuba in 1850 and might have accomplished it, had they participated in the last López expedition to the island.

