

WILLIAM WALKER (1824-60)

eight 5 feet 4 inches; weight 120 pounds. Physician, lawyer, journalist, and the most notorious filibuster (soldier of fortune) of the nineteenth century.

# *freebooters must die!*

The life and death of William Walker,  
the most notorious filibuster  
of the nineteenth century

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# Manifest Destiny and Filibustering: Narciso López and William L. Crittenden Executed in Cuba

AS AN EDITOR of the *Crescent*, Walker came into constant contact with one of the most popular causes of the times: Manifest Destiny (sometimes called the Spread Eagle Doctrine), which he came to believe in ardently and on which he was to base his subsequent career. The term Manifest Destiny first appeared in July 1845, in an article in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* by John L. O'Sullivan, who championed the divine right of the American people "to overspread the continent." Representative Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts repeated the phrase later that same year on the floor of the House of Representatives, when he argued during the debate about Oregon that it was "our manifest destiny to spread over the whole continent."

In the mid-nineteenth century Manifest Destiny meant territorial expansion into ill-defined areas in North America and the Western Hemisphere. This virile philosophy held great appeal for the American public, who fervently believed that the rapid expansion of the past decades should continue. There was no reason why the growth of the United States should stop with the annexation of Texas in 1845 and the acquisition of California in 1848, at the end of the Mexican War. Further expansion was justified—either northward to Canada or southward to Mexico, Cuba, and Central America.

The 1850s were the heyday of aggressive expansionism. Franklin Pierce was the first American president to declare—

in his inaugural address in 1853—that territorial aggrandizement was an objective of his incoming administration. James Buchanan, his successor, prophesied that "expansion is in the future the policy of our country, and only cowards fear and oppose it."

"Backward" territories, where rich natural resources were being misused, should be taken over, and all that had to be given in exchange was the prospect of admission to the Union. It was America's mission continually to go ahead and every few years swallow up, with unbridled passion and enthusiasm, still more territory—either by purchase, annexation, military conquest, or almost any other convenient means.

A belligerent poet in John L. O'Sullivan's *Democratic Review* summed up a growing, vigorous America's right to more space:

We can not help the matter if we would;  
The race must have expansion—we must grow  
Though every forward footstep be withstood  
And every inch of ground presents its foe.

The phenomenon of filibustering, which flourished between 1840 and 1860, was a natural outgrowth of Manifest Destiny. Filibusters or freebooters (from the Dutch *vrijbouter*, meaning plunderer) were soldiers of fortune who engaged in fitting out expeditions to and conducting unauthorized warfare against countries with which the United States was at peace—usually with the aim of enriching themselves. The term was first applied to buccaneers in the West Indies who preyed on the Spanish commerce to South America; later it was used to describe adventurers such as the ones who followed López to Cuba and Walker to Nicaragua in their expeditions of conquest. Today the word filibuster, considerably tamed, has an entirely different meaning and refers to the tactics used by a minority group of a legislative body, usually the Senate, to obstruct the passage of a bill: long-winded speeches, introduction of irrelevant issues, and so on. In other words, filibustering today means talking a bill to death, while in the 1850s it meant "saying it with bullets."

Expansionists, although most vociferous in the South, were

also to be found in the North and West. Many white North Americans considered themselves superior to the generally darker mixed races inhabiting Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Haughty, self-righteous Americans belittled their neighbors south of the border, characterizing them as barbarous, ignorant “greasers” who needed to be regenerated. It was the duty of the United States, proclaimed these bigoted expansionists, to annex and “uplift” the miserable, backward, unenlightened peoples, who had demonstrated themselves to be totally incapable and unworthy of self-rule. Of course the economic benefits that would accrue to the United States from grabbing the fertile soils and magnificent natural resources of the tropics of the Western Hemisphere were not just incidental.

In *The War in Nicaragua* William Walker was later to justify his own militant actions south of the border in lucid terms quite unacceptable by today’s standards, but applauded by many in the 1850s as a natural and desirable expression of rugged imperialism:

That which you ignorantly call “Filibusterism” is not the offspring of hasty passion or ill-regulated desire; it is the fruit of the sure, unerring instincts which act in accordance with laws as old as creation. They are but drivellers who speak of establishing fixed relations between the pure white American race, as it exists in the United States, and the mixed Hispano-Indian race, as it exists in Mexico and Central America, without the employment of force. The history of the world presents no such Utopian vision as that of an inferior race yielding meekly and peacefully to the controlling influence of a superior people.

Before 1850 expansionists of both North and South were in favor of the acquisition of new United States territories, but as the Civil War approached, Manifest Destiny gradually became more sectionalized. Northern expansionists believed that young America had a mission: to spread the ideals of democracy and freedom, a goal that could best be realized by enlarging the country. The Southern expansionists, who were the more zealous, saw a chance to extend slavery. Ardent promoters of slavery claimed that whenever this institution was confined within certain specified territorial limits, its future was doomed—owing to the rapid exhaustion of the soil, the overplanting of

crops such as cotton and sugarcane, and the rapid natural increase of the slave population. For the comfort and happiness of the slaves and the benefit of the landowners, therefore, slavery required fresh lands, plenty of virgin forests, and water. Furthermore, political leaders in the South believed that new slave territory was needed to maintain an equilibrium between slave and free states; what better way than to extend slavery into Mexico, Cuba, and Central America?

Cuba was a naturally tempting target for expansion, being only ninety miles away, and the United States tried to purchase the island from Spain for \$100 million in 1848—unsuccessfully. This diplomatic failure led to the emergence of a dynamic if ineffectual revolutionist who was constantly in the public eye: General Narciso López.

López had been born in Venezuela in 1798, the son of a wealthy merchant. As a youth he served as a commissioned officer in the Spanish army in Venezuela. Handsome, imposing in physique, an accomplished horseman with an affable personality, he was a favorite with his troops. López moved to Spain, where he pursued his military career, rising to the rank of general. After a few years he retired from the Spanish army and was appointed to a lucrative political post on the island of Cuba. Besides his political activities he also became involved in several business enterprises there, principally copper mines and coffee plantations, which failed for various reasons. He suffered large gambling losses, incurred substantial debts, and fell out of favor politically.

Embittered by his loss of wealth and influence, he intrigued against the Spanish government and took part in a clandestine revolutionary plot in 1848: a secret insurrection to free Cuba from Spanish rule. When this conspiracy was discovered by the local authorities, López had to flee for his life to the United States. In Cuba he was condemned to death in absentia. In New York, López found that an active movement for the forcible annexation of Cuba to the United States was under way. A filibustering expedition was being organized that was to consist of some five thousand men and be financed by \$3 million.

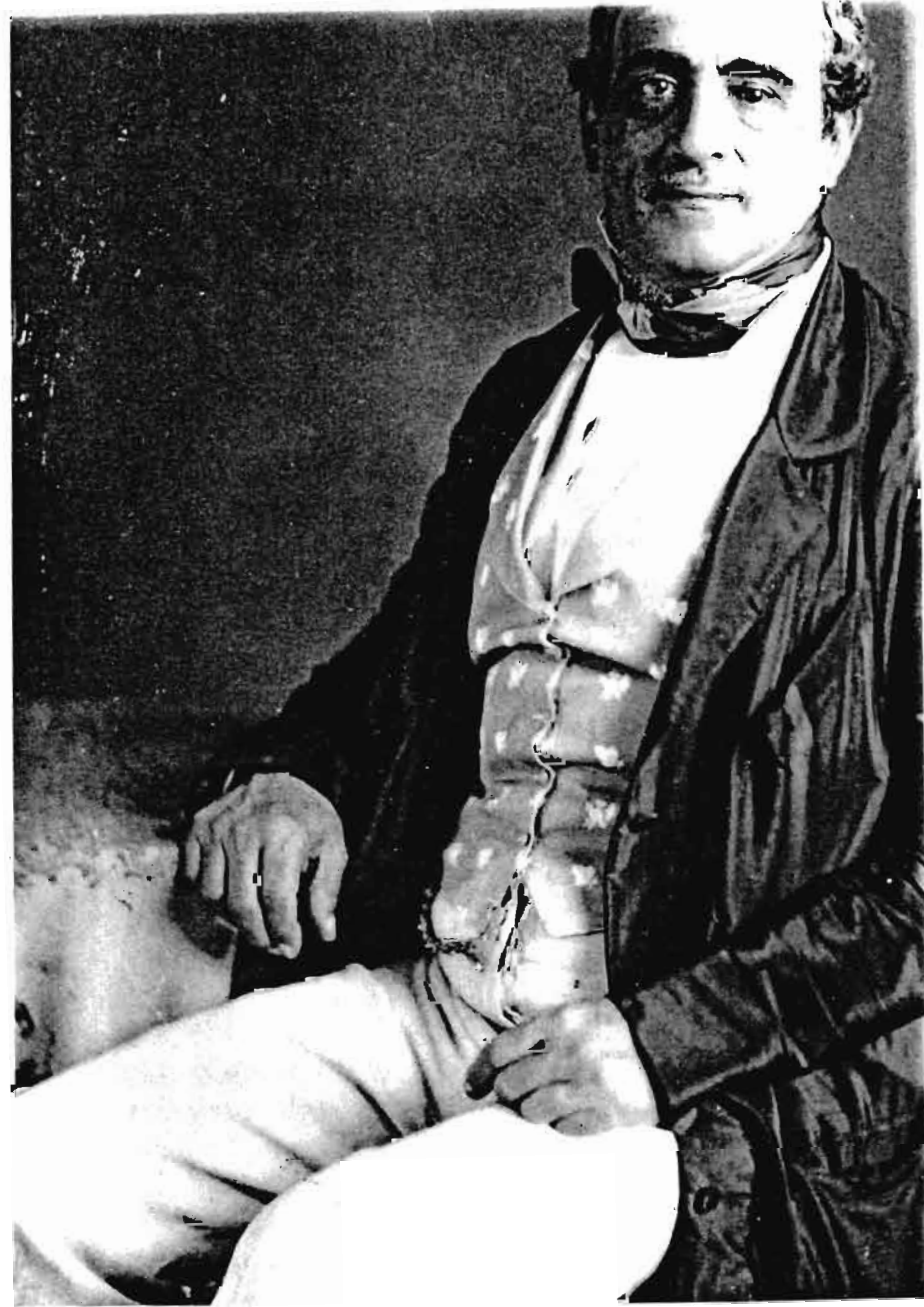
Some financial aid was obtained from Cuban exiles, New York friends, and certain wealthy Southerners. When both Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee turned down the leadership of the expedition, the charismatic López became its natural leader. But this abortive filibustering movement against Cuba was stopped by federal authorities in September 1849 at Round Island, near New Orleans.

Undaunted, López continued to gather recruits, mostly from Ohio, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Many Americans, especially in the South and West, sympathized with him. His financial support, which was less than originally hoped for, came for the most part from wealthy New Orleans extremists, whose avowed aim was to free Cuba from Spain, temporarily establish an independent Cuban republic, and then eventually annex Cuba to the American Union as a slave state.

In May 1850 López's first formal attempt to invade Cuba was launched from the island of Contoy, near Yucatán, although it had originated in New Orleans. This was called the Cárdenas Expedition because the initial landing of about 520 "Liberators" from the steamer *Creole* was made at Cárdenas, a town on the Bay of Cárdenas, about ninety miles east of Havana.

Early on the morning of May 19 the *Creole* crept silently into the Bay of Cárdenas but had not proceeded very far when she ran aground and became firmly stuck on a coral reef. A brave young filibuster named Callender I. Fayssoux (who was later to serve with William Walker in Nicaragua) immediately distinguished himself by swimming off to the shore with a rope between his teeth, thus pulling the ship off the reef and enabling his companions to land.

Cárdenas was known as the "American City," since so many Americans were engaged in business there that English was widely spoken. It was anticipated that the local population would support López with enthusiasm and join him in the liberation struggle against the bloody tyranny of Spain. Such was the case during the first morning of the invasion, when many native Cubans cheered the invading force of red-shirted Liberators—and some even joined the Americans. On the second



NARCISO LÓPEZ

Venezuelan-born filibuster who identified himself with revolutionaries in Cuba. López organized several unsuccessful filibustering expeditions from the United States to Cuba. He was captured in 1851 and executed by the Spanish in Havana—strangled by the garrote before a howling mob of twenty thousand spectators.

day, however, the regular Spanish army of 700 well-trained soldiers attacked the invaders. Most of the local Cubans then hurriedly took off their red shirts and joined their Spanish masters; the Cuban patriots who had fought with the Liberators of López in the morning changed their minds as well as their shirts in the afternoon, taking up arms with the Spanish regulars and demonstrating their loyalty to Spain.

Despite this perfidy, the invading troops managed to drive the Spaniards out of Cárdenas. General López decided to re-embark his liberating army on the *Creole* and move to another point on the coast, where he had loyal personal friends. Unfortunately, while leaving the Bay of Cárdenas the *Creole* ran aground again on another sunken coral reef. The entire supply of arms, munitions, and provisions had to be dumped overboard to enable the vessel to glide off the bar. López still wanted to proceed with the invasion, even without arms and supplies, but the men protested that such a plan would be suicidal. López was overruled, and the *Creole*, although somewhat damaged, headed for Key West, Florida, as rapidly as its defective steam power would permit.

Early on the morning of May 21, when the *Creole* was within forty miles of Key West, the fast and armipotent steamer *Pizarro* was observed in the distance; she was rapidly gaining on the limping *Creole*. In a dramatic race the Cuban Liberators managed to gain the sanctuary of Key West harbor just ahead of the *Pizarro*. Thus ended the Cárdenas Expedition. The *Creole* was confiscated by the United States authorities, but no filibusters were apprehended. López was arrested later in Savannah but released for lack of evidence.

The Cuban revolutionist was a popular hero in the South but a source of constant vexation and embarrassment to the vacillating administration in Washington, which was in a quandary about how to deal with filibusters. The American government was stung by foreign criticism: England and especially Spain wanted the filibusters to be severely punished as pirates; public opinion on the other hand was so strongly on the side of López and his followers that a conviction for violating the nebulous

Neutrality Law of 1818 (which forbade organizing within the United States an armed force that intended to attack a friendly foreign power) would be imprudent.

Having escaped with his life, López lost no time in organizing a second invasion of Cuba. He sent agents to stir up trouble in various parts of the island and incite the Creoles to open revolt against the Spanish. Although he could not speak English, López managed to attract many volunteers in the United States with the slogan "López and Liberty"—not only lovers of liberty for liberty's sake and lovers of adventure for adventure's sake, but also volunteers who expected to collect a bounty of four thousand dollars, or its equivalent in Cuban real estate, if the invasion succeeded.

Many valiant and idealistic young men from the South were eager for the fray. Among them was Colonel William Logan Crittenden, tall and handsome, a born soldier, the scion of a distinguished Kentucky family. (His uncle, John J. Crittenden,



COLONEL  
WILLIAM L. CRITTENDEN  
A graduate of West Point,  
he was executed by a firing  
squad in Havana during  
Narciso López's disastrous  
filibustering expedition of 1851.

was attorney general of the United States.) W. L. Crittenden was a graduate of West Point who had served with distinction and conspicuous gallantry in the Mexican War, but he resigned from the United States Army to cast his lot with Narciso López.

The second López invasion of Cuba, known as the Bahía Honda Expedition, might more aptly have been described as a chain of horrors. It started on a happy note: the transport steamer *Pampero* was enthusiastically cheered by a New Orleans crowd as she sailed from the Lafayette Street pier early on the morning of August 3, 1851. Some caution had to be observed to avoid seizure by federal authorities. Luckily, the 434 adventurers, mostly Anglo-Saxon in origin, were unaware of the incredible tragedy that awaited them as they sailed lightheartedly toward Cuba on the calm, blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico under a pleasant tropical sun. After an uneventful voyage the *Pampero* landed at daybreak on August 12 near Bahía Honda on the Cuban coast, some seventy miles west of Havana. The disastrous military effort that ensued was similar in many respects to the abortive Bay of Pigs fiasco by Cuban exiles 110 years later. In both instances the popular uprisings of patriotic Cubans that were supposed to take place—in 1851 against Spanish rule and in 1961 against Fidel Castro—never materialized.

On the contrary, when the Liberators of López landed at Morillo, near Bahía Honda, instead of being welcomed by enthusiastic Creole friends offering them supplies and horses, they were greeted by a volley of hostile and deadly Creole musketry. The native Cuban population was not yet ready to be freed from the dominion of Spain. López's badly organized and vastly outnumbered invading troops were soon surrounded and attacked on all sides by well-prepared Spanish regulars. The Spanish had been informed of López's every movement by his so-called Creole friends.

Colonel Crittenden, with 130 men, was soon cut off from General López and the main body of the expeditionary force. The Kentucky colonel had been ordered to protect the arms, ammunition, and supplies of the Liberators until transport

wagons could be obtained and sent to him by López. The wagons never came. Fighting valiantly against superior odds, Crittenden and his detachment attempted to join López; the supplies were loaded onto ox carts which bogged down on the muddy roads. After marching all night Crittenden's group was overwhelmed by Spanish troops. Crittenden ordered and led a charge, a diversionary tactic to enable a detachment of 80 men under Captain J. A. Kelly to proceed toward López with the ox carts. Kelly succeeded in joining López, but in the meantime had been forced to abandon the arms and supplies.

Crittenden and his 50 remaining invaders were soon overwhelmed by several hundred Spanish troops. Fighting gallantly, the Americans attempted to cut through the dense chaparral and heavy forest to look for López. But López had retreated to the mountains. Finding their situation utterly hopeless, Crittenden and his group managed to reach the coastal village of Morillo, where they put to sea in four fishing boats. They were soon sighted by the heavily armed Spanish steamer *Habanero*, whose artillery forced them to surrender. Under the terms agreed upon, Crittenden and his men would be treated, in all respects as prisoners of war and their lives would be spared.

But the captain general of Cuba, José de la Concha, utterly disregarded the terms of surrender: he ordered the captives to be tried by a drumhead court-martial and executed immediately. A proclamation was issued ordering the execution by a firing squad of Colonel Crittenden and his comrades—fifty-one men in all. Since the group consisted mostly of Americans (there were forty Americans, four Irishmen, two Cubans, two Hungarians, one Scot, one Italian, and one native of the Philippine Islands), the wretched prisoners asked to see the American consul. Their request was denied. Instead, they were given half an hour to write personal letters of farewell to their families and friends.

Just before he was executed in Havana, twenty-eight-year-old Colonel William Logan Crittenden wrote the following tragic letter, which may give some insight into the thinking of filibuster leaders—who must have known that sooner or later a violent

and unpleasant end almost certainly awaited them. The letter, dated August 16, 1851, was written aboard the Spanish warship *Esperanza*, where the captives were confined, and addressed to a friend in the United States, Dr. Lucien Hensley:

Dear Lucien:

In half an hour I, with fifty others, am to be shot. We were taken prisoners yesterday. We were in small boats. General López separated the balance of the command from me. I had with me about one hundred—was attacked by two battalions of infantry and one company of horse. The odds were too great, and strange to tell I was not furnished with a single musket cartridge. López did not get any artillery. I have not the heart to write to any of my family. If the truth ever comes out you will find that I did my duty, and have the perfect confidence of every man with me. We had retired from the field and were going to sea, and were overtaken by the Spanish steamer *Habanero*, and captured. Tell General Houston that his nephew got separated from me on the 13th, the day of the fight and I have not seen him since. He may have straggled off and joined López, who advanced rapidly to the interior. My people, however, were entirely surrounded on every side. We saw that we have been deceived grossly, and were making for the United States, when taken. During my short sojourn on this island I have not met a single patriot. We landed some forty or fifty miles to the westward of this, and I am sure that in that part of the island López has no friends. When I was attacked López was only three miles off. If he had not been deceiving us as to the state of things, he would have fallen back with his force and made fight, instead of which he marched on immediately to the interior. I am requested to get you to tell Mr. Green of the custom house that his brother shares my fate. Victor Ker is also with me, also Standford. I recollect no others of your acquaintance at present. I will die like a man. My heart has not failed me yet, nor do I believe it will. Communicate with my family. . . .

This is an incoherent letter, but the circumstances must excuse me. My hands are swollen to double their thickness, resulting from having been too tightly corded for the last eighteen hours. Write to Whistlar and let him write to my mother. I am afraid the news will break her heart. My heart beats warmly toward her now.

Farewell. My love to all my friends. I am sorry that I die owing a cent, but it is inevitable.

Yours, Strong in Heart,  
W. L. Crittenden

This letter was stained with blood from Crittenden's lacerated wrists.

Another moving farewell was written at the same time, under the same lamentable conditions, by Captain Victor Ker to his wife:

My dear Felicia:

Adieu, my dear wife. This is the last letter you will receive from your Victor. In one hour I shall be no more. Embrace all of my friends for me. Never marry again; it is my desire. My adieu to my sisters and brothers. Again, a last adieu. I die like a soldier.

August 16, 6 o'clock, 1851

Your husband,  
Victor

The prisoners were marched down the gangway of the *Esperanza* in single file, with their hands tied behind their backs, into a ferryboat that transported them to the place of execution. Some twelve hundred troops had gathered on the slopes of a hill near Castle Atares, about three-quarters of a mile outside Havana (the rest of the army had been sent out in pursuit of General López). The Spanish soldiers, attired in battle dress but wearing straw hats, formed a square; in the background several thousand citizens of Havana had come out to watch the gory massacre, as they would a bullfight. The mayor of Havana read the death sentence, and the tragedy commenced.

The victims, securely bound and blindfolded, were led forward six at a time and commanded to kneel with their backs to the soldiers who were to shoot them. After each group of six was murdered, the corpses were pushed aside to make room for the next lot. A lad of fifteen begged in vain to speak to someone who knew English. Those who were not killed instantly were beaten to death.

Colonel Crittenden, as the commanding officer of the party, was shot first of all, and alone. He refused to kneel, did not allow himself to be blindfolded, and would not turn his back to the firing squad. His last words were: "A Kentuckian kneels to none except his God, and always dies facing his enemy." Standing erect, looking the death-dealing muskets in the muzzle, he bravely met his doom.

The bodies were then handed over to the bloodthirsty mob, who spat on them, kicked them, mutilated them, and stripped them of their clothing. The naked, bloody corpses were then piled onto old hearses and carted ignominiously to the heretic section of the Espada cemetery, dumped into a common trench, and covered with quicklime.

In contrast to the heroic tragedy of W. L. Crittenden is the story of a fifty-second filibuster: David Q. Rousseau, also of Kentucky, who is reputed to have gained his eventual freedom in an ingenious manner. Cast into jail with the other fifty-one prisoners, he was informed that he was going to be shot on the following day. As a kindly gesture, he, like Crittenden and Ker, was granted permission by his captors to write one letter to inform a friend or relative of his approaching execution. Apparently Rousseau had no relatives and few friends. Indeed, he felt ashamed—the other prisoners around him were hurriedly writing their last letters, and he hadn't even started his own. To whom should he write? Then a brilliant thought occurred to him: all the letters would probably be opened by the Spanish censors, so why not pick a really important "friend"—say, Daniel Webster, the secretary of state in Washington (even though he didn't even know Webster). So he composed the following note:

Dan, my dear old boy, how little you thought when we parted at the close of that last agreeable visit of a week, which I paid you the other day, that within a month I should be "cribbed, cabined, and confined" in the infernal hole of a dungeon from which I indite this. I wish you would send the Spanish minister a case of that very old Madeira of yours, which he professes to prefer to the wines of his own country, and tell him the silly scrape I have got myself into, if indeed it be not too late, for they talk of sending me to "the bourne" tomorrow. However, one never can believe a word these rascals say, so I write this in the hope that they are lying as usual,—and am, my dear old schoolmate, your affectionate friend,

Dave

Rousseau's lack of friends turned out to be a blessing. He was rewarded for his clear thinking under stress, for while all the other filibusters in his group were executed by the Spanish, apparently he alone was spared. He was condemned instead to 'two years' hard labor in chains in the quicksilver mines in Ceuta in Spanish Morocco, a sentence later commuted to eighteen months. Surviving that ordeal, he lived to serve through the Civil War as a lieutenant in the Kentucky Infantry of the Union army.

While Crittenden and his followers were being captured and executed, General Narciso López was beset by problems of his own. With an inadequately supplied force of four hundred Liberators, including Captain Kelly's detachment, he vainly struggled against a far greater number of Spanish troops. López lost some forty-four men, including killed and wounded, in the battle of Las Pozas, and then retreated to a coffee plantation called Cafetal de Frias, which had previously belonged to him but had been confiscated three years earlier. Here he made a stand and, although attacked by nine hundred of the enemy, won a decisive battle, forcing the Spanish troops to retreat.

Having waited in vain for some three thousand reinforcements from New Orleans that never arrived, López decided to withdraw his own men to the mountains nearby. Unfortunately, a very severe tropical rainstorm virtually ruined the Liberators' weapons and their entire remaining supply of ammunition. Heading toward Bahia Honda in a vain effort to find some Creole patriots who would rally to their support, López and his followers were attacked once more by a large contingent of fresh enemy troops. The badly organized, exhausted Liberators, without ammunition, lacking provisions, and having had but one meal in six days, were routed and many were killed and wounded. General López himself made a futile effort to escape but was tracked down and severely bitten by bloodhounds and then captured by seventeen hostile Creoles on August 29, just seventeen days after his landing. The Creoles, many of them small farmers, almost without exception adhered to the royal Spanish cause and violently opposed López and the Liberators.

At seven o'clock on the morning of September 2, weary and wounded, Narciso López was strangled by the garrote in a public square near the Carcel in Havana, before a howling mob of some twenty thousand spectators. Dressed in a long white garment resembling a shroud, with a hood over his head and a priest on either side, López slowly followed an escort of uniformed guards and priests with long black caps, carrying a black banner. The ominous procession crossed the square and halted at the base of the scaffold.

The Negro executioner, two priests, two officers, and the unfortunate López climbed up on a platform about twenty feet high where the garrote had already been set up. It consisted of a small upright post to which an iron collar was attached in front, and at the back of which was a large iron screw. The priests recited a long prayer while López knelt before them. After repeatedly kissing a crucifix López uttered his last words in a firm voice: "My countrymen, pardon me for the evil, if any, that I may have caused you. I have not intended any evil—only good. I die for my beloved Cuba. Farewell."

López sat down on a stool attached to the garrote. The executioner adjusted the collar around his neck, gave two powerful turns of the screw, and thus ended the life of the patriot Narciso López.

His remaining followers, 173 in number, were subsequently embarked for the Spanish penal colony at Ceuta to serve long sentences at hard labor in the quicksilver mines. Queen Isabella II pardoned most of the Americans soon after their arrival at Ceuta. This royal clemency was largely due to the efforts of President Millard Fillmore, who interceded in their behalf. A few others managed to escape from the penal colony at Ceuta, including a Hungarian, Louis Schlessinger, who always seemed to be on the losing side. He had fought with the patriot Kossuth in the unsuccessful insurrection of 1848 in Hungary and in 1856 he was destined to lose a battle in Costa Rica so quickly that William Walker would declare him a traitor. A major on the Bahia Honda invasion staff, Schlessinger later loyally denied the widely circulated report that Narciso López had carried a red rawhide whip in his hand during the battle of Las Pozas, which he vigorously applied to the shoulders of those filibuster soldiers who in his opinion were not firing their weapons fast enough.

Crittenden's last letter was printed in the *New Orleans Bee* on September 3, 1851, along with the tragic news of the execution of the fifty other filibusters. Outbursts of public indignation against Spain occurred throughout the United States, but mostly

in the South. This nationwide rage was all the more intense because the Spanish commander of the steamer *Habanero* deliberately fired on the American ship *Falcon* at Bahia Honda at the very moment Crittenden was being executed.

Throughout New Orleans there resounded an overwhelming clamor for revenge against Spain. The *New Orleans Courier* even displayed the flag of the United States with the name CUBA emblazoned on it. A *Courier* editorial proclaimed: "American blood has been shed. It cries aloud for vengeance—vengeance on the tyrant . . . blood for blood! Our brethren must be avenged! Cuba must be seized!"

Serious riots broke out in New Orleans, and for several days there was talk of an armed expedition of revenge against Spanish Cuba. But after the news was received a few days later that López's forces had been completely routed and their leader executed, the press and the public in the South gradually calmed down.

The valiant Crittenden, however, was not soon forgotten. Several poems were composed and dedicated to the memory of this intrepid warrior from Kentucky. The following two stanzas are excerpted from "The Death of Crittenden," by Laura Lorimer; these verses were set to music and were very popular in the South during the 1850s:

#### THE DEATH OF CRITTENDEN

The flush of a tropical morn  
 Still lingered on Cuba's fair sky,  
 When a band for chivalry born  
 Were led forth like caitiffs to die.  
 No quiver on lips that had learned  
 To press back each feeling that rose,  
 Told of thoughts in their bosoms inurned  
 As their young lives drew near their sad close.  
 They bade the proud chief of that band  
 Kneel low when the death volley came,  
 And, bowed on that sun-guarded strand,  
 Pour forth his high spirit of flame;  
 Deep and haughty arose his firm tone,  
 Unchecked by surroundings of woe,  
 "I kneel to high heaven alone,  
 And ne'er turn my back on the foe!"

The Southern proslavery expansionists continued to attempt to obtain Cuba, but by diplomacy or purchase, rather than by filibustering. In 1854, during the administration of Franklin Pierce, the Ostend Manifesto was issued, proclaiming to the world that the United States was willing to purchase Cuba from Spain and hinting that if the island could not be bought there was a strong possibility of our using force to acquire it. But Spain would not part with the island, and after Narciso López no significant organized group from the United States invaded Cuba until the Spanish-American War of 1898.

(he had lost his right arm in a gunfight in Mexico). In 1850 he had forged a two-thousand-dollar letter of credit in San Antonio, Texas, in order to purchase government supplies. After this ugly report had been resurrected, French returned to Nicaragua under a cloud. Walker received him coldly, then dismissed him.

The other Central American republics were astounded when Secretary of State Marcy rejected French and refused to recognize the new government of Nicaragua on the grounds that the persons instrumental in overthrowing the old regime in Nicaragua were not citizens of that country. It was hard for the governments of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador to believe that William Walker did not have the official backing of the United States government: after all, only seven years had elapsed since the war between the United States and Mexico. This judgment by Secretary of State Marcy unquestionably encouraged and strengthened the hands of the anti-Walker forces in Central America.

Walker's political ambition was not limited to Central America. Had he been able to consolidate his victories in Nicaragua, he planned to attack Cuba in cooperation with a group of Cuban exiles represented by Captain F. A. Lainé, according to the following excerpts of a contract signed by Walker and Lainé in January 1856:

General William Walker, Commander-in-Chief of the army of Nicaragua is willing to form the following agreement with Captain F. A. Lainé, appointed agent of Sr. Domingo de Goicouria, sole holder and depository of the goods and chattels belonging to the cause of Cuba, consisting in money, a vessel and munitions of war.

*Firstly*—General William Walker pledges his word of honor that he will assist and cooperate with his person and with his various resources, such as men and others, in the cause of Cuba, and in favor of liberty, after having consolidated the peace and Government of the Republic of Nicaragua.

*Secondly*—General William Walker proposed and admits the understanding that the material and pecuniary resources of Nicaragua as well as those which are in the possession of the revolutionary party of Cuba, shall be amalgamated together, making common cause together for the purpose of overthrowing the Spanish tyranny in the island, and of insuring the prosperity of Central America.

Domingo de Goicouria, a Cuban revolutionary leader known as “the Liberator,” was for a time a brigadier general in Walker's army. He enlisted 250 recruits for service in Walker's cause and managed to persuade Cornelius Vanderbilt to advance the cost of their passage to Nicaragua. It was tacitly understood that Walker later was supposed to help the Cubans win the independence of their island from Spain. As it turned out, Walker was never in a position to launch an invasion of Cuba: he was far too preoccupied with troubles in Central America.

The Filibuster appealed to the other four Central American republics for peaceful coexistence and urged them to lay down their arms. This request fell on deaf ears, since it was well known that Walker was attempting to increase the size of his own army by recruiting more North American volunteers. Recruiting offices were opened up in San Francisco. Additional North Americans, mostly from the Pacific and Southern states, enlisted in his cause. Many volunteers purchased through tickets from San Francisco to New York, and stopped off at Nicaragua to indulge in a little filibustering. The Accessory Transit Company cooperated with Walker: hundreds of “emigrants” were transported to Nicaragua from both New York and San Francisco at the bargain price of twenty dollars a head; some even traveled free.

Ne'er-do-well idlers and adventurers, attracted by visions of easy booty, were destined to be disillusioned by Walker's strict, Prussian-like discipline. Debauchery and even profanity were vices not to be tolerated and brought severe punishment to unruly perpetrators. The well-behaved were rewarded by their monthly pay of twenty-five dollars—if and when it was available, for Walker's treasury was often drained—plus a title to up to 350 acres of land, contingent on success in subduing the country.

The following firsthand report from *Harper's Weekly* of March 14, 1857, illustrates the disillusionment of many recruits after their arrival in Nicaragua:

Let us turn now to another aspect of filibusterism—the light in which it appears to the mere military adventurer; the man out of employ-