

Mexico for disposition by the viceroy, Cazorla acknowledged, he had requested the commandant-inspector Oconór to tell him what to do with them. Their ultimate fate is not found.

On December 6, 1775, Cazorla reported that he was continuing his efforts for the apprehension of Alférez Don Faustino Lazo, the company paymaster, who had absconded sometime previously with pre-sidial funds.

On May 24, 1776, apostate Indians from the nearby missions brought Cazorla news that a ship had been lost on the coast and the Karankawas had killed the sailors who came ashore. The Indians, six days previously, had seen bodies and fragments of gear on the beach. Cazorla set out next day for the disaster scene with twenty-three soldiers and a number of citizens and mission Indians. On the twenty-sixth the expedition crossed the Guadalupe River at "the ford of the Islands" and came at midday to "Rancho Viejo"—probably the Espíritu Santo Mission ranch when it was located on the Guadalupe.

Continuing southeastward on the twenty-seventh, the Spaniards pursued and captured five Karankawas from whom they learned that the shipwreck was on "the other side" of Toboso Island. No one presently stationed at Presidio de la Bahía had ever been on the narrow strip of land, which lay across the mouth of a prominent bay.

Cazorla learned also that a band of Karankawas encamped at the mouth of the Guadalupe had just come from the wreck, and that these Indians had canoes and a boat. He determined to take the ranchería by surprise, appropriate its vessels, and force the Indians to take him to the shipwreck.

Halting the march at midday on Garcitas Creek, he waited there until ten o'clock that night, then marched in darkness to reach the Indian camp just before dawn. Leaving the horseherd and the five prisoners well guarded, the soldiers surrounded the ranchería of a hundred men, women, and children at daybreak. The Karankawas loosed an arrow attack but gave up their arms when they saw they were cut off from their canoes. But they would reveal nothing of the shipwreck. Cazorla sent a scout to reconnoiter the coast and he found bundles of clothing that included parts of English uniforms.

Next morning, May 29, the captain took the Karankawa chieftain and three of his braves and twenty-six of his own men and embarked in the canoes to look for the wreck. The rest of his force took the horses and crossed to the right bank of the Guadalupe, to wait for him on the coast beyond, at "the Place of the Brigantine"—not the shipwreck but a docking point used at some time by a Spanish vessel.

A fierce wind forced Cazorla to spend the night on the beach, but

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next day he proceeded "through many bays, crossing some and coasting others," to arrive at the Place of the Brigantine, between the mouths of San Antonio and Aransas bays, at four-thirty in the afternoon. The men with the horses arrived late that night, and the force remained in camp to rest until the following day before undertaking to reach the ship.

On June 1 Cazorla took horses for himself and twenty-one men, sending the rest of the men and horses to a rendezvous farther down the coast. From a wharf used in times past by the brigantine, two leagues from the camp, they crossed to Toboso Island a league offshore, swimming the horses. Riding eastward two leagues, they arrived at "the coast of the sea," and on the sandy beach lay the wrecked vessel—"a commercial English frigate of deep draft"—on her larboard side. From Cazorla's description, it appears the ship was on the seaward side of St. Joseph's Island.

Obviously a recent wreck, the vessel had broken up, releasing her cargo for the Karankawas to plunder. Masts, spars, and rigging were scattered over the sand. Nearby lay the decomposed body of an unfortunate sailor.

After completing the inspection of the wreck, the soldiers returned to the canoes and spent the night on the island. Crossing next day to the "Lugar del Bergantín," the captain released the Karankawa chief-tain and his braves with a warning given in sign language: They would be severely punished if they failed to notify him promptly of any ship lost or attempting a landing on the shore, or if they should mistreat, kill, or rob any shipwrecked sailors who might land.

At two o'clock the morning of June 3 Cazorla and his soldiers left the Place of the Brigantine for the rendezvous, then pressed homeward to arrive at La Bahía at three o'clock the following morning.

Cazorla transmitted his diary to the viceroy with a letter containing his recommendations for fortifying the coast, which had been completely abandoned since the suppression of Presidio de San Agustín, near the mouth of the Trinity River. The deserted shore, he believed, offered excellent opportunity for any foreign power to establish itself, either on Culebra (Matagorda) Island or on Toboso (St. Joseph's) Island, which divided the entrance of "the port called Mata gorda," extending westward to the mouth of the Río de las Nueces. (Interestingly, he applies the present name to the bay known since La Salle's time as Espíritu Santo or San Bernardo.)

Equally deplorable, he said, were "the pitiful misfortunes of the countless ships lost on the coast," where he had found many fragments, both old and new, attesting to such disasters. And more lamentable still, the sailors who managed to reach shore after being shipwrecked



colony of Louisiana. On November 15, 1778, De Mézières had reported to Croix on the strife in the English colonies. Since the last peace treaty had granted Great Britain the territory east of the Mississippi, he informed, English settlers had spilled into the western country. They had proceeded to establish trade and destroy the legitimate commerce of Spain, while penetrating Spanish dominions and subverting the natives under Spanish sovereignty. Louisiana Governor Gálvez, however, had moved to control the Mississippi, banning English vessels and their contraband trade from New Orleans. As "civil discord increased among these pernicious people," the English "unsheathed the sword against each other," devastating the colonies. They "strove to avenge with rivers of blood all their past piracies . . . , deserving of the indignation of civilized nations and even the dread and horror of the savages."

Then the furor that had been heard from afar transplanted itself, and Louisiana became a witness. Captain James Willing had sailed down the Ohio to the Mississippi with orders from the American Congress to expel all the English in his path. Laying waste to plantations, he had loaded a captured British frigate with the spoils, which he was allowed to sell in Spanish New Orleans. English troops were deserting, and families of colonists were seeking refuge in Spanish Louisiana, where they had founded a settlement named for their protector, Bernardo de Gálvez.

The governor himself, it seems, was showing a decided partiality for the colonists.

De Mézières, however, had little love for either the English oppressors or the insurgents. Yet he prophesied a rebel victory, which he probably considered the lesser of two evils. Spanish officials, already anticipating an entry into the conflict, held no doubts as to which side they would take. They had been stung severely by defeat at the hands of the English in the Seven Years' War. Now they saw an opportunity not only to avenge Spain's damaged pride but also to recover lost territory.

When the eventuality came to pass in May, 1779, Spain's American subjects were authorized to make war on Natchez and other English posts on the east bank of the Mississippi. The English countered by ordering an attack on New Orleans and reduction of the Spanish posts along the Mississippi. But they reckoned without Bernardo de Gálvez.

A year and a half previously, Gálvez had received a letter from one Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia, proposing, in effect, a division of the spoils between the new American nation and Spain. Suggesting the return of the Floridas to rightful Spanish ownership, Henry proposed channeling American commerce down the Ohio and the Mississippi to the Spanish port at New Orleans.

Such thoughts already had occurred to Gálvez, who was keeping New



*The Valedictory*

Orleans open for American privateers to sell their prizes. Ships bearing supplies for the revolutionaries were being allowed passage up the Mississippi. Then, when Willing and his triumphant raiders came sailing down the river, the Spanish governor gave them welcome and allowed them to sell their plunder. He refused a British demand for return of the captured frigate.

When Spain at last declared war on the English, Gálvez was ready with fleet and army. By September, 1779, the British garrisons at Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez, as well as eight ships carrying provisions to British-held Pensacola, had surrendered to him. Mobile and Pensacola fell to his forces in turn; all the former gulf-coast territories of the English.

Unquestionably, this Spanish effort sapped British resources that might have been used effectively to put down the rebellion. Yet, for the future of New Spain, not all the omens bade fair. For Spanish Texas, the results were two-pronged. Frontier soldiers, still too few to cope with the Apaches and the Comanches, volunteered for the campaigns against the English. As long as the war went on, there was scant hope of military replacements for Texas or reinforcements for the interior provinces. It spelled further decline in the frontier condition, accompanied by a deterioration of settlers' morale.

As commandant-general, Teodoro de Croix had set about reshuffling the frontier defense line to conform with his own ideas. Despite his criticism of Oconór's efforts to control the Indian menace, his own were hardly more successful. Not the vigorous campaigner that Oconór was, he perhaps came to realize that there was something to be said for the Irishman's tactics after all. The Indian problem persisted in spite of him. His own policies and methods, like Oconór's, were abandoned almost as soon as his back was turned. While Croix's shortcomings may be excused in part by the draining of his resources for the war with England, it must be remembered that virtually every frontier commander before and after him faced similar deprivations for one reason or another; none had ever had *carte blanche*.

Spain's failure in dealing with the Indian problem may be linked to the inability of her policymakers to recognize the real threat to the frontier provinces. Invariably, the great danger was viewed as coming from a foreign invader, a remote possibility that was tremendously overemphasized at the expense of the real threat: the hostile Indians. Seldom if ever was the determination of frontier policy allowed those who were frontier-bred. Rather, it came from theoreticians who were far more imbued with an awareness of Spain's international rivalry than with any sense of urgency for taming the wilderness.



The frontier inspections of the 1760s, followed by the New Regulations of 1772 and designation of the commandancy-general in 1776, seemed to promise a shift in the ill-conceived priority system. But even after the structure that offered remedy had been created, the same old system refused to let it function. Frontier needs always ran second to other concerns.

In pondering the causes of failure, it may be well to consider the men themselves. Croix, having imputed military and administrative incompetency to Oconór, probably came to possess a sense of failure himself. But the key to the personal successes and failures of both men—as their contemporaries, Ripperdá and Bucareli—is to be found not so much in their military capabilities or the lack of them as in their personal qualities. Oconór, having served as governor *ad interim* of Texas, felt a proprietary interest in the province that caused him to meddle more than his position warranted in Ripperdá's affairs. Croix, following Oconór, sought to downgrade the latter's accomplishments as a means of magnifying his own.

Domingo Cabello, in succeeding Ripperdá, evidently felt the same need; he accused his predecessor of overcharging soldiers of his presidio for supplies and instigated an investigation. Despite Ripperdá's other shortcomings, this allegation hardly seems to be in keeping with his character.

Bucareli, who had appointed Oconór, and who was losing part of his authority to Croix, had double reason for resenting the commandant-general. All the principal leaders influencing Texas in 1776 reacted, at one time or another, with pettiness, with the possible exception of De Mézières. Where they might have been mutually supportive, they were destructive, not only to themselves and to each other but also to their government's aims.

The futility of their mortal concerns is dramatically emphasized. By the end of the decade all except Croix were dead.

Oconór, his health broken from his rigorous service in the interior provinces, died at his new post as governor of Yucatán on March 8, 1779. Bucareli, having once submitted his resignation and been prevailed upon by the king to remain, died in office on April 9, a month after Oconór.

De Mézières, suffering from a mortal injury when he arrived in San Antonio on September 30 to answer a call to the governorship, died there on November 2, 1779.

Less than a year later, in October, 1780, death came to Ripperdá at his new post as governor of Honduras. He left his wife and six Texas-born children.

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*The Valedictory*

Events occurring in Texas in 1776, while important, were nowise as momentous as those in the thirteen English colonies. The American Revolution was the beginning of a movement that would not come to the Spanish colonies for two more decades but which eventually would spread to all. Its attendant ideology was to have incalculable effect on the rest of the world.

At the advent of this first wave of revolution, all the colonial rivals for North America had been eliminated but England and Spain. The latter then joined in eliminating the former, not fully realizing the extent to which she was hastening the day when she, too, would be ousted from the continent.

De Mézières had been right; whatever the upheaval's outcome, it would not be to Spain's benefit. This remarkable figure's proposals were strongly advocated by provincial authorities long after his death. They were considered seriously by the viceregal government. But in reality it seems doubtful that anyone grasped his message: To save her colonies, Spain must put her colonial house in order. And that she was never able to do.

With his particular brand of bias, De Mézierès had asked rhetorically what could be expected from "one who with such fury attacked his own king, his own country." His question was prophetic. He himself may have known the answer: that such "a pernicious people" would stand all too ready to help another attack *his* king and country.

And thus it was that Texas, whose borders could not be effectively sealed against the tide of restless Anglo-Americans, became a hotbed for the Mexican Revolution. While the Spanish king could forbid publication of the American Declaration of Independence in his colonies, he could not suppress the ideas and ideals contained therein.

Long a battleground for Indian and Spaniard, Texas now became the theater for a bloody contest between the offshoots of two conflicting European cultures. The same forces that had impelled the Spaniards northward across the mountains and deserts of the Mexican heartland—a thirst for adventure and new wealth—motivated the new Anglo-Americans to cross the Mississippi and press against the borders of New Spain. The two met in Texas.

The term "manifest destiny" encompassed both the imperial desires and the missionary zeal of the American people. Origin of the idea is traceable to no particular person or moment, but from the beginning of the republic its political leaders believed their democratic institutions too perfect to be confined in narrow boundaries. The United States, said Thomas Jefferson, should be "a standing monument and example" to freedom-loving people everywhere. By the 1840s Andrew Jackson



spoke of actively extending "the area of freedom," and the ideal took on its imperialistic overtones. In such a view, expansion into contiguous lands was needed to enable the United States to fulfill its role as the mother of liberty.

The raw frontiersmen and misfits of Eastern society who answered a strange call to migrate to Mexican Texas might have had difficulty putting it into words, but surely they possessed the spirit. Only after this spirit had impelled them to throw off the Mexican yoke in armed rebellion was the catch phrase supplied by an Eastern journalist. John L. O'Sullivan, editor of the *New York Morning News*, wrote in December, 1845, of "our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us."

The idea, articulated in the East, was made possible in Texas.

Having been oppressed, México, at least to the Anglo-Texans, became the oppressor. While the Mexicans, like the Americans, had espoused freedom, the word was regarded in different contexts in the two cultures. The result was yet another revolution, another political separation. Texas, in giving itself to the United States, became the first fruit of the new expansionist spirit newly labeled manifest destiny.

Texas was the keystone. Settlement of the Oregon boundary question with England soon followed. México, confronted with blatant U. S. demands for California, felt it was time to call a halt on its northern neighbor's imperialism. The sister republics went to war, with the result that the United States secured its claim to a large one-third of the area within its present continental limits.

Although modern moralists often are prone to question the means by which manifest destiny was achieved, judgments can be made only with defective hindsight. Seldom in history's course has it been possible to atone for mistakes of the distant past or to correct history's injustices. The standards of the present era cannot be imposed on a previous one.

There has been a price to pay for the trauma that attended the end of Texas's Spanish period. Because of it, there has been a marked tendency to seal off this significant segment of history, which has so vitally affected not only Texas but also the entire nation.

In their quest for freedom, México and the United States have taken entirely separate paths. Yet in large areas of the two nations, their cultures are fused in a way that adds a richness to both. The dominant strain in the heritage of the northern republic is Anglo-Saxon. But while homage is paid the legacy of the thirteen English colonies, surely there's room for an appreciation of that which derives from Spain.