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The Taylor Administration Versus Mississippi Sovereignty: The Round Island Expedition of 1849

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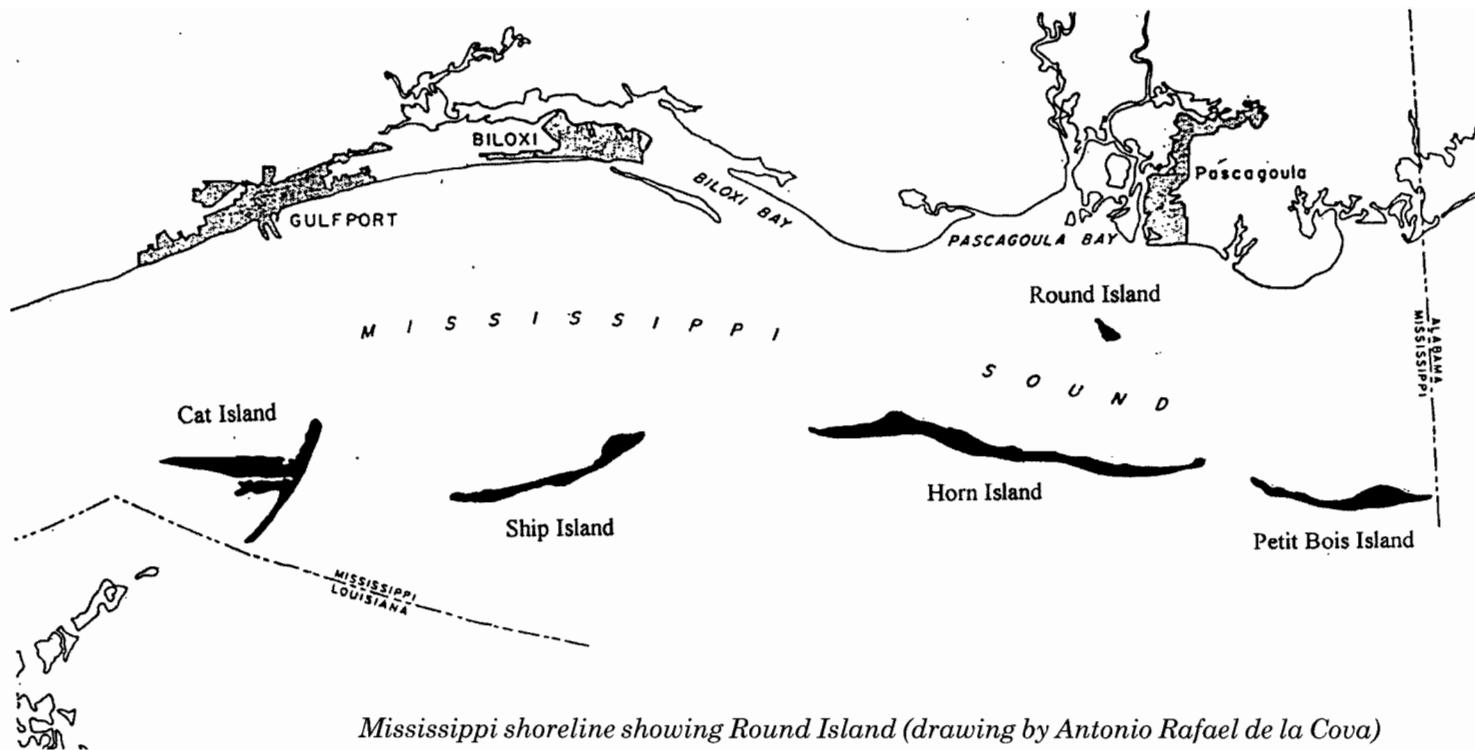
Mississippi Democratic governor Joseph W. Matthews was angry at the federal government. One year prior to the Compromise of 1850, he complained to William Ballard Preston, secretary of the United States Navy, that federal warships were blockading Round Island off Mississippi's Gulf Coast. U.S. Navy commanders Victor Morean Randolph and George M. Totten had issued proclamations ordering the dispersal of a large group of men gathered on the island. Matthews asked Preston to explain the meaning of the proclamations, but his request was ignored, an action prompting Matthews to denounce the blockade as an "outrage" upon states' rights and an "insult" to their state sovereignty.¹

The six-week naval blockade of Round Island motivated the Jackson *Mississippian* to accuse Preston and Randolph of "conspiracy" against the peace of Mississippi and called for their indictment by a state court. The New Orleans *Delta* claimed that the naval officers had committed "a clear usurpation of power and seriously trespassed against Mississippi's State sovereignty."²

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¹ "Commander Randolph," Jackson *Mississippian*, September 14, 1849, p. 2; J. W. Matthews to William B. Preston, September 15, 1849, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Miscellaneous Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy 1801-1884, RG 45, National Archives (hereinafter NA); and "Message of the Governor," *Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi* (Jackson, 1850), 29.

² The Round Island expedition received scant coverage in the filibuster histories of Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855* (New York, 1948); Edward S. Wallace, *Destiny and Glory* (New York, 1957); Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill, 1980); Josef Opatrný, *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s* (Lewiston, N.Y., 1993); and Tom Chaffin, *Fatal Glory: Narciso López and the First Clandestine U.S. War*



Mississippi shoreline showing Round Island (drawing by Antonio Rafael de la Cova)

Who were these men on Round Island? Why was the U.S. Navy concerned with events in the state of Mississippi? Did this confrontation involve the growing sectional alienation that almost disrupted the Union in 1850? To explore these questions is to illuminate a forgotten but important chapter in American political, legal, diplomatic, and military history.

To comprehend the crisis at Round Island, one must first understand the rise of Cuban filibustering in the aftermath of the Mexican War. The Round Island expedition was the first of four antebellum filibuster attempts between 1849 and 1851 by Cuban exiles in the United States to invade their homeland and overthrow the Spanish colonial regime. They were led by fifty-two-year-old Venezuelan-born Narciso López, a disgruntled former Spanish army general married to a Cuban aristocrat, and his thirty-year-old Cuban aide-de-camp, Ambrosio José Gonzales, a lawyer and college professor. Their plan emulated the Texas Republic's model of using American volunteers, weapons, and funds to obtain independence from an abusive and corrupt centralist government. A plebiscite would later decide whether the island would be annexed to the United States.³

López had initially planned to land in Cuba with fifty to two hundred men who would serve as officers, equipped with a large supply of weapons and ammunition, to raise the revolutionary flag. He expected his former military subordinates to mutiny throughout the island by *pronunciamiento*, the populace to rally around them, and a demoralized and mistreated conscript Spanish army to refuse to fight them. According to conspirator

against Cuba (Charlottesville, Va., 1996). These works largely omitted Spanish-language sources related to the Round Island affair, neglected the role of Spanish military conspirators on the island, overlooked the intelligence activities of the Spanish consuls in the U.S., and failed to mention the participation of John T. Pickett, Theodore O'Hara, Dr. George A. Gardiner, Colonel James W. Breedlove, Alonzo B. Luce, George McCleskey, and others who figured prominently in future Cuban filibuster expeditions. None of these books cites any southern newspapers, U.S. Navy log books, Admiralty case files, Round Island collections in Mississippi, newspaper hotel and ship passenger registries, and lists of letters in the post office related to the Round Island episode.

³"General Lopez, the Cuban Patriot," *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review*, February 1850, pp. 97-112; A Flibustiero, *Life of General Lopez, and History of the Late Attempted Revolution in Cuba* (New York, 1851); Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, 3 vols. (Havana, Cuba, 1930-1958); and Antonio Rafael de la Cova, "Ambrosio Jose Gonzales: A Cuban Confederate Colonel," dissertation, West Virginia University, 1994.

John L. O'Sullivan, the New York journalist who coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny," López had contacts in Cuba "with more than one Colonels of regiments, and with various other officers." The Spanish monarchist organ in New York, *La Crónica*, admitted that the "inhuman conspiracy . . . counts on some traitors" in Cuba. The revolutionary newspaper *La Verdad*, smuggled from New York to the Spanish soldiers and civil servants on the island, called on "the wealthy class of Cuba" to disburse the gold needed to win these people over to their cause.⁴

López broadened his plan after realizing that effective assistance could be acquired in the United States if the enterprise was given a more American character. The expedition would be headed by an American commander who would land twenty-five hundred armed men, with a good supply of artillery, on the southern coast of Cuba. If the battle went against them, their allies in the United States would raise a popular clamor on their behalf that would cause thousands of volunteers to rush to their assistance "from every port in the Union." To procure the troops, the Cubans decided to recruit among veteran officers of the Mexican War. Most of the filibuster leadership was Freemasons, and the international fraternity served as an intermediary between them and their American supporters.⁵

The Cuban revolutionaries initially offered the leadership of the expedition to Freemason Mexican War generals William Jenkins Worth and Caleb Cushing, but they "refused to go into the enterprise unless the people of Cuba should encourage it" by first revolting.⁶ López and Gonzales later

⁴ John L. O'Sullivan to Thomas J. Rusk, September 13, 1849, Thomas J. Rusk Papers, the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, cited hereinafter as TJR; *La Crónica*, August 24, 1849, p. 691; and "The Spanish army and employers, with relation to a Political change in Cuba," *La Verdad*, September 6, 1849, p. 4. The Spanish government financed *La Crónica* with \$2,250 annually and also the New Orleans newspapers *La Unión* and *Compilador Americano*. Ultramar, Cuba, Gobierno, Legajo 4629, No. 23, Legajo 4635, No. 16 and Legajo 4643, No. 13, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Spain, cited hereinafter as AHN.

⁵ "The Position and Affairs of Cuba Rightly Explained," *New York Herald*, August 23, 1849, p. 2; "Correspondence of the Courier," *Charleston Courier*, September 6, 1849, p. 2; "Contemplated Cuban Movement," *Vicksburg (Miss.) Whig*, September 18, 1849, p. 2; and Antonio Rafael de la Cova, "Filibusters and Freemasons: The Secret Obligation," *The Journal of the Early Republic*, Spring 1997, pp. 95-120.

⁶ Major General William Jenkins Worth was renowned for his military exploits during the War of 1812, the Seminole War, and the Mexican War. General Caleb Cushing did not see action during the Mexican War, and entered Mexico City with a reserve battalion months after the capital had been pacified. William R. Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, vol. I (Independence, Mo., 1957), 275; *ibid.*, vol. IV, 351;

met with Senator Jefferson Davis, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, in his hotel suite in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Varina Davis overheard the trio talking in whispers for some time before Davis excused himself. As the Cubans were leaving, Mrs. Davis heard her husband recommend Major Robert E. Lee as the only man in whom he had implicit confidence. The senator later informed his wife of his visitors' identities and their purpose: he had been asked to lead a liberating expedition to Cuba in exchange for \$100,000 to be immediately deposited in her name and, after victory, an additional equal amount or a very fine coffee plantation. Davis later recalled that the Cuban leaders met with Lee when he was captain of engineers in Baltimore and made a generous offer for his military services. Since Lee assumed that post in April 1849, the proposition would have been made sometime between then and July. After conferring with the Cubans, Lee went to the capital and discussed the matter with Davis, who twenty years later stated that Lee had declined to accept "a proposition for foreign service against a government with which the United States was at peace." López then decided to lead the expedition himself if no American officer assumed command.⁷

Ambrosio Jose Gonzales, *Manifesto on Cuban Affairs Addressed to the People of the United States* (New Orleans, La. 1853), 7; "On to Cuba," *New Orleans Times Democrat*, March 30, 1884, p. 9; "The Cuba Invasion," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, April 8, 1850, p. 1; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época (1848-1850)*, vol. II (Havana, Cuba, 1952), 36-37; Edward S. Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth: Monterey's Forgotten Hero* (Dallas, 1953), 223, n. 2; "The Cuba Expedition in Washington," *Evening Picayune*, September 5, 1849, 1; Claude M. Fuess, *The Life of Caleb Cushing*, II (New York, 1923), 48-49, 60, 79, 96, 99; "From Havana—Cuba," *Springfield (Mass.) Daily Republican*, May 22, 1850, 2; and "Filibustering," *Mobile Daily Advertiser*, August 28, 1853, p. 2.

⁷ Varina Davis, *Jefferson Davis: A Memoir*, Vol. I (New York, 1890), 411; Hudson Strode, *Jefferson Davis: American Patriot 1808-1861* (New York, 1955), 211; William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (New York, 1991), 197; Emory M. Thomas, *Robert E. Lee: A Biography* (New York, 1995), 146-48; "Remarks of President Davis," *Organization of the Lee Monument Association, and the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, Richmond, Va., November 3d and 4th, 1870* (Richmond, Va., 1871), 13-14; Douglas Southhall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, Vol. I (New York, 1934), 307; and Margaret Sanborn, *Robert E. Lee: A Portrait* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1966), 205. The date of the meeting is not precise. When Mrs. Davis wrote her memoirs forty years later, she mistakenly claimed that the encounter occurred in the summer of 1848 and that within two months López was garroted, whereas this happened in 1851. Chaffin, *Fatal Glory*, 47-48, relies on this error to date the encounter in July 1848, while López was actually traveling to the U.S. The interview apparently took place between April and July 1849, prior to the Round Island expedition, since it is

During the first week of July, recruitment for the Cuban expedition was promoted through suggestive newspaper advertisements, street placards, and handbills in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Mobile, Pascagoula, and New Orleans. In the latter, enlistment was done in the Pelican House by twenty-eight-year-old Colonel George William White,⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Walter F. Biscoe,⁹ and Charles C. Campbell. Many

unlikely that Davis or Lee would have given his consideration to a project that President Zachary Taylor publicly denounced with a presidential proclamation in August 1849. Thomas, *Robert E. Lee*, 148, estimates the meeting between Lee and the Cubans "in late 1849." Portell Vilá *Narciso López*, II, 189, and Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, 197, date the encounter February 1850, during the winter, contradicting Mrs. Davis's recalling summer weather. Lee's biographers and filibuster historians are not precise concerning his movements in Washington, D.C., or New York City during this period.

⁸ George William White had migrated from Ireland to New York City, married an English woman, and worked as a clerk in a Bowery store before moving to New Orleans. He became a shop man in a linen-draper's and was a clerk in a Magazine Street dry goods store. In May 1847, he raised the Montgomery Guard volunteers for the Mexican War. White captained what became Company A of the Louisiana Third Infantry Battalion, in the First Regiment of General Persifor F. Smith's Brigade of Louisiana Volunteers, serving in Veracruz and Tampico. Three months after returning home in July 1848, White organized one thousand men in New Orleans, including Charles C. Campbell, to suppress an indigenous revolt on behalf of the governor of Yucatan. Thomas W. Wilson, *An Authentic Narrative of the Piratical Descents Upon Cuba Made by hordes from the United States headed by Narciso Lopez, a native of South America* (Havana, Cuba, 1851), 4-5; 1850 Louisiana Free Census, Third District in Orleans Parish, 281; *Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory, 1851* (New Orleans, La., 1851), 198; "Our Volunteers," *Commercial Bulletin*, May 18, 1847, p. 2; "News from Vera Cruz and Tampico," *Picayune*, August 14, 1847, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "News and Arrival of the S.S. *Alabama*," October 5, 1847; "List of Officers of Louisiana Volunteers Distinguished by their Service in the War with Mexico," Historical Military Data Louisiana Militia 1847-48, Supplement, W.P.A. Project, 1941, Jackson Barracks Library, New Orleans, Louisiana, 209, 213; "American Soldiers for the Mexican Army," *Tribune*, October 24, 1848, p. 2; *Ibid.*, November 28, 1848, p.1; and "Volunteers for Yucatan," *Ibid.*, December 8, 1848, p. 2. White was erroneously identified as "Joseph A. White" in Wallace, *Destiny and Glory* 40-46, 58-59, and as "Robert M. White" in Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny*, 37.

⁹ Walter F. Biscoe, a New Orleans merchant, was appointed first lieutenant of Company F of the Regiment of Louisiana Volunteers during the Mexican War, departing for Point Isabel in May 1846. Returning to New Orleans when his one-year enlistment expired, Biscoe immediately raised the Battalion of Louisiana Mounted Volunteers, which included many printers, for one year service. He was elected captain before leaving for Veracruz in August 1847. Three months later, while doing scout and reconnaissance duty in Mexico, Biscoe was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the battalion. In January 1848, he briefly returned to New Orleans with his servant to secure a position as colonel from Governor Isaac Johnson but was turned down for having participated as a second in a duel. The Louisiana cavalrymen spent most of

who signed up were Mexican War volunteers who had returned home the previous year. In exchange for their services, the recruits received a \$1,000 bond, signed by López as "Commander in chief of the Liberating Army" and payable by the Republic of Cuba. According to John L. O'Sullivan, the New Orleans expedition and another one from New York would rendezvous off Cape Catoche, Yucatan, and thence "proceed together to the South Side of the Island."¹⁰

their time in Mexico escorting army wagon trains. Biscoe saw action in February 1848 when his eighty-man outfit, traveling from Veracruz to Orizaba, was ambushed at Matacordera by 400 Mexican guerrillas. He lost his wagon train and fled, leaving dead and wounded on the field. Before returning to New Orleans in July 1848, Biscoe and his men patrolled Mexico City after it fell to American forces. "Regiment of Louisiana Volunteers," *New Orleans Daily Tropic*, May 18, 1846; "Captain Biscoe Forming Company," *Picayune*, August 4, 1847; "Election of Officers," *Ibid.*, August 11, 1847; "Captain Biscoe Elevated," *Le Courier De La Louisiane*, November 24, 1847, p. 3; "The Portland returned with 185 discharged soldiers and cabin passengers," *Picayune*, January 2, 1848; *Ibid.*, "For the Seat of War," January 26, 1848; "Louisiana Volunteers," *L'Orleanais*, February 14, 1848, p. 1; *Picayune*, March 7, 1848; "Colonel W. F. Biscoe's conflict with guerrillas," *Ibid.*, March 8, 1848; "From Mexico," *Le Courier de la Louisiane*, March 8, 1848, p. 3; *Mexican War 1847-1848*, Jackson Barracks Library, New Orleans, Louisiana, 213; and Evans J. Casso, *Louisiana Legacy: A History of the State National Guard* (Gretna, La., 1976), 69.

¹⁰ "Proclamation of Gen. Taylor Against Illegal Enterprises," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, August 15, 1849, p. 2; T. Ewing to Clayton, August 7, 1849, John Middleton Clayton Papers, Library of Congress, cited hereinafter as JMC; John M. Clayton to James E. Harvey, August 9, 1849, Dispatches from Special Agents of the Department of State 1794-1906, Record Group 59, National Archives, cited hereinafter as DSA; United States Senate, Executive Document 57, *Message of the President of the United States, Transmitting Reports from the several Heads of Department relative to the subject of the Resolution of the Senate of the 23d of May, as to alleged revolutionary movements in Cuba*, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 67, 69, 101; "Intelligence by the Mails," *New York Herald*, August 8, 1849, p. 3; "The Projected Foray," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, August 18, 1849, p. 2; "The Cuba Expedition," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, August 18, 1849, p. 3; "The Round Island Party," *New York Tribune*, September 15, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," *Evening Picayune*, August 23, 1849, p. 1; "The Cuba Expedition," *Memphis Eagle*, August 28, 1849, p. 2; Jay Higginbotham, *Pascagoula: Singing River City* (Mobile, Ala., 1967), 30; Charles L. Sullivan, *The Mississippi Gulf Coast: Portrait of a People* (Northridge, Ca., 1985), 68; and John L. O'Sullivan to Thomas J. Rusk, September 13, 1849, TJR. One of the recruitment bonds read, "The Republic of Cuba hereby promises by a sacred pledge of the public faith to pay to John B. Brown or his legal representatives, so soon as the Republic of Cuba shall be established, the sum of One Thousand Dollars, in consideration of the engagement of the said *John B. Brown*, to serve truly and honorably in the Liberating Army through the war for the establishment of such independence, and of his faithful fulfillment of the same, to the best of his ability, as a brave and

The Cuban revolutionaries collected \$368,267.01 through contributions and the sale of bonds, according to a balance sheet they provided in 1850 to General John Anthony Quitman, governor of Mississippi. Those raising and allocating funds included various Cuban exile leaders identified by pseudonyms, along with Colonels White and Biscoe, Major Thomas Alexander Harris, New York attorney Theodore Sedgwick, F. & D. Fowler, and O'Sullivan, who used the pseudonym "Rowley." The balance sheet indicated that two vessels were chartered for the expedition. The steamer *Fanny*, capable of a swift 12 knots an hour, was acquired for \$16,817.40 in New Orleans. A partial payment of \$14,000 went to hire the steamer *Sea Gull* in New York.¹¹

Colonel White traveled to New York in mid-July, where a letter awaited him at the post office. Other expedition leaders arriving in Manhattan that month included Mexican War veterans Colonel Lewis Carr of Philadelphia and Kentucky colonels John T. Pickett and Theodore O'Hara. The latter was a twenty-eight-year-old attorney and editor. Pickett was a twenty-seven-year-old Kentucky attorney and former West Point cadet, who had been U.S. consul at the Turk's Island, a post he resigned to join the expedition. Conspirator George A. Gardiner, a Washington, D.C., dentist, joined them a few weeks later. Another Kentuckian, Colonel E. B. Gaither, was authorized to raise 500 recruits in his state. A lieutenant colonel from Ohio mustered "quite a number" of expeditionaries in Cincinnati.¹²

worthy American volunteer (signed) *N. Lopez*, Commander in Chief of the Liberating Army (seal of the Republic). Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, II, 467.

¹¹ "Balance de los Fondos de la Expedición de 1849," John Anthony Quitman Papers, September 18, 1850, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; Bruce S. Allardice, *More Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge, La., 1995), 121; Columbia *Missouri Herald*, November 4, 1880; Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, ed., *Los Primeros Movimientos Revolucionarios del General Narciso López (1848-1849)* (Havana, 1950), 67, 169; and U.S. Senate, Ex. Doc. 57, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 88, cited hereinafter as Senate Doc. 57. The identities of some of the conspiratorial pseudonyms also appear in Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, II, 155, 191, 259.

¹² "List of Letters Remaining in the New York Post Office," *New York Herald*, July 23, 30, and August 4, 11, 1849, p. 4; "The Secret Expedition," *Evening Picayune*, August 30, 1849, p. 1; "Suspicious Military Enterprises," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, II (Frankfort, Ky., 1966), 587; *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky of the Dead and Living Men of the Nineteenth Century* (Cincinnati, Oh., 1878), 593; W. M. Paxton, *The Marshall Family* (Cincinnati, Oh., 1885), 56; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York, 1988), 506; "Movements of Individuals," *New York Herald*, July 16, 1849,

A week later Colonel White employed three vessels to transfer some four hundred recruits from New Orleans, along with others previously encamped on Cat Island, to Round Island. The Mississippi barrier island, so named because of its almost circular shape when it was discovered, was 1 1/2 miles long and 3/8 mile wide. It is located 3 miles southwest of Pascagoula, halfway between that city and the eastern end of Horn Island, rising seven feet above sea level at its highest elevation. Round Island contained about 80 forest acres of slash pine and saw palmetto. A 44-foot brick lighthouse built in 1833 stood on the southwestern shore. On July 31, Brevet Major-General David E. Twiggs, chief of the U. S. Army Western Division headquarters at Pascagoula, sent a message to Secretary of War George W. Crawford regarding his recent conversation with White. The colonel maintained that they were a group of emigrants headed for the California gold rush, but Twiggs had heard rumors that it was an expedition to invade Cuba or revolutionize the Mexican Sierra Madre states. He therefore requested procedural instructions from the War Department.¹³

3; Theodore O'Hara Papers, The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky; "Col. Theodore O'Hara," *The Atlanta Journal*, May 29, 1897, pp. 15-16; Jennie C. Morton, "Theodore O'Hara," *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society*, September 1903, p. 49; J. Stoddard Johnston, "Sketch of Theodore O'Hara," *Ibid.*, September 1913, p. 67; Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, VII (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 4-5; Edgar Erskine Hume, "Colonel Theodore O'Hara and Cuban Independence," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union*, May 1937, 364; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I (Frankfort, Ky., 1966), 410-11; Richard P. Weinert, "The 'Hard Fortune' of Theodore O'Hara," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 1966, p. 33; Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., and Thomas C. Ware, *Theodore O'Hara: Poet-Soldier of the Old South* (Knoxville, 1998); "The Cuban Expedition," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, January 16, 1850, p. 3; and "More of the Cuba Expedition," *Cincinnati Commercial*, August 20, 1849.

¹³ Ray M. Thompson, "Round Island," *Down South*, March-April 1964, p. 15; Tom Charlier, "Grande Batture Islands doomed," *Biloxi-Gulfport Daily Herald*, August 13, 1984; Carol Waddell, "Round Island: Landfall shrouded in mystery touched with romance, tragedy," *Mississippi Press*, October 31, 1984, p. 1; "Round Island Lighthouse," M. James Stevens Collection, Biloxi Public Library, Biloxi, Mississippi; Round Island Papers, Gulf Islands National Seashore Library, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Ocean Springs, Mississippi; Senate Doc. 57, p. 51; *Picayune*, July 13, 1848, p. 2; "Intelligence by the Mails," *New York Herald*, August 8, 1849, p. 3; "Proclamation of Gen. Taylor Against Illegal Enterprises," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, August 15, 1849, p. 2; and "The Cuba Enterprise," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, August 27, 1849, p. 3. Round Island has eroded to only 7/8 mile long and 1/4 mile wide. The original 1833 lighthouse was destroyed by a hurricane, and the one rebuilt in 1859 still stands today. The island served as a drop-off point for cotton

Upon arriving on Round Island, the filibusters slaughtered the cattle of lighthouse keeper A. Delmas, broke his storeroom windows, and stole his provisions. The next day Delmas notified Mobile collector John J. Walker that he feared more trouble, as "they seem to do just as they please." The collector passed the information to Mobile U.S. district attorney Peter Hamilton, who on August 4 requested from Secretary of State John Middleton Clayton the dispatch of a naval vessel from the Pensacola Navy Yard in Florida. The following day, East Pascagoula attorney Thomas Gibbes Morgan wrote to Logan Hunton, the U.S. district attorney in New Orleans, that Colonel White had about three hundred men on Round Island. Some of them had visited the mainland procuring provisions and talking of effecting a revolution in Mexico or Cuba. Morgan requested Hunton to telegraph Washington of their unlawful intent, claiming that his denunciation was motivated to avoid censure against the administration of his "old friend General Taylor."¹⁴

The U.S. attorneys in New Orleans and Mobile wrote details of the expedition to the State Department. Interior Secretary Thomas Ewing, relying on his own sources, told Clayton on August 7 that eight hundred recruits on Cat Island would depart in two weeks on the steamer *Fanny* for the south side of Cuba. He concluded that "A considerable number of the Military in Cuba are said to be in communication with them." The next day, Clayton informed Hunton that an armed expedition was being prepared in New Orleans, whose "real destination is Cuba." Clayton asked Hunton to investigate the matter; if it proved to be true, the president wished him "to proceed, by every means in your power, to enforce the laws, and to prevent the violation of our treaty with Spain."¹⁵

On the ninth, Clayton informed James E. Harvey that he had just been appointed special agent by the president to investigate the projected Cuban expedition, scheduled to depart between August 20 and 25. Harvey received \$500 and was instructed to proceed to Baltimore and Philadel-

smugglers during the Civil War and for Caribbean rum runners during the prohibition era. Round Island was a favorite sailing destination of author William Faulkner.

¹⁴ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 4-6; and "Round Island Expedition," *Commercial Bulletin*, August 25, 1849, p. 2.

¹⁵ Ewing to Clayton, August 7, 1849, JMC; and John M. Clayton to Logan Hunton, August 8, 1849, General Records of the State Department, Miscellaneous Correspondence 1784-1906, Correspondence on the Lopez Expedition to Cuba, 1849-1851, box 1, entry, 121, RG 59, NA.

phia and to coordinate his inquiry with the federal authorities and the local police. From there, Harvey was to proceed to New York and Boston to establish the same surveillance coordination to uphold the Neutrality Act of 1818.¹⁶

Clayton then wired Spanish Minister Angel Calderón de la Barca, vacationing in Glen Cove, Long Island, to return to the capital for consultation. The minister immediately activated the Spanish "system of espionage in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities on the Atlantic coast" that had previously monitored the political activities of Cuban exile opponents. Navy secretary William Ballard Preston, acting on the information provided by General Twiggs, sent a secret dispatch to Home Squadron Commander Foxhall A. Parker, in Pensacola, conveying presidential orders to immediately sail his squadron to Cat Island and suppress the movement. If the expedition had already sailed, Parker was instructed to head for Cuba and prevent their landing.¹⁷

On the tenth, Clayton took it upon himself to draft a presidential proclamation warning that the government had the duty to abide by treaties and prevent attacks by their countrymen against friendly nations. Those Americans intent on the "criminal" invasion of Cuba would be subject to "heavy penalties" and forfeit all future U.S. protection no matter how extreme their situation might get. The document called on all law-enforcement officers to arrest the offenders "for trial and punishment." Clayton mailed a copy to Taylor in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who returned it the following day with his "entire approbation." The president ordered that Preston promptly dispatch the warship *Allegheny* to arrest any Neutrality Law violators. Clayton also notified the U.S. district attorneys in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston that in their cities recruitment efforts were being carried out to invade Cuba and that President Taylor wanted them to investigate the matter with the assistance of local authorities. The Spanish vice consul in Boston later replied to Minister Calderón de la Barca that no military organization had existed there for

¹⁶ John M. Clayton to James E. Harvey, August 9, 1849, DSA; and Senate Doc. 57, p. 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7, 67-68; "Spanish Espionage in New York," *New York Herald*, August 22, 1849, p. 2; "Cuban Spies," *New Orleans Picayune*, August 31, 1849, p. 2; "Spies for Cuba," *North Carolina Greensborough Patriot*, September 1, 1849, p. 1; "Cuban Espionage in America," *Nashville True Whig*, September 1, 1849, p. 2; and "The Expedition to Cuba," *Washington Republic*, August 23, 1849, p. 3.

foreign purposes since the previous winter, when a group of Irishmen had planned to attack Canada in coordination with an Irish rebellion.¹⁸

Clayton received a telegram on the eleventh from U. S. attorney Hunton in New Orleans confirming that Colonel White, with an "unlimited command of money," had already assembled some eight hundred men near Pascagoula. They were being drilled and disciplined for an attack upon Tampico or Yucatan. Five days later, Hunton had to leave New Orleans for Louisville due to family illness, thus ending his involvement in the Round Island affair. The presidential proclamation written by Clayton was issued on the eleventh and published in newspapers nationwide and in Havana. The following day, an esoteric filibuster message depicting a bristling cat appeared in the New Orleans *Picayune*: "PUSSY CATS—ATTENTION!—You are hereby notified to meet at 'The Other Corner' THIS MORNING, Sunday, August 12, 1849, at 7 o'clock, to pay a visit to Cat Island. Every Feline Animal will please be punctual. By order of the C.D.P.C. BRINDLE, Secretary."¹⁹

¹⁸ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 7-10; Z. Taylor to J. M. Clayton, August 11, 1849, Preston Family Papers, The Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; "Proclamation by the President of the United States," *Vicksburg Whig*, August 21, 1849, p. 2; and "Invasion of Cuba," *Columbia Tri-Weekly South Carolinian*, September 4, 1849, p. 2. The Washington *Union* indicated that it was Secretary of State John Clayton, "more than it was his duty to do so," who issued the proclamation. All of Taylor's biographers overlooked that it was Clayton who wrote the presidential proclamation against filibustering. "Whig Cant—"The Man of Peace,"" *Washington Union*, August 16, 1849, p. 3; Silas Bent McKinley and Silas Bent, *Old Rough and Ready: The Life and Times of Zachary Taylor* (New York, 1946), 243; K. Jack Bauer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge, 1985), 279; Holman Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House*, II (Hamden, Conn., 1966), 224; and Elbert B. Smith, *The Presidencies of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore* (Kansas, 1988), 87. Clayton's biographers also have not given him credit for drafting the document: Joseph P. Comegys, *Memoir of John M. Clayton* (Wilmington, N.C., 1882), omits mention of Cuban filibusters and depicts Clayton and Taylor as supporters of the Hungarian revolt; Mary Wilhelmine Williams, "John Middleton Clayton," in Samuel Flagg Bemis, ed., *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy* (New York, 1963), 37; and Richard Arden Wire, "John M. Clayton and the Search for Order: A Study in Whig Politics and Diplomacy," dissertation, University of Maryland, 1972, p. 275, claims Clayton had Taylor issue the proclamation.

¹⁹ Logan Hunton to J. M. Clayton, telegram [August] 11, 8 P.M. [1849], JMC; *Picayune*, August 17, 1849, p. 2; Senate Doc. 57, p. 8; "The President's Proclamation," *Washington Union*, August 15, 1849, p. 2; *Gaceta de La Habana*, August 25, 1849, p. 2; "Special Notices," *Picayune*, August 12, 1849, p. 3.

The next day Clayton received a letter from Calderón de la Barca stating that his sources indicated the invasion was being prepared in New Orleans and other points of the Union and was destined for Cuba. The Spanish minister called for "an energetic action on the part of the federal Government" to stop the expedition. The following day, Navy secretary Preston ordered the *Allegheny* to proceed from the Washington Navy Yard to Cat Island and report to Commodore Parker. Additional officers were assigned to the vessel and its magazines, and shot rooms were replenished. Before Parker received Preston's dispatch of the ninth, he departed Pensacola for Newport, Rhode Island, via Havana on the USS *Raritan*, accompanied by the USS *Saratoga*. He appointed Commander Victor Morean Randolph as senior officer afloat in the Gulf of Mexico during his absence. The commander of the Pensacola Navy Yard, Captain John Thomas Newton, got Preston's order on the seventeenth, and Randolph executed the order the next day with the sloop-of-war *Albany*. Forty-eight hours later, when the steamer *Water Witch* arrived in Pensacola with commanding Lieutenant George M. Totten, Newton sent it on the same mission.²⁰

On the seventeenth, Secretary Clayton reassured Minister Calderón de la Barca that his government "wholly discountenances and condemns" the invasion plans, would keep the strictest watch over any expeditionary movements, and would "earnestly, and in good faith, do all that lies within their power to defeat those designs." The next day, the Spanish consul in Charleston, South Carolina, chartered a schooner that delivered intelli-

²⁰ The 1,000-ton *Albany*, with dimensions of 163 feet in length and 32 feet in berth, carrying eighteen 32-pounder guns, had participated in combat and blockade duty during the Mexican War. The *Water Witch*, a side-wheeled steamer with a top speed of 6 knots, measuring 131 feet in length and 21 feet in berth, armed with an 8-inch shell gun and two 32-pounders, had served with the blockade forces during the Mexican War. William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs 1831-1860, Vol. 11—Spain* (Washington, D.C., 1939), 470; Senate Doc. 57, pp. 69-70, 72, 81-82; Louis N. Feipel, "The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1918, pp. 771-72; "Naval," *Picayune*, July 17, 1849, p. 1; *Washington Union*, August 2, 1849, p. 2; "Naval Intelligence," *New York Herald*, August 3, 1849, p. 1; *Ibid.*, "Naval Movements," August 25, 1849, p. 2; "The Steamship Allegheny," *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, August 31, 1849, p. 1; "Our Navy," *Charleston Mercury*, September 25, 1849, p. 2; and Foxhall A. Parker to W. Ballard Preston, August 14, 1849, Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanding Officers of Squadrons 1841-1886, Home Squadron, Vol. 95, RG 45, NA, cited hereinafter as HSL.

gence messages to the captain-general of Cuba, Federico Roncali, the count of Alcoy. In response, Roncali called out three squadrons of cavalry militia, organized an additional four thousand volunteers, reinforced the southern coast garrisons with men and munitions, promised the army double pay for combat, put to sea the half-dozen schooners and sloops of the station to cruise for the invaders, burned all newspapers arriving in Havana from the United States, and requested an additional eight thousand troops from Spain.²¹

While the U.S. Navy was assigned the responsibility of intercepting the filibusters, General Twiggs was ordered to quell a Seminole Indian uprising in Florida. Prior to leaving for Tampa Bay, Twiggs verified that the Round Islanders were unarmed. The next day, the secretary of the Navy instructed Commander Charles Lowndes, of the sloop-of-war USS *Germantown* in the Boston Navy Yard, to proceed to Havana with urgent dispatches from Secretary Clayton to Consul Robert Campbell. The twenty-two-gun warship was ordered to remain there to interdict the expedition.²²

Meanwhile, expedition preparations in New York City were highly advanced by mid-August. Hotel arrival and post office notices indicate that López, O'Sullivan, Colonel James W. Breedlove, Pedro José Yznaga Hernandez, Captian james C. Marriott, and other leading conspirators were frequently traveling to and from Manhattan. They were joined by Kentuckian Burwell B. Sayre and Cirilo Villaverde, a novelist recently escaped from a Cuban jail. Colonel Robert E. Lee, who had been offered command of the expedition, checked into the Irving House one week prior to the scheduled departure. When it was postponed because of the late arrival of a steamer, Lee departed on the fifteenth for the Ocean House summer resort in Newport, Rhode Island, but then returned to New York

²¹ Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, XI, 72, 472; Senate Doc. 57, p. 13; "Revolution in Cuba!" *Delta*, September 5, 1849, p. 2; "From Havana," *Picayune*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; "Insurrection in Cuba!," *Vicksburg Whig*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; "Havana Correspondence of the Delta," *Delta*, September 18, 1849, p. 2; and "Affairs in the Island of Cuba," and "Latest from Havana," *Picayune*, October 2, 1849, p. 2.

²² "Indian Outrage," *Jacksonville Florida Republican*, July 26, 1849, p. 2; "Army Movements," *Evening Picayune*, August 20, 1849, p. 1; *Delta*, August 23, 1849, p. 2; Senate Doc. 57, p. 71; and Louis N. Feipel, "The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1918, p. 771.

on the twenty-ninth, three days before the next sailing date. After the expedition was again postponed, Lee temporarily sojourned to West Point.²³

When the New Orleans volunteers arrived on Round Island, they selected their officers and non-commissioned officers. Griffith H. Williams of St. Louis was appointed sergeant major. H. H. Driggs commanded the Pelican Company, and a Captain Harris led Company A. Other companies were headed by Captains Boyle and Patterson. The volunteers, camped in tents and wigwams, were mustered by drum and fife every morning and evening, drilled in squads and companies, assigned guard duty, and given countersigns. To transport men and supplies to Round Island, Doctor A. L. Saunders of New Orleans bought the fast regatta sailing yacht *Undine* for \$750.²⁴

The appearance of the USS *Albany* off Pascagoula on the evening of the twenty-first created some excitement and uneasiness among the filibusters. Early the next morning, the *Albany* encountered the *Water Witch* near Cat Island. Finding the place deserted, the former anchored 1 mile southwest of the western tip of Ship Island for the next three days, while the latter docked at Pass Christian, Mississippi. Commander Randolph ordered on the twenty-third that the Pensacola-based light-draft steamers *General Taylor* and *Walker* proceed immediately "with guns mounted" to Round Island.²⁵

²³ "Movements of Individuals," New York *Herald*, August 9, 1849, p. 4; Ibid., "Hotels," August 15, 17, and 30, 1849, p. 2; Ibid., "The Grand Fancy Dress Ball at Newport," August 27, 1849, p. 3; Ibid., "List of Letters Remaining in the Post Office," August 20, 1849, p. 4; "The Abduction of Rey—Statement of Don Civilo [sic] Villaverde," Washington *Republic*, August 27, 1849, p. 2; Emeterio S. Santovenia, *Huellas de Gloria* (Havana, Cuba, 1944), 157; and Thomas, *Robert E. Lee*, 428, n. 14 and 16.

²⁴ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 101-04; "Round Islanders," *Vicksburg Whig*, October 25, 1849, p. 2; "The Round Islanders," Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 25, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," *Picayune*, August 24, 1849, p. 2; "Life on Round Island," *Delta*, September 28, 1849, p. 2; "Sale of the Undine," *ibid.*, August 21, 1849, p. 2; Ibid., August 25, 1849, p. 2; "Excitement at the Pass," New Orleans *Crescent*, August 28, 1849; "Pass Christian Hotel Regatta," *Evening Picayune*, September 5, 1849, p. 1; "The Owls Are Out," *Delta*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; and "Southern Yacht Club Regatta," *Evening Picayune*, September 19, 1849, p. 1.

²⁵ "Naval," *Evening Picayune*, August 23, 1849, p. 1; "Naval Dispositions," New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, August 24, 1849; "The Secret Expedition," *Picayune*, August 24, 1849, p. 2; "Naval," *The Pensacola Gazette*, August 25, 1849, p. 2; Log Book USS *Albany*, October 10, 1848, to September 30, 1849, List of Log Books of U.S. Navy Ships, Stations, and Miscellaneous Units, 1801-1947, RG 24, NA; Log Book, USS *Water Witch*, May 24, 1849, to May 14, 1850; Senate Doc. 57, p. 76; Feipel, "The Navy and Filibuster-

While the *Albany* remained anchored off Ship Island, Commander Randolph sent an officer to New Orleans to confer with the U.S. district attorney and the collector of customs. Randolph then wrote to Navy secretary Preston that there were up to eight hundred adventurers encamped on Round Island awaiting other recruits and steamers from New Orleans to take them to Cuba or to revolutionize Mexico in cooperation with exiled former president Antonio López de Santa Anna. Randolph, assuming that close firing of its large guns would have sent the filibusters scurrying home, regretted that the *Albany's* deep draft did not allow it to get within 8 miles of the shallow waters surrounding Round Island. Randolph then ordered the *Water Witch* to search all vessels approaching Round Island and to prohibit the departure of armed expeditionaries.²⁶

Obedying those orders, the *Water Witch* anchored in 10 feet of water off Round Island at noon on the twenty-fifth. One hour later, three adventurers swam out to the steamer and requested to leave. That night, the steamer's launch cruised between Round Island and Pascagoula to intercept any filibuster reinforcement vessels. The next day, the schooner *Nymph* joined the Round Island patrol. During the afternoon, a crew from the *Water Witch* boarded the schooner *Almira* and discovered a cargo of provisions for the expeditionaries. When the steamer returned to its anchorage off Round Island, they picked up another filibuster deserter. That night, the launch patrolled the west end of Round Island and boarded the schooner *Cora* bound from New Orleans to Mobile.²⁷

On the morning of the twenty-seventh, Commander Totten and a retinue from the *Water Witch* landed on Round Island and delivered a letter to the expedition leaders. It warned the filibusters that if they did not disband within twenty-four hours, provisions would be cut off and "You will find it *impossible* to depart on the expedition. Your steamers will be captured, or sunk in the attempt, if they are ever permitted to leave New Orleans, which is very doubtful. All outlets to the Gulf are watched, and a force is rapidly collecting round you that you cannot dodge." That afternoon several filibuster officers visited Totten on board with a reply letter signed by John Haskins as president and W. Johnston as secretary. It

ing in the Fifties," 775; James L. Mooney, ed. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, III (Washington, D.C., 1991), 61.

²⁶ Senate Doc. 57, p. 74; and "Naval Dispositions," *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, August 24, 1849.

²⁷ Log Book *USS Water Witch*, August 25-26, 1849, RG 24, NA.

described their group as “a body of men *unenlisted, unarmed* and unwilling to do aught that would in any manner compromise our citizenship or liberty.” They claimed to lack the means of immediately leaving the island and, until that was arranged, would not attempt to acquire further supplies. After the visitors departed, the *Water Witch* fired a 32-pound gun in response to three cannon blasts from the *Albany*, anchored off the east end of Horn Island. The steamer fired another signal gun at nine p.m., intimidating some of the expeditionaries.²⁸

The next day, the twenty-eighth, Commander Randolph sent the Round Islanders a lengthy summons, which was also posted in Mobile, claiming that their purpose was “*unlawful*, and that *plunder* is the inducement held out to all who embark in this reckless expedition . . . You are *vagrants* in the eyes of the law, and in fact; and therefore cannot be allowed to occupy your present position, and must immediately disperse.” He then imposed a blockade on Round Island, cutting off all provisions, while the expeditionaries were allowed to depart if they did not embark on seagoing vessels. Randolph offered them free passage to Mobile and warned Colonel White against bringing the *Fanny* to Round Island. The New Orleans collector Samuel J. Peters refused to circulate the Randolph summons, considering it “uncalled for and improper,” lacking “substantial and reliable proof which would sanction coercive action on the part of the government.”²⁹

During the last week of August, expedition preparations accelerated in New York. On the twenty-fourth, filibuster Calvin L. Cole signed a Charter Party with John D. Wood, part-owner and master of the 760-ton steamer *New Orleans* for a voyage from “New York to Chagres or to any port or ports in the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean Sea.” The *New Orleans*, a former Mexican War troop transport, would serve to take the New York contingent to the rendezvous off Yucatan. The contract indicated that “said Steamship shall not carry on freight any arms or ammunition” and that the voyage would commence on or before the twenty-seventh, or as soon as Cole delivered—within ten days—the necessary coal, water, and provisions. The Charter Party specified that “said Steamship shall not be

²⁸ Ibid., August 27, 1849; and “The Round Island Expedition,” *Delta*, August 29, 1849, p. 2.

²⁹ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 78-80; “The Secret Expedition,” *Vicksburg Whig*, September 4, 1849, p. 2; “Important from Cuba,” *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, May 25, 1850, p. 4; and Feipel, “The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties,” 776.

required nor permitted to violate any law of the United States or to do any act in violation of any treaty or treaties between the United States and foreign Nations and that said Steamship shall not be required to enter the waters or ports within the jurisdiction of the Island of Cuba or of its authorities." Cole paid \$7,500 when the document was drawn and agreed to pay another \$12,500 before the steamer and its crew left port. The witnesses signing the Charter Party were Robert W. Taylor and Albert G. Sloo.³⁰

In New York City, large filibuster recruitment meetings were held every other night at Lafayette Hall, on Broadway, and later at Montgomery Hall, on Prince Street. Among the "highly respectable" leaders, "several of them officers of the United States Army," were Colonels Carr, Pickett, and Carlington, Captain Call, Captain Smith Tompkins, and one Johnny Watson, who was reported as boasting that he had "enlisted a large portion of the expedition." On August 31, the *New York Herald* announced that the expedition would be "sailing in a few days." That evening, at a filibuster meeting in Lafayette Hall, the recruits were told that "owing to some delay in the fitting up of the machinery of the steamer," the expedition would be postponed for at least five more days.³¹

The Round Island blockade was tightened on the morning of August 29, when the schooner *Flirt* and the steamer *General Taylor* joined the *Water Witch* and the *Nymph*. Captain John Pearson of the *General Taylor* "was well acquainted with all the islands and shoals in the vicinity of Round Island, and could be of great service in piloting through the intricate passages." The *New Orleans Delta* indicated that "These various vessels, together with innumerable smaller craft, formed a cordon around the Island, cutting off all communications between the natives and civilization." The blockade interrupted filibuster provisions and medicines, and

³⁰ *Robert A. Parrish, Jr., vs. the Steamship* New Orleans, September 14, 1849, Admiralty Case File No. 7-372, Records of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, RG 21, NA, cited hereinafter *Parrish*, ACF.

³¹ Smith Tompkins was a sailor on the U. S. S. *St. Marys* during the Mexican War. John Watson had served in C Company, Third U. S. Artillery during the Mexican War. "The Cuba Invasion," *New York Journal of Commerce*, August 30, 1849, p. 2; "Suspicious Military Enterprises," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition to 'Cuba or Some Other Place,'" *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition Again," *Picayune*, September 9, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," *Commercial Bulletin*, September 15, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition to Cuba or Somewhere Else," *New York Herald*, August 31, 1849, p.

"the men were confined to rice and coffee." At noon the *Flirt*, under Lieutenant Commander Eben Farrand, anchored in 10 feet of water near the Round Island lighthouse, staying in place for the next five days. Four former sailors in the filibuster camp defected to the *Flirt* on the thirtieth. That night, one of the remaining 450 expeditionaries died of brain fever. While a large group attended his burial, a small party tried to plunder "the hospital, in hopes of securing the bread set apart for the use of the sick." Lieutenant Raine, in charge of the commissary, was nearly beaten to death. A knife-wielding guard went to his assistance, mortally wounding one assailant and severely cutting another. The *Water Witch* commander answered the filibuster distress signal and sent his physician ashore to provide medical assistance. Raine was taken on board the steamer for treatment. The *Delta* later blamed Commander Randolph for the bloodshed, calling it a result of driving the filibusters to starvation and violence during the blockade.³²

Commander Randolph, piqued by the newspaper denunciations against him and the Navy, expressed contempt toward the filibusters in a September 1 note to Navy secretary Preston: "It is my deliberate opinion that if a *piratical* enterprise were, or could be, projected at this point to rob upon the high seas, that more than one-half of the four hundred and fifty (450) now assembled on Round Island would instantly volunteer to take part in it." Randolph stated that a fight on Round Island the previous night had resulted in two bad stabbings and that a dozen "good looking" adventurers had boarded the *Albany* and requested service in the U.S. Navy, which he granted. Randolph insisted that he had protected his country from disgrace and could not believe that he would be blamed for his actions. He told Preston that he was going to "starve out" the expeditionaries.³³

2; "The Secret Expedition," *ibid.*, September 1 and 5, 1849, p. 2; and "The Cuba Invasionist," *New York Journal of Commerce*, September 1, 1849, p. 2.

³² "U.S. Steamer Gen. Taylor," *Picayune*, September 3, 1849, p. 1; Log Book, USS *Water Witch*, August 29, 1849, RG 24, NA; Feipel, "The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties," 775; *Commercial Bulletin*, September 3, 1849, p. 2; "The First Great Naval Exploit of the Round Island Blockaders," *Delta*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; "The Round Islanders," *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, October 25, 1849, 2; Log Book, U. S. S. *Flirt*, August 29 to September 3, 1849, RG 24, NA; "From Round Island," *Picayune*, September 3, 1849, p. 1; and "Correspondence of the Delta," and "The Consequences," *Delta*, September 5, 1849, p. 2.

³³ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 87-88.

Randolph changed his mind a few hours later when two hungry filibuster officers visited him and pledged that they and their men would abandon Round Island the next day, provided the expedition steamer did not arrive by then—if in the meantime the Navy would give them rations. Randolph agreed to the terms and the following day instructed *Flirt* Commander Farrand to dispense food from his vessel. Randolph told Farrand that, even if the expeditionaries were acting in bad faith and did not depart, he would partially lift the blockade in twenty-four hours. The *Flirt* delivered to Round Island 200 pounds of pork, 200 pounds of beef, and 200 pounds of bread, while taking two defecting filibusters who were former seamen. Another expeditionary swam to the *Water Witch* that afternoon and requested passage to Pensacola. Commander Randolph later boasted in a letter to a friend in New Orleans that he took pity on the starving adventurers “and fed them from our vessels for two days.”³⁴

This was unknown to Colonel White who, on Sunday, September 2, left New Orleans for Pascagoula with attorney Perry S. Warfield, Major Thomas Alexander Harris, and an alderman of New Orleans’ Third Municipality on the chartered schooner *Victoria*, manned by two Spaniards. White stayed in Pascagoula that night, while the others ran the naval blockade, grounding their vessel on the western beach of Round Island. The *Victoria* unloaded barrels with bread and pork, which one hundred-fifty “gaunt, grizzly, long bearded, hungry looking” filibusters carried ashore. Most of the provisions were removed before the crew of the *Nymph* and the *Albany*’s gig seized the *Victoria*. Major Harris spent the night on the *Nymph*, while his companions and the Spaniards were taken to the *General Taylor*. The schooner and its passengers were released the next morning, with a stern warning to abide by Randolph’s proclamation and stay away from Round Island. Warfield responded by threatening to take legal action against Randolph in a Mississippi Circuit Court. When they returned to New Orleans, Colonel White immediately enlisted more men for the expedition. Meanwhile, in Belleville, Illinois, former governor and Democratic representative John Reynolds organized a large meeting at the Belleville courthouse in favor of Cuban annexation. Resolutions were

³⁴ Ibid., 92-93; Log Book, USS *Flirt*, September 1, 1849, RG 24, NA; Log Book USS *Water Witch*, September 1, 1849, *ibid.*; “Capt. Randolph and the Round Islanders,” *Picayune*, September 9, 1849, p. 2; “The Round Island Blockade,” *Vicksburg Whig*, September 11, 1849, p. 2; and *ibid.*, “Round Island,” September 15, 1849, p. 2.

passed calling on fifty local citizens to join the Cuban patriot army and "severely condemning" Randolph's conduct.³⁵

Captain Newton, commandant of the Pensacola Navy yard, sent a message on September 3 to Randolph via the *Creole*, requesting the return of the *General Taylor* and urging caution on proceeding against the expeditionaries. He feared that Randolph had transcended his powers by issuing the summons without special orders from the government. That same day Randolph sent the Round Islanders a communication saying that he was lifting the blockade, that they could receive provisions but not weapons, and that "hereafter he would not interfere with their proceedings further than to prevent any armed departure in seagoing vessels from the island." Randolph then withdrew his ships from the north side of the island, facing Pascagoula, to allow communication with the mainland.³⁶

That same evening, in New York City, a contingent of filibusters led by an Englishman named Maguire boarded the steamer *Wilson G. Hunt* and went 40 miles out to sea for a rendezvous with the propeller schooner *Sea Gull*, which was supposed to contain the weapons and carry the men to Cuba. This style of departure allowed the filibusters to technically claim that they had left the United States as unarmed emigrants, not as a military expedition, since the arms and the sealed orders to the officers would not be distributed until they were in international waters. When the *Sea Gull* was not located, the expeditionaries returned to port and saw it moored at the quarantine station on Staten Island. Its owner had refused to release the ship until receiving the full sale price. Seven recruits from Philadelphia became dissatisfied, were set ashore and had their passages paid to return home. The next day Calvin L. Cole transferred his Charter Party for the steamer *New Orleans* to Robert A. Parrish, Jr., of Philadelphia, with Lewis Carr and John T. Pickett signing as witnesses,

³⁵ "The Round Island Blockade," *Picayune*, September 6, 1849, p. 2; "The Round Island Blockade Raised," *Delta*, September 6, 1849, p. 2; *ibid.*, "The First Great Naval Exploit of the Round Island Blockaders," September 7, 1849, p. 2; "Round Island," *Commercial Bulletin*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; and "Cuba Annexation," *Belleville (Ill.) Advocate*, September 20, 1849, p. 2.

³⁶ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 90, 92-94; "From Round Island," *Picayune*, September 3, 1849, p. 1; "Late from Round Island," *Delta*, September 5, 1849, p. 2; *ibid.*, "Round Island"; *ibid.*, "The Round Island Blockade Raised," September 6, 1849, p. 2; "Round Island," *Commercial Bulletin*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; and "The Round Island Party," *Tribune*, September 15, 1849, p. 2.

after he was unable to raise the \$12,500 needed for the vessel to sail. That evening, another filibuster meeting was held in Lafayette Hall, and the New York *Herald* reporter “ascertained that fifteen hundred men have been already enlisted.”³⁷

That same afternoon, September 4, ninety-one filibusters from Round Island, led by a Captain Daly, boarded the *Water Witch* for passage home. They criticized Colonel White for leaving Pascagoula after meeting with Randolph, without having visited Round Island. Randolph found that one of the stab victims had died and handed his killer to the Mississippi authorities, who refused to act. Randolph wrote Navy secretary Preston on September 5 that “in less than ten days from this date the whole band will disperse” from Round Island as a result of his blockade. That morning, the filibusters aboard the *Water Witch* were transferred to the *General Taylor* for passage to New Orleans. One expeditionary group stayed on the *Water Witch* as ordinary seamen. The steamer remained stationed near the Round Island lighthouse for another week, along with the *Flirt*. Randolph ordered the *General Taylor* back to the Navy yard two days later.³⁸

On the fifth, George Harrington, Clayton’s private secretary, checked into the Irving House in New York City. The next day Clayton telegraphed two messages to New York district attorney Hall urging the arrest of any man or vessel engaged in the Cuban expedition, which was about to sail. He also sent the same dispatch to Special Agent James E. Harvey at the Astor House in New York. The information had come from Spanish Minister Calderón de la Barca, who received it three days earlier from Gorge de Chacón, his consul in Philadelphia. The report stated that an enlistment for the Cuban expedition was occurring in that city and that the steamer *Sea Gull* would soon retrieve them and another group from Baltimore. In fact, the Baltimore contingent, headed by a former officer of the

³⁷ “The Secret Expedition to ‘Cuba or Some Other Place,’” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; Parrish, ACF; and “The Secret Expedition,” *New York Herald*, September 5, 1849, p. 2.

³⁸ Senate Doc. 57, pp. 90-91; Feipel, “The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties,” 778; “Round Island,” *Crescent*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; Log Book USS *Water Witch*, September 5 to 12, 1849, RG 24, NA; and “From Pensacola,” *Evening Picayune*, September 20, 1849, p. 1. The steamer *General Taylor* was put on the public auction block in Pensacola in April 1852. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, III, 61.

Colonel Hughes Mexican regiment, had already departed for New York. In Philadelphia, "It is said that Col. [George C.] Wynkoop is to be Major General of the forces raised. A great number of the Mexican returned volunteers have agreed to join the expedition." Hall responded by telegraph to Clayton: "Should an opportunity to arrest Gen. L[ópez] or any Cuban occur shall I arrest him or them? Please answer immediately." Clayton quickly ordered Hall to seize the filibuster vessels.³⁹

Hall then instructed the U.S. marshal to detain the steamers *Sea Gull* and *New Orleans* in New York harbor. Captain Isaac McKeever, commandant of the Brooklyn Navy yard, detailed a force of forty armed sailors and ten Marines for the operation. Hall and the boarding party took the steam cutter *D. C. Pell* to where the *Sea Gull* was docked on Staten Island. The ship contained 203 boxes with muskets, rifles, pistols, swords, uniforms, cartridges, gunpowder, and one howitzer. Robert A. Parrish, Jr., and some forty Spaniards and Cubans found on board were released. The *D. C. Pell* towed the *Sea Gull* back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard at sundown. After nine p.m., the marshal and a group of Marines seized the deserted steamer *New Orleans* at the Grand Street wharf. The vessel carried 377 tons of coal, 120,000 rations in 200 barrels, camp equipment, water and medical stores, fully received that morning, and was to have transported up to 900 men. Hall boarded but did not confiscate a third expeditionary ship, the 250-ton bark *Florida*, owned by B. Shaw, since it was unfitted and he considered the other seizures "sufficient." It was being repaired at King's Spar yard after lightning had shivered its main mast. Lewis Carr was arrested and released on \$5,000 bail, and warrants were issued against conspirators Edward Wier, James C. Marriot, William W. McFarlan, Pigot, and Clark.⁴⁰

³⁹ "The Hotels," *New York Herald*, September 6, 1849, p. 1; Senate Doc. 57, 14, 18-19; John M. Clayton to James E. Harvey, September 6, 1849, RG 59, DSA; J. Prescott Hall to J. M. Clayton, September 6, 1849, JMC; "The Cuba Expedition," *Delta*, September 8, 1849, p. 1; "The Cuban Expedition," *Eufaula Democrat* (Alabama), October 9, 1849, p. 2; and "The Secret Expedition to Cuba Frustrated," *Tribune*, September 8, 1849, p. 2.

⁴⁰ William W. McFarlan served in G Company, Thirteenth New York Volunteer Infantry during the Mexican War. Senate Doc. 57, pp. 15-18; Feipel, "The Navy and Filibustering in the Fifties," 779; J. Prescott Hall to John M. Clayton, September 15, 1849, Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State, RG 59, NA; "The Secret Expedition," *New York Evening Mirror*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; "Tremendous Excitement Relative to the Cuba Expedition—Chase Down the Harbor," *New York Herald*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "Movements of the Secret Expedition," September 8, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "The Cuban Expedition," September 9, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedi-

At seven o'clock the next morning, September 7, a "thin and feeble" President Taylor arrived in Manhattan on a steamer from Albany, New York. He was accompanied by his physician son-in-law, Robert Crooke Wood, and another doctor and looked "considerably fatigued" from a recent illness. Taylor had breakfast with Hall and other distinguished gentlemen at a private residence. To "preserve the neutrality of the country," the president ordered breaking up the expedition, but said "that it was not his wish that those concerned in it, thus far, should be proceeded against criminally." Clayton then countermanded his order of the previous day to Hall with a new confidential telegram: "Act according to your own discretion in the case of Carr, and the vessels also. Break up the enterprise—that is the great object. If the government had no other object, it is all important to save the lives of the ignorant dupes of the project. Their fate in Cuba would be most disastrous. No vindictive proceedings are desirable, in my judgement, after the enterprise is broken up."⁴¹

That day, Colonel Robert E. Lee, who had spent the previous week at West Point, arrived in Manhattan for the third time in three weeks. Spanish Minister Calderón de la Barca, accompanied by his secretary Bañuelos and Assistant Secretary Silva, departed Washington that morning for New York, "on business connected with the alleged contemplated invasion of Cuba." He then traveled to Glen Cove and returned in a fortnight to the Union Place Hotel Manhattan. The intelligence reports furnished by

tion to Cuba Frustrated," *New York Tribune*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," *New York Evening Mirror*, September 8, 1849, p. 3; "Seizure of the Steamship New Orleans, and the Propeller Sea Gull," *New York Journal of Commerce*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "The Bark Florida," September 10, 1849, 2; *La Crónica*, September 8, 1849, p. 724; Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, September 8, 1849, p. 3; "The Secret Expedition," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, September 17, 1849, p. 2; "The Cuban Expedition from New York," *Vicksburg Whig*, September 25, 1849, p. 2; and *Parrish*, ACF.

⁴¹ G. W. Crawford to Dr. Wood, August 28, 1849, Papers of the Bringier and Related Families, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans; "Arrival and departure of the President," *New York Evening Mirror*, September 7, 1849, p. 2; "Gen. Taylor in New York," *New York Journal of Commerce*, September 7, 1849, p. 4; J. Prescott Hall to J. M. Clayton, September 7, 1849, JMC; "Arrival and Reception of the President of the United States in the City of New York," *New York Herald*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; "The President's Movements," Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, September 8, 1849, p. 3; "The Secret Expedition to Cuba Frustrated," *Tribune*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "Cuba Expedition," September 11, 1849, p. 1; "The Cuba Hunt," *Richmond Enquirer*, September 11, 1849, p. 2; *Vicksburg Whig*, September 15, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," *Picayune*, September 16, 1849, p. 2; "The Secret Expedition," Jackson *Mississippian*, September 21, 1849, p. 1; and John M. Clayton to J. Prescott Hall,

Calderón de la Barca allowed the captain general in Cuba to inform the Madrid government on September 9 that the expedition posed “no danger for now” and that the “public tranquility continues unaltered” on the island. A week later, the seized vessels and weapons were returned to their owners. Robert A. Parrish, Jr., who had recently assumed the Charter Party of the *New Orleans*, then sued the master of the vessel for \$12,000 in the Admiralty Court for the Southern District of New York. Parrish was represented by attorney Theodore Sedgwick, the filibuster fundraiser. The case was “discontinued without costs to either party” four months later.⁴²

Meanwhile, the steamer *Allegheny*, under Lieutenant Commander William W. Hunter, arrived on the seventh at Pensacola from Norfolk, Virginia. Three days later it proceeded to Cat Island under the orders issued three weeks earlier by Navy secretary Preston. Finding the place deserted, the *Allegheny* joined the *Albany*, which, after leaving Horn Island, had recently anchored off Ship Island. Since Commander Hunter was from New Orleans, Randolph sent him there on the twelfth to obtain filibuster information and to ascertain the designs of the *Fanny*. The steamer had been seized the previous day by William J. Scott, the U.S. marshal in New Orleans. A libel suit had been presented by attorney Charles William Hornor, representing three men claiming they were owed \$118.50 for “repairing her boilers and fitting her for sea in the months of August and September 1849, in the port of New Orleans.” The libelants alleged that the steamer was soon going to leave port. Colonel Biscoe, represented by attorney William D. Hennen, appeared the same day before federal judge Theodore H. McCaleb, declared himself to be the sole owner of the *Fanny*,

September 7, 1849, in James E. Harvey, DSA. Carr’s name and the last sentence of this confidential telegram were deleted when it was printed in Senate Doc. 57, p. 15.

⁴² “Movements of Strangers,” *New York Tribune*, September 8, 1849, p. 5; “Hotels,” *New York Herald*, September 8, 1849, p. 2; *La Crónica*, September 12, 1849, p. 733; “Hotels,” *New York Herald*, September 24, 1849, p. 2; Ultramar, Cuba, Gobierno, Legajo 4633, No. 26, AHN; Vidal Morales y Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires de la revolución cubana*, II (Havana, 1931), 194-95; “The Sea Gull,” *New York Evening Mirror*, September 13, 1849, p. 2; *ibid.*, “The Cuba Expedition,” September 20, 1849, p. 2; Robert E. Lee’s biographers have not clarified his purpose for being in New York City three times around the scheduled departures of the filibuster expedition. Although Jefferson Davis indicated in 1870 that Lee had initially declined the offer, it remains speculative as to whether he later changed his mind.

and offered to post bond for its release, which occurred five days later. The case was settled in favor of Biscoe fifteen months later.⁴³

Meanwhile, John L. O'Sullivan had arrived in the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans with "unlimited powers to act for the interests of the future Republic of Cuba." He consulted with conspirators Emile La Sére, a Democratic representative from Louisiana and co-owner of the *Louisiana Courier*, and Democratic senator William Rufus King, a planter in Cahaba, Alabama, who chaired the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. With their consent, O'Sullivan wrote on September 13 to Texas senator Thomas J. Rusk, a Freemason and veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto, asking him to "come down at once to New Orleans and take the position of head of the whole American part of the movement, second only to the General commander-in-chief." In return, Rusk would receive the rank of major general and \$100,000 at the end of the war. O'Sullivan reassured him that there would be a "treaty of *annexation* which must very shortly follow that event." He indicated that, although the northern branch of the expedition had failed due to "the encouragement of northern Whig opinion," López would arrive in New Orleans in eight or ten days "to reorganize the whole movement from here." A letter from Pascagoula to the Mobile *Herald* on the twentieth said the expeditionaries "expected that they will start now pretty soon. The principal leader is looked for here presently from the North . . . he is the Spanish General Lopez, now or recently residing in New York." Other conspirators were leaving New York and heading south. Pedro and Juan Yznaga and Juan Francisco Portuondo departed in the steamship *Southerner* for South Carolina and checked into the Charleston Hotel on September 25. The next day, Freemasons Alonzo B. Luce and George McCleskey, who later figured prominently in the movement, returned to Savannah.⁴⁴

In New Orleans, twenty filibusters who had previously abandoned Round Island returned there with Major Harris in a schooner carrying

⁴³ Log Book *USS Allegheny*, September 7-10, 1849, RG 24, NA; "The Steamer Alleghany," New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin*, September 13, 1849, p. 2; "Naval," *The Pensacola Gazette*, September 15, 1849, p. 2; and Duncan Williamson, *William Hughes and Samuel Matthews vs. Steam Ship Fanny*, Admiralty Case File No. 6617, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, New Orleans, RG 21, NA.

⁴⁴ John L. O'Sullivan to Thomas J. Rusk, September 13, 1849, TJR; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, IV, 80; United States Congress, *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress* (Washington, D.C., 1989), 1314-15, 1346; Mobile *Herald* letter reprinted in "The Round Islanders," *Washington Republic*, October 3, 1849, p. 3; "Pas-

rations for eight days. Harris then assumed command of the Round Island encampment, and the men were told they would depart on the twenty-second to get their equipment. Randolph wrote to Preston on the fourteenth that 360 expeditionaries remained on the island because local newspapers, which considered the navy's actions a violation of states' rights, continued "to encourage them to persevere in their wild and lawless enterprise." He complained how "I exceedingly regret to hear such a band of would-be buccaniers [*sic*] eulogized as patriotic and chivalrous American citizens; and the navy, and myself in particular, denounced as having shamefully prevented so meritorious a band of heroes from participating in a contemplated great and glorious struggle for liberty and the rights of man!" Randolph concluded that "many of this very band, including their Colonel, were once employed by the whites of Yucatan to exterminate the poor oppressed and degraded Indians" ⁴⁵

The Mobile *Daily Advertiser* published two pieces on September 18 and 19 under the pseudonyms "Truth" and "Justice" denouncing the "unfair and abusive" editorials in the New Orleans *Delta* against naval officers enforcing the blockade. The articles, praising the conduct of Commander Randolph, apparently were written by him. They contained many of the words and phrases employed by Randolph in his letters and communiques—his describing the expeditionaries, for example, as a "band of vagrants." The article of the nineteenth denounced that the fact that "some of this very band on Round Island, with their Colonel at their head, were once hired to butcher the poor oppressed and enslaved Indians" in Yucatan. This sentence was borrowed from Randolph's letter to Preston five days earlier. The articles were reprinted in many Whig newspapers and printed

sengers" and "Arrivals at the Charleston Hotel," *Charleston Courier*, September 26, 1849, p. 2; "Passengers," *New York Morning Express*, September 27, 1849, p. 2; De la Cova, "Filibusters and Freemasons," 112-13.

⁴⁵The Gulf Coast, with cities like New Orleans and Mobile containing considerable Cuban immigrant populations, tended to support the filibusters. C. Stanley Urban, "New Orleans and the Cuban Question During the Lopez Expeditions of 1849-1851: A Local Study in 'Manifest Destiny,'" *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, October 1939, p. 1095; Lester D. Langley, "The Whigs and the Lopez Expeditions to Cuba, 1849-1851: A Chapter in Frustrating Diplomacy," *Revista de Historia de America* (Mexico), Enero-Junio 1971, pp. 12-13; "From Round Island," *Crescent*, September 17, 1849; "The Secret Expedition," *Commercial Bulletin*, September 17, 1849, p. 2; "From Round Island," *Washington Republic*, September 25, 1849, p. 2; "Life on Round Island," *Delta*, September 28, 1849, p. 2; and Senate Doc. 57, p. 99.

by the *Daily Advertiser* press into an eight-page pamphlet entitled *Round Island Expedition: Defence of the Navy*. The *Delta* later sarcastically commented that “the blockaders seem to have very little respect for their own service, when they enlisted for their own ships some twenty or thirty of those ‘incorrigible rouses [sic].’”⁴⁶

On the eighteenth, Lieutenant Commandant Hunter returned to the *Allegheny* from New Orleans and reported to Randolph that he had met with Collector Samuel J. Peters and Acting U.S. District Attorney E. A. Bradford. They informed him that the filibuster shortage of funds and the prompt action of the federal government had paralyzed the Round Island affair. Peters, who held the register of the *Fanny*, stated that only half of the \$16,000 sale price had been paid in New York by the expedition leaders. Hunter asked the collector to notify Commander Randolph by fast steamer in case the *Fanny* or another suspicious light-draft vessel left for Round Island.⁴⁷

The next day, a dozen filibusters enlisted for duty on the *Albany* and gave sworn statements regarding the contemplated expedition. These were in addition to the previous eight who had joined the crews of the *Flirt* and the *Water Witch*. Randolph then ordered Hunter on the twentieth to report to Navy secretary Preston in Washington, D.C., after stopping to refuel the *Allegheny* at the Pensacola navy yard. Three days later, the expedition’s physician boarded the *Flirt* off Round Island and informed Commander Farrand that the filibusters expected to get away that week, since they had rations for only three days and did not expect more. Farrand also received a complaint from the lighthouse keeper of the renewed slaughter of his cattle, and sent him three sentinels.⁴⁸

Fifty filibusters abandoned Round Island on September 30 and were transported to Pascagoula on the *Water Witch* launch. Two days later, the *Delta* reported that “the camp has been broken up” on Round Island after their purpose was “defeated, or postponed” and that “large numbers” had

⁴⁶ *Round Island Expedition: Defence of the Navy* (Mobile, 1849); “The Round Island Affair,” *New York Morning Express*, September 26, 1849, p. 1-S, and Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 5, 1849, p. 3; and “The Round Island Expedition,” *Delta*, October 3, 1849, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Senate Doc. 57, p. 100.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 103-07; Log Book *USS Allegheny*, September 20, 1849, RG 24, NA; “The Blockading Squadron—Again,” *Delta*, October 4, 1849, p. 2; “Naval,” Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 9, 1849, p. 3; and “Arrival of the Allegheny,” New York *Herald*, October 9, 1849, p. 1.

returned to New Orleans. When López failed to arrive in the Crescent City, John L. O'Sullivan departed on the fourth on the steamship *Ohio* for New York via Havana. The volunteers continued leaving Round Island until there were only 120 left on Sunday, October 7. That evening the *Flirt* returned to the Pensacola navy yard. Two days later, the Cuban captain general reported the "complete dissolution" of the expedition to the Spanish secretary of state in Madrid. That same day, the U. S. sloop-of-war *Saratoga* met the *Albany* off Ship Island. The *Saratoga* and the *Raritan* had reached Newport, Rhode Island, the previous month from Havana. Upon receiving the delayed order to sail to Cat Island, the vessels immediately departed. The U.S. steamer *Vixen*, from Norfolk via Pensacola, joined the blockaders on October 10. The next day Commander Randolph proceeded to Round Island in the *Vixen* and removed the last sixty expeditionaries, who had asked for transport to Pascagoula, from which they took other passage to New Orleans. About a dozen "half-starved, ragged, dirty" filibusters ended up "in the streets of Mobile begging for work." Randolph then wrote to *Saratoga* commander William C. Nicholson that "the enterprise is now completely frustrated and broken up, and that the orders from the Hon. Secretary of the Navy have been carried out to the letter." Nicholson forwarded the report to Secretary Preston on the twelfth. Four days later, the *Saratoga* and the *Albany* headed back to the Pensacola Navy yard. The *Water Witch* followed them on the seventeenth, while the *Vixen* docked at Pascagoula. Two days later, Home Squadron Commander Foxhall Parker arrived on the *Raritan* off Round Island and, not finding the expeditionaries or the blockading squadron, sailed to Pensacola. The *USS Germantown*, which had been ordered to Havana to carry urgent dispatches and interdict the filibuster expedition, stayed in Cuba until it departed on the fourteenth for Norfolk. At the end of October, conspirators James W. Breedlove and Dr. George A. Gardiner left New York for New Orleans. After their arrival, Colonel White departed New Orleans on the steamship *Ohio* for New York. Thus ended the Round Island expedition, although its political repercussions lasted for another year.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Log Book *USS Water Witch*, September 30, 1849, RG 24, NA; Foxhall A. Parker to W. B. Preston, September 8, 1849, HSL; "The Round Islanders," *Delta*, October 2, 1849, p. 2; *ibid.*, "The Blockading Squadron—Again," October 4, 1849, p. 2; "Passengers by the *Ohio*," *Picayune*, October 5, 1849, p. 2; *ibid.*, "Dispersing of the Round Islanders, &c.," *Evening Picayune*, October 5, 1849, p. 1; *ibid.*, "Naval," October 8, 1849, p. 1; *ibid.*,

Although the Round Island crisis superficially revolved around the Neutrality Act, an issue of federal law, it had from the start a sectional dimension and brought the issue of states' rights into American foreign policy for the first time. The Totten and Randolph ultimatums against the Round Island adventurers incensed states' rights advocates and fueled party issues. The New Orleans *Delta* argued that because General Twiggs had ascertained that the men on Round Island were unarmed, they did not constitute the armed expedition referred to in the presidential proclamation. Therefore, Totten's "interference" in ordering the men to disperse and cutting off their supplies was "a clear usurpation of power" constituting "a serious violation of law and a trespass upon the rights of citizens, for which he is liable to the courts of Mississippi." The *Delta* argued that if the Round Islanders were in contravention of law, it was up to the federal and state courts to take action, and not a naval officer, whose "duty is not to interpret laws, but to obey orders." The newspaper called for "the magistracy of Mississippi, to resent and punish such an invasion of State sovereignty" by serving Totten with "A constable's warrant, for a trespass and breach of the peace." After Commander Randolph's proclamation was released, the *Delta* compared the juris-consults of the naval officers to that of Caligula and denounced their zeal, "which transcends law, violates the rights of citizenship, and insults the dignity of a sovereign State." The New Orleans *Crescent* and the Jackson *Mississippian* quoted the Mobile *Advertiser* that "Commander Randolph transcends his powers when he declares martial law and gives notice that he will cut off all supplies of provisions intended for the persons on Round Island." The

"Round Island Evacuated," October 13, 1849, p. 1; "Round Islanders," *Vicksburg Whig*, October 11, 1849, p. 2; Ultramar, Cuba, Gobierno, Legajo 4630, No. 11, AHN; "The Cuba Invaders," Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 10 and 23, 1849, p. 3; "The Navy and the Round Islanders," New York *Herald*, October 12, 1849, p. 2; *La Crónica*, October 13, 1849, p. 805; "Naval," *The Pensacola Gazette*, October 22, 1849, p. 2; Log Book *USS Flirt*, October 7, 1849, RG 24, NA; "Arrival of the Raritan and Saratoga at Newport," New York *Tribune*, September 10, 1849, p. 1; "Important Naval Intelligence," *Vicksburg Whig*, September 25, 1849, p. 2; Log Books, *USS Albany*, *U. S. S. Water Witch* and *USS Vixen*, and *USS Germantown*, October 16-17, 1849, RG 24, NA; Charles Lowndes to William B. Preston, September 26, 1849, Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders 1804-1886, RG 45, NA; V. M. Randolph to Wm. C. Nicholson, October 12, 1849, *ibid.*; William Nicholson to W. B. Preston, October 12, 1849, *Ibid.*; Foxhall Parker to W. Ballard Preston, October 19, 1849, HSL; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, II, pp. 176-77; "Passengers Sailed," New York *Herald*, October 17, 1849, p. 4; "Arrivals at the Principal Hotels," *Picayune*, October 25, 1849, p. 2; and *Picayune*, November 1, 1849, p. 2. The *Albany* was lost at sea with all hands

Mobile *Herald and Tribune* indicated that the Navy officers could not supersede the duties of judges and marshals, nor could they detain vessels or citizens without warrants or due process of law. The newspaper also questioned the president's authority of "blockading a portion of one of the States and of declaring to men on it that they should have no supplies or provisions, and should leave it only in particular modes of conveyance."⁵⁰

The detention of the schooner *Victoria* on September 2 had prompted the *Delta* to charge that "Men living in the State of Mississippi have been denied the right of free passage within its limits—have had their property seized and appropriated by strangers to the laws of the State." The newspaper claimed that it constituted "An insult—an outrage of the most grievous and aggravating character." The *Delta* called for a magistrate's warrant to arrest the naval officers implicated in the "unlawful invasion" of Mississippi sovereignty and to have them "appear before a Circuit Court to answer for their acts." The New Orleans *Picayune* described "the illegality of Capt. Randolph's proceedings" as "an invasion of State rights, a violation of the laws of Mississippi, to which the island belongs, for which he is amenable to its tribunals." The New Orleans *Crescent* stated that if the Round Islanders were vagrants or trespassers, as Randolph alleged, "it is Mississippi's law that must make them so, and by the same law only can they be dealt with."⁵¹

Commander Randolph was also denounced in the Jackson *Mississippian* on September 14 for "the outrage committed upon the State of Mississippi," which it termed "a usurpation of power which demands an explanation from the government at Washington." The newspaper demanded that the federal government "disclaim this outrage" and called for "a correspondence between the governor of the State, and the authorities at

after leaving Panama in September 1854. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, I, p. 129. The *Water Witch* was decommissioned in April 1851. Her engine was removed and the hull used for target practice. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, 157.

⁵⁰ "The Round Island Expedition," *Delta*, August 29, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "The Round Island Outrage," August 30, 1849, p. 2; *Ibid.*, "The Round Island 'Blockade and Embargo,'" September 1, 1849, p. 2; "To the Round Islanders," *Crescent*, September 1, 1849; "To the Round Islanders," Jackson *Mississippian*, September 7, 1849, p. 3; Mobile *Herald and Tribune* quoted in "More Outrage," *Richmond Enquirer*, September 14, 1849, p. 4.

⁵¹ "The Outrage upon the State of Mississippi," *Delta*, September 4, 1849, p. 2; "Capt. Randolph and the Round Islanders," *Picayune*, September 4, 1849, p. 2; and "Round Island Blockade," *Crescent*, September 5, 1849, p. 2.

Washington" to resolve the matter. The following day, Mississippi governor Joseph W. Matthews wrote to Navy secretary Preston, enclosing newspaper copies of the Randolph and Totten proclamations, asking "that a copy of the instructions under which they acted be furnished me as soon as convenient." Preston replied with a terse note declining compliance with the request and providing no information on the subject.⁵²

By the time the Round Island expedition disbanded in October, the nation was already embroiled in a dispute over slavery in California and New Mexico that threatened to disrupt the Union. That same month, Mississippians held a state convention in Jackson, presided over by filibuster supporter William L. Sharkey, with Governor Matthews as vice president, strongly voicing their opposition to the Wilmot Proviso, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and the prohibition of the domestic slave trade. The Round Island crisis was a catalyst that set the mood in Mississippi for radical resistance to central authority, which may help explain why General John Anthony Quitman was elected governor in November 1849. Quitman, a known states-rights radical and expansionist, would five months later provide López with weapons from the state arsenal and agree to lead a reinforcement expedition. Had the Round Island filibusters not forced the issue, it is possible that Mississippi's attitude might have been less radical.⁵³

Even after the expedition disbanded, the sectional repercussions persisted. Southern newspapers continuously demanded that Mississippi senators take the issue before the U.S. Senate and avenge Mississippi sovereignty. President Taylor, in his first annual message on December 4, 1849, again denounced American citizens who joined filibuster expeditions to Cuba. He submitted a copy of the presidential proclamation to Congress with a statement that as long as the Neutrality Law was in effect, he would "hold it to be the duty of the Executive faithfully to obey its injunction." Governor Matthews responded with his own annual message to the Mississippi legislature on January 7, 1850, denouncing how "Our

⁵² "Commander Randolph," Jackson *Mississippian*, September 14, 1849, p. 2; J. W. Matthews to William B. Preston, September 15, 1849, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Miscellaneous Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy 1801-1884, RG 45, NA; and "Message of the Governor," *Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi* (Jackson: Fall & Marshall, 1850), 29.

⁵³ "State Slavery Convention," *Vicksburg Whig*, October 4, 1849, p. 2; "Report," *Ibid.*, October 9, 1849, p. 1; Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, I (New York, 1975), 248; May, *Quitman*, 223-25.

coast was kept, for weeks, in a state of blockade, and our citizens deprived of the exercise of their rights of freemen, in a time of profound peace, by martial law, and in total disregard of the civil authorities of the State." Matthews urged the solons to instruct their federal congressmen "to institute an inquiry into this transaction, by resolution or otherwise, as they may deem most proper."⁵⁴

Two weeks later, Democratic representative Albert Gallatin Brown, a former Mississippi governor, introduced a resolution in the House calling for all evidence regarding any armed expedition to Cuba known to the president. Brown specifically asked for "copies of all instructions given to Commander Randolph, or any other naval or military officer of the Government," involved in the Round Island affair. The bill was assigned in a fortnight to the calendar of business. The next day, January 22, Mississippi Democratic senators Jefferson Davis and Henry S. Foote endorsed a similar Senate resolution, which was adopted immediately. As a result, President Taylor complied with the Senate request, and all government documents relating to Cuban revolutionary movements were published on June 19 in Senate Executive Document 57.⁵⁵ Nine days later, the Jackson *Mississippian* denounced the affair:

The Round Island affair was a palpable violation of the rights of our State, and one which must not be passed over in silence. Commander Randolph and the Secretary of the Navy are guilty of a conspiracy against the peace of our State; and the latter officer, were he tried in our courts for offenses committed by his subalterns upon our citizens, might stand a fair chance of being sent to the penitentiary. Indictments ought to be found against all connected with the Round Island affair, and the case brought to trial. Good grounds exists for such a course.⁵⁶

The Round Island fiasco was a severe blow to Cuban separatists, who suffered large economic losses. The United States government publicly

⁵⁴ J. D. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of Presidents*, Vol. V (Washington, D.C., 1898), 11-12; and "Message of the Governor," *Journal of the Senate of the State of Mississippi*, 28-29.

⁵⁵ *The Congressional Globe*, Washington, D.C., 31st Congress, 1st Session, pp. 189, 220, 278, 1023-24, 1030-34, 1042, 1055, 1110, 1112, 1130, 1179, 1254; Senate Doc 57; and Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 130.

⁵⁶ "Attempt to remove the Governor from the State of Mississippi," Jackson *Mississippian*, June 28, 1850, p. 2.

denounced them with a Presidential Proclamation and closely collaborated with Spain to prevent future expeditions, while the Cuban colonial regime received troop reinforcements from Spain and incremented its vigilance at home and abroad. Internal bickering and recriminations among the emigres split them into the opposing camps of the clandestine Cuban Council of Organization and Government, which folded within a year, and the Junta for Promoting the Political Interests of Cuba, which organized three other Cuban expeditions. López was captured and executed during the foray in August 1851, bringing to a close the last antebellum filibuster invasion of Cuba.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ A decade later, the Civil War found many of the Round Island protagonists in opposite camps. Pennsylvania filibuster leaders Robert A. Parrish, Jr., and George C. Wynkoop became Union officers. Parrish was a major in charge of the second battalion of the Seventy-first Pennsylvania Infantry, and Colonel Wynkoop led the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry at the action on the Hartsville Road, Tennessee, in 1862. Filibuster officers John T. Pickett and Theodore O'Hara served the South. Pickett was the Confederate diplomat to Mexico, and O'Hara was lieutenant colonel of the Alabama 12th Infantry, served on the staff of General Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, and functioned as chief of staff to General John Breckenridge at Murfreesboro. Filibuster Doctor A. L. Saunders manufactured "improved submarine batteries" for the Confederacy. State Department special agent James E. Harvey became a Confederate secret informant. Commander Foxhall A. Parker directed a Union naval battery on Morris Island, South Carolina, that attacked Fort Sumter in August 1863. His opponent there was Colonel Ambrosio Jose Gonzales, chief of artillery for the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, who had been López's aide-de-camp. William Ballard Preston, the secretary of the Navy, sided with the southern cause. The two naval officers who neutralized the Round Island expedition, Captain Victor Randolph and Commander Eben Farrand, accused by Mississippians of violating their state sovereignty, resigned their commissions and joined the Confederate Navy. Portell Vilá, *Narciso López II*, pp. 96-97, 455; and "Cuba," *Washington Union*, December 9, 1849, p. 3; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Vol. 1 (Washington, 1880), 287-88; (2), 678-79, 699; (10) part II, 512-55; (16) 877-78; (28) 607; (52), part II, 230; "Resignations in the Navy," *Charleston Courier*, 29 April 1861, p. 2; Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War*, 506; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, II, 587; John E. Kleber, ed., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, 1992), 689; and Hughes and Ware, *Theodore O'Hara*.