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NARCISO LOPEZ.

Cuban Filibustering in Jacksonville in 1851

Antonio Rafael de la Cova

In the summer of 1851, General Narcisco López launched a Cuban filibuster movement from Jacksonville, Florida. This was the third consecutive year that López had led expeditions against Spanish colonial rule in Cuba, the first two having originated in New Orleans in 1849 and 1850. All were based on the model of the Texas Republic, hoping to obtain independence for Cuba through the use of American volunteers, weapons and funds, and to later petition for admission to the Union. In 1851, López broadened the front, organizing Cuban invasion battalions in New Orleans, Savannah, New York City, and Jacksonville. Volunteers were mustered, funds were collected, and military drills were held while the Cuban flag waved in city streets. In Jacksonville, the Cuban filibuster activities generated intense interest and involved a number of community leaders. Local newspapers reported these events for over a year, yet they have never been explored in published histories of Jacksonville. While historians have analyzed these events during the War of Independence (1895-1898), little attention has been given to the first Cuban filibuster movement in Jacksonville in April and August of 1851.¹ In general, scholarship on Cuban filibustering in the 1850s, including Josef Opatrny's recent *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s*, has ignored Jacksonville's involvement.¹

¹ For 1895-98 see Napoleon B. Broward, "Filibustering in Florida," *The Florida Life*, November 1897; F. Funston, "To Cuba as a Filibuster," *Scribner's*, September 1910; Richard V. Rickenbach, "Filibustering with the Dauntless," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, April 1950, 231-253; and Samuel Proctor, "Filibustering Aboard the Three Friends," *Mid-America*, April 1956, 84-100.

For the 1850s see James Esgate, *Jacksonville, The Metropolis of Florida*. Boston: Wm. G. J. Perry, 1885; T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity 1513 to 1924*. St. Augustine, Fla.: The Record Company, 1925; Pleasant Daniel Gold, *History of Duval County Florida*. St. Augustine, Fla.: The Record Company, 1928; Richard A. Martin, *The City Makers*. Jacksonville, Fla.: Covington Press, 1972; James Robertson Ward, *Old Hickory's Town: An Illustrated History of Jacksonville*. Jacksonville, Fla.: The Miller Press, 1985; Jules L. Wagman, *Jacksonville and Florida's First Coast*. Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Publications, 1988; George E. Buker, *Jacksonville: Riverport--Seaport*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1992; and Stewart B. Dowless, "A History of Jacksonville, Florida to 1876." Masters Thesis, Appalachian State University, 1970.

¹ Josef Opatrny, *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 223. American scholarship on the López expeditions began in 1906 with Anderson C. Quisenberry's *López's Expeditions to*

It is the author's contention that a number of prominent Jacksonville residents participated in Cuban filibuster activities, either in a military role or in support groups that acquired recruits, funds, weapons and provisions. However, since the participants cloaked their activities in secrecy by using code names and confidential couriers to avoid prosecution under the Neutrality Law of 1818, it is difficult to find hard evidence of the individuals involved. The ties that bind the Jacksonville filibusterers and volunteers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky and Georgia appear to have been common membership in state militias and status as veterans of the Mexican War. Also, many of the participants were members of a secret fraternity known as the Free and Accepted Masons; in Jacksonville the freemasons were members of Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Thus, the filibusterer's affiliations and movements will be traced through newspaper notices of hotel registries and steamship passenger arrivals. Inferences will be drawn from the numerous incidences of coinciding travel arrangements, hotel registrations and boarding house residencies of Jacksonville men and known filibuster leaders, especially during peak periods prior to scheduled expedition departures.

The Jacksonville Battalion of Cuban filibusterers was commanded by Henry Theodore Titus, a twenty-eight-year-old former Philadelphia postal clerk born in New Jersey. He was described as having "dark brown eyes and hair; standing well over six feet in height and weighing 250 pounds." He had accompanied López as an Adjutant Lieutenant of the Kentucky Regiment in the 521-man expedition that landed on May 19, 1850, in Cárdenas, Cuba. A massive Spanish counterattack and a lack of popular support by Cubans forced the

Cuba 1850-1851 (Louisville, Ky.: John P. Morton & Company, 1906). See also Robert Granville Caldwell, *The López Expeditions to Cuba 1848-1851* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), 92-93.; Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948; Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 76. Relevant works in Spanish are Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, 3 vols. Havana: Compañía Editora de Libros y Folletos, 1930-1958. José Ignacio Rodríguez, *Estudio Histórico Sobre el Origen, Desarrollo y Manifestaciones Prácticas de la Idea de la Anexión de la Isla de Cuba a los Estados Unidos de América*. Havana: Imprenta La Propaganda Literaria, 1900; and Vidal Morales y Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires de la revolución cubana*, 3 vols. Havana: Cultural S.A., 1931, reprint.

³ "Early Recollections of Minnie Titus Ensey, Youngest Daughter of Colonel Henry Theodore Titus, as Told to Her Daughter Fedora Ensey Grey," in Henry Theodore Titus Collection, North Brevard Public Library, Titusville, Florida; "Henry Theodore Titus: Famous or Infamous," *Ibid.*; and U.S. Department of State, *Register of all Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* (Washington: J. & G. S. Gideon, Printers, 1845), 432.

adventurers to retreat to Key West that same day. López and fifteen leaders were indicted in New Orleans the following month for violation of the American Neutrality Law.

Titus, who was not charged, returned to Philadelphia and met with López in August to make plans to raise a filibuster contingent in the City of Brotherly Love before the end of the year.⁴ Instead, Titus moved to Florida, arriving at the Jacksonville Hotel on September 9, 1850.⁵ The establishment, on the southwest corner of Adams and Newnan streets, served as unofficial filibuster headquarters throughout the following year. It had just been renovated with the addition of twenty more rooms, the front extended to over five hundred feet, with piazzas in front and rear, and a capacity for over one hundred and fifty guests. The proprietor was thirty-six-year-old Samuel Buffington, a colonel in the Florida Militia. A native of Georgia, Buffington was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20, and the owner of seventeen slaves.⁶ Soon after arriving in Jacksonville, Titus entered into a partnership with John M. Cureton and a Mr. Harris to operate Florida's first steam-powered circular-saw mill at Empire Point, on the east bank of the St. Johns River by its juncture with Little Pottsburg Creek. Titus would use the mill as a base of operations for the next invasion of Cuba.⁷

Titus was joined at the Jacksonville Hotel by persons who would figure prominently in the local Cuban filibuster movement. Also registered on September 29, were Henry R. Saddler and John N. Reeves, who were part of a nucleus that would frequently follow Titus during the next twelve months.⁸ Reeves was a bookkeeper from Augusta, Georgia.⁹ Saddler was a wealthy Georgia-born planter,

⁴ "The Pampero Trial," *Florida Republican* (Jacksonville), 20 November 1851, hereafter "Pampero Trial."

⁵ "Arrivals at the Jacksonville Hotel," *Jacksonville News*, 14 September 1850, hereafter "Arrivals."

⁶ 1850 Florida Census, Duval County, 92; 1850 Florida Slave Census, Duval County, 79; "Jacksonville Hotel," *Florida Republican*, 5 June 1851, 4; and *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, of the State of Florida; at its Several Grand Communications, from its Organization, A.D. 1830, to 1859, inclusive* (New York: J. F. Brennan, 1859), 855. Hereafter, *Proceedings* is used to identify Freemasons. Samuel Buffington later testified in court regarding his role and that of his establishment in the filibuster movement.

⁷ *Jacksonville News*, 1 March 1851, 4; "Milling," *Florida Republican*, 24 April 1851; Richard A. Martin, "River and Forest: Jacksonville's Antebellum Lumber Industry," *Northeast Florida History*, 1 (1992), 22.

⁸ "Arrivals at the Jacksonville Hotel," *Florida Republican*, 3 October 1850, 3.

⁹ 1850 Georgia Census, Richmond County, 499.

who owned the 5,200 acre Ortega plantation located near downtown Jacksonville. He was also a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20. His 170 slaves made him the second largest slave holder in Duval County in 1850. His brother-in-law, John H. McIntosh, had 187 slaves on Laurel Grove plantation, in the present-day Jacksonville suburb of Orange Park."

During the last week of October, the Titus coterie included Florida Militia General Benjamin Hopkins, his twenty-two-year-old son, John L. Hopkins, a merchant who would command a company of the Jacksonville Battalion, Georgia Militia Colonel Henry H. Floyd, John F. Frink and Jacob Rutherford, who had served as assistant engineer for the *Pampero* steamer in the Cuban expedition of 1850. Born in South Carolina, Benjamin Hopkins raised his family in Georgia and moved with them to a plantation in Putnam County, Florida, in 1845. Floyd was a planter from Camden County, Georgia, whose neighbor, David Bailey, was also a filibusterer. Frink, Florida born, was a farmer from Hamilton County. Others who appeared on a regular basis in Jacksonville with the filibuster leadership were Florida Militia Colonel John P. Sanderson, Daniel C. Ambler and J. Henry Hawkins. Sanderson, a Vermont-born lawyer, was a veteran of the Second Seminole War, owner of a plantation with thirty slaves and a partnership in a dry goods store. Ambler was a New Yorker practicing dentistry in Jacksonville. Hawkins was a native of Kentucky practicing law in Tallahassee. Benjamin Hopkins and Sanderson were members of Solomon's Lodge No. 20."

Plans for the invasion of Cuba were postponed until after the filibuster trial in New Orleans, which began in December. López sent his second-in-command, Ambrosio José Gonzales, to Georgia in late January 1851 to recruit in Columbus, Macon, Atlanta and Savannah. Gonzales, a lawyer and college professor, was the first Cuban to shed his blood for Cuban independence in Cárdenas in 1850. Later, during the American Civil War, he would become Confederate Chief of Artillery for the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida." In 1851, from his Pulaski House headquarters in Savannah, Gonzales

¹⁰ 1850 Florida Census, Duval County; 1850 Florida Agriculture Census, Duval County, 59; 1850 Slave Census, Duval County, 101; "Ortega," *The Jacksonville Historical Society Papers* 1954, 56-57.

" *Florida Republican*, 31 October, 28 November, 1850; *Jacksonville News*, 7 August 1850; "Pampero Trial"; 1850 Census for Georgia: Camden County, 386; 1850 Census for Florida: Duval County, 252; Putnam County, 39; Hamilton County, 577; Leon County, 106; 1850 Florida Slave Census, Duval County, 82-83. See also Ambrosio Jose Gonzales, "The Cuban Crusade: A Full History of the Georgian and López Expeditions," *New Orleans Time Democrat*, 6 April 1884.

¹² Antonio Rafael de la Cova, "Ambrosio Jose Gonzales: A Cuban Confederate Colonel." Ph.D. dissertation, West Virginia University, 1994.

recruited in coastal McIntosh and Camden counties and in northern Florida. A Yankee traveling in the region at the time heard of the filibuster plot and denounced it to New York Senator Hamilton Fish, who promptly relayed the news to President Millard Fillmore. The informant provided details of the invasion plan and claimed that Gonzales "is probably favored by some of the large planters. His instrument with the rank and file is a man known as Harry Titus, a celebrated fighting man." ¹³

López and the indicted filibuster leadership had their charges dismissed in New Orleans on March 7. A few weeks later, the New Orleans *Delta* reported a rumored uprising in Cuba, which circulated widely in Southern newspapers. This prompted the premature departure on April 9 of a filibuster contingent from Rome, Georgia. When they passed through Atlanta the next day, J. Reneas, editor of the Atlanta *Republican*, telegraphed President Fillmore: "Our rail-roads are crowded with an army of adventurers destined for Cuba-- by way of Savannah beyond all doubt."¹⁴ Fillmore issued a Presidential Proclamation calling filibuster expeditions "adventures for plunder and robbery" in violation of U.S. laws, and ordered all civil and military officers to arrest the perpetrators. President Fillmore's appeal appeared in the Jacksonville press.¹⁵

During the ensuing months, presumed filibuster activists arriving in the Jacksonville Hotel included Ambler, Reeves, Thomas E. Buckman, Kingsley B. Gibbs, Joseph W. Hickman and Solomon F. Halliday, accompanied by Theodore O'Hara, a Kentucky-born thirty-one-year-old Mexican War veteran renowned for the poem, *Bivouac of the Dead*, who led the Kentucky Battalion in the Cárdenas invasion. Buckman, a twenty-seven-year-old Pennsylvanian, member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20, later became a Confederate hero for building intricate torpedo mines against Union vessels in the St. Johns River. Gibbs, a forty-one-year-old New Yorker, had been a brigadier major in the Florida Militia in the Second Seminole War, and owned a plantation with fifty-four slaves on Fort George Island. Hickman was a twenty-year-old Floridian without an occupation, residing in the Jacksonville Hotel. Halliday was a member of Masonic Alachua Lodge No.

¹³ Hamilton Fish to Millard Fillmore, 26 April 1851, Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State, roll 179, National Archives, hereafter MLDS.

¹⁴ J. Reneas to President of the U. States, 10 April 1851, MLDS; New Orleans *Evening Picayune*, 7 March 1851, 1; Logan Hunton to Daniel Webster, 7 March 1851, William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs 1831-1860*, Vol. XI--Spain (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1939), 101; and Manning, "The Late Cuba State Trials," *Democratic Review*, April 1852, 307; New Orleans *Delta*, 29 March 1851; *Rome Courier* (Georgia), 10 April 1851.

¹⁵ Jacksonville *News*, 3 May 1851; *Florida Republican*, 8 May 1851.

26 in Newnansville.¹⁶

The Jacksonville expeditionary force was rumored to have "some 600 men, 50 of whom were to be mounted." A St. Mary's, Georgia, resident said of the filibusterers: "Many have volunteered from the middle counties, mostly young men of respectability and good standing. Capt. F[isher], of Tallahassee, who has seen some service in the Indian wars of Florida, and possesses talents, intelligence and influence, is, I learn, to be colonel. Young D--, son of Gen. D--, has a commission; he is a genuine fighting cock. Dr. F--, son of Mayor F--, goes as surgeon. In truth, most of the best young men of that section of the country have volunteered. Many of them are wealthy."

The *Newark Advertiser's* "correspondent in Jacksonville" wrote on April 25 that the expedition would sail within thirty-six hours from rendezvous points on the St. Johns River, in St. Mary's, Georgia, and in New Orleans. He had recently seen "cannon, gun-carriages, rifles, muskets, ammunition and the furniture of an army" in a local warehouse, along with stores of provisions for horses and "large quantities of wood and resin for the fuel on board the steamers, and horses and men are collected in this vicinity, ready for embarkation." He described the officers of the Jacksonville Battalion as "men of bravery and military talent," and the privates as veterans of the Mexican War. He said the troops included Floridians of Hispanic descent, Cubans, and a few who had been previously engaged in the Cárdenas affair. They were able to recruit and drill unimpeded in Jacksonville due to the lack of a federal Marshal in the city. The same correspondent found "it interesting to observe how enticing and contagious is the war spirit." The expedition had been regarded as wild and chimeral by the citizenry the previous day, but "the field pieces and the muskets seem to have

turned the heads of some from whom more wisdom would be expected." This article, reproduced in numerous newspapers throughout the country, including the *Philadelphia North American* and the *Louisville Democrat*, put Jacksonville in the national spotlight.

¹⁶ "Arrivals," *Florida Republican*, 1 May 1851; Keith V. Holland, Lee B. Manley and James W. Towart, *The Maple Leaf: An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck* (Jacksonville, Fla.: St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993), 26; 1850 Florida Census, Duval County, 92, 260; 1850 Florida Slave Census, Duval County, 125; Florida Department of Military Affairs, State Arsenal, St. Augustine, Special Archives Publication 67, Florida Militia Muster Rolls Seminole Indian Wars, 26-27, hereafter FDMA.

¹⁷ *Savannah Republican*, 6 May 1851.

¹⁸ *New Orleans Evening Picayune*, 20 May 1851.

¹⁹ *New York Tribune*, 2 May 1851; *Louisville Democrat*, 8 May 1851.

The local *Florida Republican* reported that Jacksonville had the "appearance of a rendezvous for one branch of the 'patriot' army. Strange arrivals have been unusually frequent, among whom are one or two personages of note, who served as officers in the Cárdenas expedition." ²⁰ The *Newark Advertiser* reported on the 27th that Jacksonville ladies had wrought pretty tri-color Cuban banners, and "half the town seems disposed to go if their wives would let them." From Savannah came news that telegraph wires had been cut at Jacksonville and that "the Judge and District Attorney were persuaded a week ago to take an excursion to the wilderness, and are now where no telegraph or mail can reach them." ²¹

Disturbed by such reports, Savannah Customs Collector Hiram Roberts chartered the steamer *Welaka* and sailed to St. Mary's the evening of May 1, carrying Savannah port surveyor Thomas Burke, U.S. Marshal William H. C. Mills, one deputy, and an inspector, with arrest warrants for López and Gonzales. They were accompanied by a reporter from the *Savannah Morning News*. Arriving at St. Mary's at midnight, Burke was told there were "from 500 to 1,500 persons collected at Jacksonville," but investigations in Jacksonville the following day failed to reveal either armament or evidence of a large gathering of men. ²² The Savannah reporter wrote that according to "reliable information, obtained from respectable sources" there had been "no principal officer of the contemplated expedition ... in Jacksonville lately." He did talk with thirty men "who expressed themselves willing to join the expedition," and concluded that at Jacksonville "there are but few persons who do not sympathize with, and would aid the expedition as far as possible." According to a local newspaper, the arrival of the federal authorities "caused an apparent hiatus in the programme of arrangements" of the expeditionaries. ²⁴ The investigators did not find the large gathering of volunteers because it occurred at Empire Mills, a few miles downriver from the town. Titus had checked into the Jacksonville Hotel on May 1 without arousing suspicion.

The two Jacksonville weekly newspapers favored Cuban liberty. The *Democratic News* expected to "heartily rejoice to see Cuba in the full enjoyment

"Florida Republican, 1 May 1851.

²¹ *Savannah Morning News, 10 May 1851.*

²² Hiram Roberts to W. L. Hodge, 3 May 1851, MLDS; *Jacksonville News, 3 May 1851.*

²³ *Savannah Morning News, 3 May 1851.*

²⁴ "Arrivals," *Florida Republican, 1 May 1851, 3; 1850 Florida Census, Marion County, 243.*

of her liberty and independence." ²⁵ The Whig *Florida Republican* reprinted an article from the *American Telegraph* chastising Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* for regarding the affair as "nothing but the extension of the area of slavery." It argued that "the condition of both races would be improved by the independence of Cuba," especially for slaves, who would then be returned to colonize and civilize Africa." The *Florida Republican* warned that Cuban annexation, by strengthening the South, might "embolden the North to clamor for the acquisition of Canada, thus bringing in another world of free-soil, as the price of our repeated effort to preserve the balance of power to ourselves." It later recommended that President Fillmore buy Cuba from Spain and that the island be "enfranchised by purchase--by spontaneous revolution of her people--or by a revolution begun at their instance by foreign aid, and seconded and finished by themselves."" In contrast, the Northern Whig newspapers were highly critical of all Cuban filibusters, with one Iowa paper calling them a "Slaveocratic Crusade."²⁸ Many Northern Democratic publications favored the Cuban annexation cause, especially the anti-slavery *Cincinnati Nonpareil*. One of its editors, Richardson Hardy, was a Cárdenas veteran.' Democratic support was not unanimous, with some "locofoco" editors denouncing the Cuba expedition.

The filibusterers in the Jacksonville Hotel departed after the federal authorities left the city, but returned on May 9. Titus arrived with company commanders David Province and Samuel St. George Rogers, and George Mooney, owner of the Jacksonville Iron Foundry. Mooney was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Province, a Kentucky native, was a Mexican War veteran and attorney residing in an Ocala boarding house. Rogers was a Tennessee-born attorney from Franklin County, affiliated with Marion Masonic Lodge No. 19 in Ocala.¹

The *Savannah Morning News* reported on May 19 that "during the past

²⁵ *Jacksonville News*, 3 May 1851.

²⁶ *Florida Republican*, 1 May 1851.

²⁷ 15 May 1851.

²⁸ *Burlington Hawk-Eye* (Iowa), 30 May 1850.

²⁹ *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, 15 May 1850, 2; Richardson Hardy, *The History and Adventures of the Cuban Expedition* (Cincinnati: Lorenzo Stratton, 1850); *Louisville Democrat*, 19 May 1851. *Locofocos* were a radical group of New York Democrats organized in 1835.

³⁰ 1850 Florida Census, Franklin County, 324; Marion County, 230; Duval County, 92; *Jacksonville News*, 30 August 1851; and *Florida Sentinel* (Tallahassee), 9 September 1851.

week there had arrived, in the neighborhood of Jacksonville, some 300 men with upwards of 150 horses, from different parts of this State and Florida, whose intention it was to have joined the Cuban expedition." The newspaper estimated that since the start of the movement, "upwards of 1,500 men have from time to time arrived in the vicinity of Jacksonville, with a view to embark from that point."³¹ The filibuster leadership apparently decided to wait until López notified them of a better opportunity to renew their efforts.

López had secretly returned to New Orleans on May 7, while Gonzales had been hidden by planters in coastal Georgia and South Carolina. The Cubans kept in contact by secret courier mail using code names. On June 23, Gonzales wrote from Wilmington Island, three miles east of Savannah, to Cirilo Villaverde, the General's secretary, that he was taking quinine to alleviate a "severe bilious fever."³² Three days later, Gonzales arrived at the Jacksonville Hotel for a meeting with Titus and an inventory of the salvaged weapons and munitions. On July 2, López wrote to Gonzales advising him to recuperate in the sulphur baths of Virginia and await further instructions."

Events in Cuba, fueled by false reports of rebel successes, encouraged the filibusterers in the United States to resume their activities. An annexationist uprising occurred in Puerto Príncipe, Cuba, on July 4, led by thirty-four-year-old attorney Joaquín de Agüero, with forty-four followers. The group was captured three weeks later, but news of the defeat was not published in the United States until late August."

The day after reports of the Cuban insurrection surfaced, Buckman again checked into the Jacksonville Hotel, followed by the Cubans Theodore O'Hara and Cirilo Villaverde and Leopoldo Turla.³⁵ The conspirators continued to meet at Empire Mills until early August, when Titus sold Empire Mills and invested his proceeds in equipment for the expedition. He then invited Villaverde to join Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Other Cubans, among them Angulo Guridi and Cárdenas expeditionary Juan Manuel Macias, continued to reach Jacksonville.

" *Savannah Morning News*, 19 May 1851.

³² Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época*, Vol. III (Havana: Compartía Editora de Libros y Folletos, 1958), 228-229.

³³ Ambrosio José Gonzales, *Manifiesto on Cuban Affairs Addressed to the People of the United States* (New Orleans: Daily Delta, 1853), 10-11; and , "The Cuban Crusade," 9.

³⁴ Jorge Juárez Cana, *Hombres del 51* (Havana: Imprenta "El Siglo XX," 1930), 7, 58; New Orleans *Evening Picayune*, 18 & 21 August 1851.

³⁵ *Florida Republican*, 23 & 28 July, 7 August, 18 September, 8 October, 1851.

Another Cárdenas veteran, José Sánchez-Iznaga, arrived from New York. Agustín Manresa landed August 3 from New Orleans with a letter from López, dated July 24, announcing that his expedition would leave that city July 31 and arrive in Jacksonville August 4. Subsequent events would delay the arrival until August 31³⁶

The delays were caused by mechanical problems with the steamer *Pampero*, bought for \$60,000 by New Orleans *Delta* publisher Laurent J. Sigur to carry the expedition. When the vessel reached New Orleans on July 29, Captain Armstrong Irvine Lewis reported that "his boilers were burnt out" from a collapsed exhaust pipe. Since López insisted on leaving immediately, a shoddy replacement pipe installed while the steamer was being towed out to sea slowed the *Pampero* to a speed of eight knots instead of its usual fifteen. The *Pampero* and its 450 expeditionaries did not arrive at Key West until August 10. They received an enthusiastic reception from the populace, and from U.S. Senator Stephen Mallory, who put a hair ring on the general's finger for good luck. When López heard an erroneous rumor that the Cuban insurrection had spread to thirteen towns, he called a war council. Officers informed him that the men "were now impatient to strike straight across for the nearest part of the Island, and unwilling to go round first to the St. Johns for the artillery, munitions and men..." López decided to strike Cuba immediately and send the steamer to Jacksonville later.

After landing the expedition in western Cuba, the *Pampero* returned to Key West under the Cuban flag in the early morning of August 13. Its name was obliterated from the hull, although Washington, D.C. appeared as the home port, and the ship's furniture and apparel bore the *Pampero* label. When Customs Inspector Alexander Patterson boarded to request the ship's papers, Captain Lewis provided a clearance signed by López three days earlier, identifying Lewis as a Cuban citizen and the vessel as the *Cuban Liberator*, cleared from the port of Cabañas to Savannah, with ballast, and listing the crew members. The inspector took the paper to the Customs Collector on shore, who immediately ordered the steamer seized, but Lewis was able to depart after receiving only a warning. The *Pampero* ran aground approaching the Cape Florida shore, while trying to land a party to chop wood for fuel. Two days were lost before a salvage vessel dislodged them. Several recruits, described by the U.S. District Attorney as "men

³⁶ Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época, I* (Havana: Cultural, S.A., 1930), 76-77; and Vol. III, 483, 656.

³⁷ Louis Schlesinger, "Personal Narrative of Louis Schlesinger, of Adventures in Cuba and Ceuta," *Democratic Review*, September 1852, 217-219; William Freret, *Correspondence Between the Treasury Department, &c., in Relation to the Cuban Expedition, and William Freret, Late Collector* (New Orleans: Alex, Levy & Co., 1851), 8, 45.

of no character," boarded the steamer, which then headed for Jacksonville to embark the reinforcement expedition."

The Jacksonville press was still in support of the Cuban uprising. The *News* voiced its "warm sympathy in the cause of that oppressed people." ³⁹ The *Florida Republican* stated, "we cannot, now that we are justified in believing that Cuba herself has started the ball of revolution, withhold our warm sympathy with the patriots in what must resolve itself into a struggle between Republicanism and colonial vassalage," and forecast the start of "Cuban expeditions ... from a hundred points on the Atlantic." On August 21, the *Florida Republican* published two articles about the López landing and the *Pampero*, giving a laudatory description of the vessel that "can run away from the whole American Navy."

The filibuster call to arms was heard throughout northern Florida, prompting adventurous and idealistic young men to descend upon Jacksonville. Sánchez-Iznaga, Saddler and son, Buckman, Reeves and Tumlin were back in the Jacksonville Hotel by the 13th. In Ocala, David Province, Samuel St. George Rogers and William Fisher mustered three companies of 180 men, including "good riflemen" from the Florida Militia, and brought them to Jacksonville on the 16th." On August 28, the adventurers read in the *Florida Republican* that the *Pampero* was "now in the waters of Georgia, to receive reinforcements, and may momentarily pay this port a visit." Two accompanying articles reprinted from newspapers dated a week earlier erroneously claimed that "Lopez's force is gaining from twelve to fourteen hundred men daily" and causing massive casualties to the enemy. It did accurately report that fifty Americans accompanying López had been captured and executed by Spanish soldiers who

³⁸ United States vs The Steamer Pampero, District Court of the United States for the North District of Florida, Opinion and Decision on Libel & information for violation of the Revenue Laws, 12 December 1851, RG 206, Solicitor of the Treasury, Letters Received, U.S. Attorneys, Clerks of Courts, and Marshals, Florida 1846-April 1863, Box 19, National Archives; William R. Hackley to Daniel Webster, 23 August 1851, MLDS; "Pampero Trial"; *Charleston Courier*, 25 August 1851; *Cincinnati Nonpareil*, 5 September 1851; *New Orleans Delta*, 23 December 1851.

³⁹ Jacksonville *News*, 2 & 9 August 1851.

⁴⁰ 14 August 1851.

⁴¹ "More Troops for Cuba," *Savannah Morning News*, 22 August 1851. Fisher had joined Captain Johnson's Company at Fort Brooke, Tampa, in 1847. After the company was discharged, he reorganized volunteers into Fisher's Company, which he commanded with the rank of captain at Fort Brooke until their disbandment six months later. See: FDMA, Publication 9, Compiled Muster and Service Records, Florida Militia Volunteers, War with Mexico 1846-1848.

"committed horrible brutalities on the bodies."

These accounts so inflamed passions against Spain that a public meeting was convened by trumpet call the next evening at the Jacksonville Court House to permit citizens to "express their sympathy for the struggling Cubans and their approbation of the course of those patriotic citizens who are about to embark for Cuba to join the liberating army."⁴² The meeting was chaired by Samuel W. Spencer, a Maryland-born physician from Franklin County who had resided in Florida for a decade and become a colonel in the Florida Militia. Acting as secretary was Felix Livingston, judge of the Duval County Probate Court and editor of the Jacksonville *News*. Speakers that evening included known members of the filibuster movement David Province and Theodore O'Hara, and influential Jacksonville residents James W. Bryant and J. McRobert Baker. Bryant, an attorney who had migrated from Massachusetts and become a colonel in the Florida Militia and a Whig state Representative from Duval County, was a strong Unionist and the founding Worshipful Master of Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Baker was a Georgia-born attorney and a Lieutenant Colonel Judge Advocate of the Second Division of the Florida Militia. Other influential locals heard at the meeting were Isidore V. Garnie, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Duval County, member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20, and Florida Militia Aide-de-camp to General Edward Hopkins. Isaac Swart, a New Yorker who had arrived in town three years earlier as rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, was also on the committee. Charles Byrne, an Irish-born physician and planter, slave owner and publisher of the Jacksonville *News*, was joined on the collection committee by John C. Hemming, an English-born bookkeeper, slave owner, and member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Before the public meeting closed with repeated cheers for the Cuban Revolution a stirring resolution was endorsed."

Whereas, the cause of freedom is dear to every American heart, and whereas the spirit of progress in civil liberty is now abroad among the nations of the earth, and whereas every enlightened people should sympathize with the oppressed of every clime who desire to be free, and whereas the people of Cuba are now in a state of actual revolution to obtain a Republican Government,--therefore

Resolved, That we heartily sympathize with the Cubans in their endeavors to establish a Republican Government.

⁴² "Cuban Meeting," Jacksonville *News*, 30 August 1851, 2.

⁴³ Jacksonville *News*, 30 August 1851; 1850 Florida Census, Franklin County, 328.

2. That to those noble spirits who have volunteered to aid the oppressed Cubans, we extend our best wishes, in the name of Republican liberty, and bid them God-speed in their mission.

3. That we entertain sentiments of the deepest interest for those Cubans who are now exiled from their native land, some of whom are now present with us.

Additional excitement was generated by the arrival of the *Pampero* two days later. Many in town were curious to see the vessel described a week earlier as "the fastest thing on the water." An army officer visiting Jacksonville at the time who joined the crowds at the waterfront also noted "the Cuban flag was flying in the streets of Jacksonville, and that under that *flag daily drills* took place of men avowedly organized for a Cuban expedition." Captain Lewis was less interested in the crowds than in engine repairs to the *Pampero* and in renovations to the cargo space that made the ship a more efficient transport vessel. He also sparred with Customs Inspector Isaiah David Hart to keep him from impounding his ship, which lacked papers, flew an unregistered flag, and had been identified as a Cuban filibuster vessel. Hart was a wealthy planter who took arms against Spain in the 1812 Patriot Rebellion and later founded Jacksonville. He had served as postmaster, court clerk, commissioner of pilotage, judge of elections, militia major during the Seminole War and Florida Territorial Whig senator. Described as "an eccentric character," Hart owned downtown real estate, a two-story boarding house, a plantation and forty-eight slaves.'

When work on the *Pampero's* engine was completed on September 2, Henry Titus paid the \$400 hotel bill for fifty young volunteers who had signed the expedition muster roll and embarked for Empire Mills. From a flat-load lighter on Little Pottsburg Creek, in boxes marked "HTT," the steamer was loaded with "two cannons, two howitzers, 5 or 600 muskets, about 150 Yauger Rifles, about 150 cutlasses, 10 or 15 kegs of Powder, some Bombs and 50 or 60 kegs of cartridges and some [thirty] saddles and also about 75 men." ⁴⁷ When the howitzers were mounted on trunnels on the *Pampero* and prepared for firing, Titus ordered

⁴⁴ Jacksonville *News*, 23 August 1851; Jacksonville *News*, 6 September 1851; Charleston *Courier*, 6 September 1851.

⁴⁵ Henry Williams to Secretary of State, 4 September 1851, MLDS.

⁴⁶ 1850 Florida Census, Duval County, 90; 1850 Florida Slave Census, Duval County, 77; FDMA, Publication 67; Davis, *History of Jacksonville*, 53-54, 57-58; "Isaiah David Hart, City Founder," *Jacksonville Historical Society Papers*, 1954, 1-6; "A Remarkable Man," *Ibid.*, 1969, 42-46

⁴⁷ United States vs. The Steamer *Pampero*, 11 December 1851; and "The *Pampero* Trial," 1.; Jacksonville *News*, 6 11 September, 1851.

the vessel to resume the journey down the St. Johns River and up the intracoastal waterway. Sharing command with Colonel Titus were Lieutenant Colonel Theodore O'Hara, Major David Province, and Captains Samuel Rogers and Andrew Colvin.

Waiting for the filibusterers at Wilmington Island were *Pampero* owner Laurent Sigur and seventy men of the Georgia Battalion. Ambrosio Gonzales had been there for weeks hiding from the U.S. Marshal and expecting to take command of the expedition when the *Pampero* arrived. That was not what Colonel Titus had in mind. He had a large financial investment in the affair, and had received a letter from López in July, when Gonzales was ill, giving him command of the Jacksonville Battalion. The controversy was settled when Sigur sided with Titus and Gonzales departed for Charleston."⁴

On September 4, after one-third of the cargo was removed from the ship and sent to Savannah, the *Pampero* steamed south toward Florida. Meanwhile, the U.S. Attorney at Savannah, Henry Williams, was notified of the filibustering activities. After telegraphing the Secretary of State, Williams ordered the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Jackson* to the mouth of the St. Johns River.⁴ The vessel evaded the intercept by turning inland at Nassau Sound and to take refuge at a plantation on the upper bank of the Nassau River." For the next three days the volunteers drilled and waited in vain for more volunteers to arrive. On September 6 the Jacksonville *News* reported that López and all who had landed in Cuba with him had been captured and executed. Recruiting terminated abruptly and half of the Titus force with the *Pampero* disbanded.

Down to only thirty volunteers, the *Pampero* left the Nassau River on September 8 and was spotted by the cutter *Jackson*. Deploying full sail, the *Jackson* closed in on the *Pampero* and fired a warning shot. Instead of stopping, the *Pampero* crew reportedly "gave three hearty cheers, put on all steam, and went ahead" up the St. Johns River. The cutter remained outside the river bar, with its two guns loaded and its dozen crew members at battle stations to prevent the *Pampero* from escaping to sea. The *Pampero* continued south on the St. Johns River, passing through Jacksonville at eight o'clock that evening and secretly unloaded its cargo in the vicinity of Palatka. Captain Lewis then hid the vessel a

^{4a} "Pampero Trial"; Gonzales, *Manifesto*, 10; and Charleston *Courier*, 4 September 1851.

⁴⁹ Henry Williams to Secretary of State, 4 September 1851, MLDS.

⁵⁰ It is the author's opinion that the Nassau River plantation was owned by either John Christopher or Samuel Harrison.

few miles further south in Dunn's Creeks'

At dawn the next day, Isaiah Hart sent Customs Inspector Henry Drayton Holland in search of the filibusterers. Holland was a surgeon from South Carolina who arrived in Florida in 1835 to fight in the Seminole War. He later settled with his wife and seven children in Jacksonville and joined Solomon's Lodge No. 20. Collector Hart used "every exertion to get other boats and crews" to join the pursuit, but found only one willing to do so. U.S. Army Lieutenant Anderson Merchant arrived in Jacksonville at six a.m. on September 10 with a detachment of twenty soldiers sent by the St. Augustine Customs Collector, J.M. Hanson. Two artillery pieces arrived the next evening intended to prevent the *Pampero* from sailing back out to sea.⁵²

Laurent Sigur, the owner of the *Pampero*, arrived in Jacksonville on the 10th, accompanied by New Yorkers John L. O'Sullivan and J. N. Livingston. Sigur asked a Jacksonville attorney, McQueen McIntosh, to help him regain control of his vessel. When alarming reports of one hundred armed filibusters traveling up the St. Johns River to commandeer the *Pampero*, and "making threats that they would resist to the last," St. Augustine Collector Hanson sent an urgent request to the Department of State for "an armed force of at least 50 men [to] be sent immediately to Jacksonville.""

Sigur and McIntosh cooperated with Inspector Holland in the search for the *Pampero*. At Palatka, they learned of the vessel's location and went to Dunn's Creek the next morning. Sigur surrendered the steamer to Holland and accompanied it to the Jacksonville wharf, where it was placed under guard at eight o'clock on the night of the 11th.⁵⁴

During the three days after the *Pampero's* surrender, filibuster officers O'Hara, Macias, Rogers, Province, Reeves, and Williamson registered in the

⁵¹ Isaiah D. Hart to Secretary of the Treasury Thomas Corwin, 13 September 1851, MLDS; *Florida Republican*, 11 September 1851; and *Savannah Republican*, 14 September 1851.

⁵² Isaiah D. Hart to Treasury Secretary Thomas Corwin, 13 September 1851; J. M. Hanson to Acting Secretary of State W. S. Derrick, 9 September 1851, MLDS; "Chasing the Pampero," *Florida Republican*, 11, 18 September 1851; *Charleston Courier*, 15 September 1851; *Georgia Journal and Messenger* (Macon), 17 September 1851. Dr. Holland was elected mayor of Jacksonville in 1852 and died in 1860. Webster Merritt, "Physicians and Medicine in Early Jacksonville," *The Jacksonville Historical Society Papers*, (1947), 107-108; and 1850 Florida Census, Duval County, 92.

⁵³ J. M. Hanson to Acting Secretary of State W. S. Derrick, 11 September 1851, MLDS.

⁵⁴ Isaiah D. Hart to Treasury Secretary Thomas Corwin, 13 September 1851, MLDS; "The Pampero Trial."

Jacksonville Hotel. Collector Hart, alarmed by reports of one hundred filibusterers in Jacksonville, ordered the captain of the Cutter *Jackson* to pull into port, as "there are quite a number of desperate fellows, around here." He wrote to Treasury Secretary Thomas Corwin asking if they should be arrested. The U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, George W. Call, began legal action against the *Pampero* on September 18 for violation of the Revenue Laws. Trial was set for October 9 in the St. Augustine Court House. Three days later, Call informed Secretary of State Daniel Webster that Henry Titus had concealed the filibuster armament. "Should any prosecution be deemed advisable," Call wrote, "I would point out this person as a proper subject, both because he was the leader of the expedition, and because his conduct since amounts to an almost open defiance of the law." The editor of the Jacksonville *News* felt differently: he warned against a "purely vindictive" prosecution of the filibusterers, since they had "the sympathies and good wishes of this whole community."

The *Pampero* libel trial began in October, with McQueen McIntosh and Benjamin A. Putnam representing Laurent Sigur as claimant of the vessel. Judge J. H. Bronson tried the case, hearing testimony through the first two weeks in October before adjourning until December 1. Witnesses testifying included expedition leaders Henry Titus, John Hopkins, Andrew Colvin and Jacob Rutherford. A signal that there had been a serious falling out among the filibuster leaders came on the last day of testimony, when Colvin filed charges against Titus in St. Johns County Circuit Court for "assault and battery with intent to kill." Prosecutor John P. Sanderson dropped the charges eighteen months later when the witnesses failed to appear.

While the trial was underway, the provisions and stores confiscated in the *Pampero* were sold by the U.S. Marshal in Jacksonville. Customs Collector Hart also seized a small schooner belonging to John Thompson, a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 20, containing "sixty-nine boxes of fixed ammunition, a

⁵⁸ Hart to I. J. Morrison, 12 September 1851; Hart to Treasury Secretary Thomas Corwin, 14 September 1851, MLDS; "Arrivals," *Florida Republican*, 18 September & 2 October, 1851.

⁵⁶ George W. Call to Daniel Webster, 21 September 1851, MLDS.

⁵ Jacksonville *News*, 27 September 1851, reprinted in the New Orleans *Delta*, 9 October 1851.

⁵⁸ The State of Florida vs. Henry T. Titus, 14 October 1851, Circuit Court Papers, St. Johns County, Florida, box 163, folder 41, St. Augustine Historical Society; 18 October 1851, 2; and New Orleans *Delta*, 21 October 1851; Jacksonville *News*, 27 September, 1851; and "Pampero Trial."

quantity of new harness, cavalry saddles, and one brass piece. " ⁵⁹ Titus recovered this property in December after the government failed to properly identify it at trial. Four months later, Titus sold the equipment to the Florida Militia.'

The final hearing of the *Pampero* trial began on December 1. U.S. Attorney Call charged that the steamer had carried a false registry and had violated federal law by being used in an armed expedition against Cuba. The defense attorneys argued that the *Pampero* was not an armed vessel since no weapons had been found aboard. With no weapons it could only have been "engaged in a mere transport service. " ⁶¹ The court ruled on December 11 against Sigur and the *Pampero* on both charges and ordered the U.S. Marshal to sell the ship "at public auction."" The *Pampero* was sold in Jacksonville on Saturday, January 17, 1852, to H. C. Templeton of New Orleans for \$15,100, one-fourth of Sigur's purchase price. The steamer's furniture and apparel went for \$425 to Thomas O. Holmes, a Jacksonville merchant. The local press reported "little disposition by the public to bid high on the boat, as the friends of Mr. Segur [*sic*] expressed their wish to purchase for his interest.""

This study of the Jacksonville activities of the Cuban filibuster movement of 1851 suggests that the participants were motivated by diverse interests and purposes. Filibuster supporters appear to have come from widely divergent backgrounds, regions, national origins, political and religious preferences, and social and economic standings. Freemasonry and service in the Florida Militia served to unify many of the participants, and while some sought adventure, fortune or fame, the majority of the Jacksonville filibusterers and their supporters enthusiastically expressed a desire for Cuban liberty.

Jacksonville was an important rallying point for the Cuban independence movement in 1851. The filibuster activities in the city were reported in newspapers throughout the United States. Volunteers from northern Florida and southeast Georgia came to Jacksonville, creating an atmosphere of intrigue and enthusiasm. Armed men marched on town streets behind the Cuban flag, using the Jacksonville Hotel as their unofficial headquarters. The last antebellum military expedition intended to free Cuba from Spain culminated with the capture and sale

⁵⁹ *Florida Republican*, 13 November 1851; *Savannah Morning News*, 14 October 1851.

⁶⁰ "Payments to Titus, 3 April 1852," Florida Senate Journal, 6th Session, 22 November 1852, 116; *New Orleans Delta*, 23 December 1851.

⁶¹ *Jacksonville News*, 6 December 1851.

⁶² *Florida Republican*, 18 December 1851; *Jacksonville News*, 20 December 1851.

⁶³ *Florida Republican*, 22 January 1852.

of the *Pampero* in Jacksonville. Thus ended Cuban filibustering in Jacksonville until Cuban independence leader José Martí returned to the area in 1895.

Antonio Rafael de la Cova graduated from West Virginia University with a Ph.D. in U. S. and Latin American history. He resides at Amelia Island, Florida.