

EASTERN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS AND THE OTHERING
OF MEXICANS IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY POPULAR PRESS

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ABSTRACT

American correspondents from distinct regions of the United States brought the cultural strains of those regions with them to areas of the West long settled by Mexicans. This dissertation demonstrates the role these distinct cultural strains played in generating stereotypical notions about Mexicans that reflected American settlers' material needs — rooted in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny — and conditioned correspondents to project the inverse of their core values onto Mexicans. As Mexicans from distinct regions of the Southwest were racialized and stripped of their individual distinctiveness in the white Anglo-Saxon mind, regionally specific othering that played a part in the process of Latinos' subordination merged into nationally known stereotypes that have prevailed since the turn of the twentieth century. This dissertation uses the methods of cultural history to examine the ways correspondents' religious and political beliefs, first-hand and second-hand knowledge about Mexicans, and personal trajectories combined to generate media images that othered Mexicans. This othering during the nineteenth century laid the foundations for stereotyping about Latinos in the twentieth century.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Charles Ramírez Berg and Arthur G. Pettit, among other media scholars, have traced modern American stereotypes of Hispanics to the dawn of film at the turn of the twentieth century.¹ But a look at what whites in the American Southwest wrote and said about Mexicans in the nineteenth-century mass media reveals a much earlier origin. By the time the first Kinetoscopes brought moving pictures to the American people, negative representations of Mexicans had been congealing into conventional wisdom for a half-century.

It is posited here that Eastern correspondents on the trail of Anglo-American empire-building in the mid-nineteenth century reflected the norms of Easterners who coveted the West's resources — many under the control of Mexicans who nominally became U.S. citizens after the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-48. The process and product of marginalizing Mexicans mirrored Western European representations of the Orient. As Edward Said detailed in *Orientalism*, European experts on the Middle East portrayed the native society, economy, government, religion, and sexuality of their colonies as

¹ Charles Ramírez Berg, *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Arthur G. Pettit, *Images of the Mexican-American in Fiction and Film* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980); Gary D. Keller, "The First Decades: Film Types," *Bilingual Review* 18, no. 2/3 (May-December 1993): 70-111; Charles Ramírez Berg, "Colonialism and Movies in Southern California, 1910-1934," *Aztlán* (Spring 2003), 75-96.

inefficient, backward, despotic, irrational, evil, morally degenerate — in short, inferior in every way and the mirror image of European progress and values.² In North America, journalists played a significant role in this process of othering, regardless of whether they were catalysts of change or merely mirrors of their communities. Frontier newspaper historian William H. Lyon wrote that the frontier editor was “bound and hemmed in by the norms of his frontier community, an individualist, or a democrat insofar as his own town possessed those virtues. The editor could not become too eccentric else he took to the trail to find a new print shop.”³ Editors who lacked reporters of their own to fill their columns relied on exchanges from other newspapers, delivery of which was fostered by low-cost postage that connected communities in a rapidly expanding republic. Also democratizing the spread of information from the 1840s through the 1860s were the penny papers, newspapers cheap enough for the masses to afford. These papers developed correspondents with distinct personas who provided not just the facts, but detailed interpretation of the context of events in California and the Southwest. While just-the-facts reporters were anonymous contributors to the newspaper, the editor was a persona in his own right. So was the correspondent. His status and creative freedom were loftier than those of newswriters who were paid by the column inch and received no byline. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the ways Northern and Southern correspondents constructed Mexican identity for their readers, emphasizing their otherness rather than their similarity to Anglos, and how these constructions provided the seeds for modern American stereotypes about Hispanics. The research explores how the

² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

³ William H. Lyon, “The Significance of Newspapers on the American Frontier,” *Journal of the West* 19, no. 2 (April 1980), 9.

nation's burgeoning print culture and regional cultures shaped correspondents' perception and portrayal of Mexicans in the West. By doing so, it demonstrates how the print culture promoted America's goals of empire in the mid-nineteenth century.

The images of Mexicans created by the correspondents and sown in the American mind by the nation's burgeoning communication network had material consequences for the conquered Mexicans, their descendants, and for other Latinos in the decades that followed. Othering grew into stereotyping as America extended its influence throughout the hemisphere. Notions of Mexican inferiority provided powerful justifications for the American takeover of land and resources in Latin America, as well as the internal colonization of conquered Mexicans who once had autonomy. These notions were rooted in conflicts over land and resources that erupted as American explorers, soldiers, settlers, farmers, ranchers, and industrialists flooded into the West. New Englanders sailed to California, while Southerners pushed into Texas and New Mexico, bringing with them ideals flavored by the politics, religion, and economics of their home regions.

The men who put images of Mexicans in Eastern readers' heads were guided by the craft values of printing and journalism as well as social mores. Four of the eight correspondents examined in this project — George Wilkins Kendall, Bayard Taylor, Albert Deane Richardson, and J. Ross Browne — started out as apprentice printers or became assistant editors in young manhood. Two others, W. W. H. Davis and G. Douglas Brewerton, came to newspapering and magazine writing during political and military careers. The others, Richard Henry Dana Jr. and Josiah Gregg, wrote about Mexican life as a byproduct of their mercantile experiences. The circumstances that propelled them to privileged positions as correspondents molded the logic that guided their journalistic

practices. This conditioned logic shaped the way they saw and characterized Mexican life in the West. In some cases, these correspondents owned, in whole or in part, the newspapers for which they wrote, accounting for their access to resources such as transportation and editorial space. Other men first went west as soldiers and government officials, then parlayed their knowledge of the frontier into posts as journalists and lecturers. Correspondents are important subjects for cultural study for two reasons. First, by its nature, their work made their writing far more likely to contain subjective interpretation and judgments. Correspondents based their work on first-hand experience of the people and places they encountered, and their work was packed with attributes, details, judgments, assessments, and predictions about the places where they traveled in the West. Second, to understand what was in the minds of journalists, one must first identify them. Correspondents' work provides the identification and description necessary to link the writing to the man. By doing this, it is possible to understand the mindset that shaped the correspondence.

Because New Englanders and Southerners had distinctly different worldviews, it is posited here that they portrayed the Borderlands states and territories from Texas to California in distinctly different ways. The Mexican image in the New England mind was refracted through the prism of Puritan values and Whig, Free Soil, and Republican political ideologies. Southern correspondents saw Mexicans through the lens of white Anglo-Saxonism, martial tradition, and the taboo of miscegenation that the South's economic dependence on slavery promoted. But Manifest Destiny, the belief that Americans had a divine calling to spread democracy, influenced correspondents' representation of Mexicans regardless of their sectional origin.

This project focuses on four correspondents who roved the West on behalf of Eastern publications from 1850 to 1869: Northerners Bayard Taylor and Albert Deane Richardson, and Southerners John Ross Browne and George Douglas Brewerton. Their roles in the print culture can be understood through two lines of inquiry. The content of their newspaper articles in the *New York Tribune* and *Boston Daily Journal*, magazine serializations in *Harper's Monthly* and *Harper's Weekly*, books, and lectures were read closely to understand how they represented Mexican people and culture in the Borderlands from Texas to California. Their private and personal writings in letters, journals, and other manuscripts were scrutinized to ascertain what and who influenced their ways of seeing Mexicans. Taylor, Browne, and Richardson wrote to readers and loved ones that they read books by men who adventured, traded, and soldiered in Mexico's former territories in the 1840s. Books by these men, Richard Henry Dana Jr., W. W. H. Davis, John Russell Bartlett, Josiah Gregg, and George Wilkins Kendall were also closely read to understand their portrayals of Mexican life. Where available, their manuscripts were also scrutinized to understand the personal and cultural influences that shaped their writing. Two of these men were newspaper editors. Davis edited the *Santa Fe Gazette* and wrote editorials for the *Old Dominion* of Portsmouth, Virginia, in the 1840s. Kendall owned and corresponded for the *New Orleans Picayune*. Their writing for these newspapers was also examined.

A search of the America's Historical Newspapers and the 19th Century Masterfile databases shows that New York served as the principal node for the development and distribution of negative portrayals of Mexicans, while a handful of Southern magazines

also fed information about the Borderlands to American readers.⁴ For this reason, this dissertation focuses mainly on the Northern press. In addition, the publishing centers of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were significant because their speedy printing technology and the North's expansive rail network extended their reach to the Trans-Mississippi West. But the South had influential publications of its own, even if their reach was limited. *DeBow's Commercial Review*, the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the *Southern Quarterly Review*, and the *Southern Quarterly* all published material relating to Mexico that was shaped by the South's economic, political, social, and religious values. Their potential influence on the Southerners who wrote for the Northern Press cannot be overlooked.

As John Nerone argued, a cultural history of communication is not possible unless the entire communication circuit is taken into account.⁵ So in examining the ways that culture shaped correspondents' perceptions and representations of Mexicans, it is crucial to remember that writers are also readers and that mass media encompass more than periodicals. Writers' work resonated far beyond their initial audiences, rolling off newspaper and magazine presses into lyceum lectures and best-selling books. So readers' interaction with texts and writers will also be considered. Observation was certainly not

⁴ This search sought articles containing the keywords "Mexican," "Mexicans," "Mexico," "Californian," "Californians," "Californios," "Tejanos," and "greasers." "Borderlands" encompasses the northern states of Mexico, the territories that the United States wrested from Mexico in the war of 1846-48, and land acquired in the Gadsden Purchase: the present-day states, in whole or in part, of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. This includes the southernmost hundred miles of Colorado, as that land was part of New Mexico before 1875. American correspondents who wrote about Mexicans generally confined themselves to activity north of the border, although Bayard Taylor strayed across the line in 1849-50, J. Ross Browne wrote about Baja California and Sonora in the 1860s, and George Wilkins Kendall wrote his U.S.-Mexico War dispatches while fighting as a free lance attached to Texas Rangers units and the staff of General W. J. Worth.

⁵ John Nerone, "The Future of Communication History," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23, no. 3 (August 2006): 258.

these correspondents' only source of information. They gathered facts and formed impressions from reading the works of and speaking with other journalists, authors, soldiers, government agents, and businessmen. They read magazines, novels, pamphlets, books, and maps. Lecturers delivered useful information to cities and towns from the Carolinas to California and from Maine to the Mexican border. Libraries provided background material that informed correspondents about others' experiences in the Far West. With all of these media at their disposal, Eastern correspondents' minds were hardly blank slates concerning Mexicans in the Southwest when they set out for the frontier.

Americans from distinct regions brought the cultural strains of those regions with them to the Southwestern enclaves settled by their kith and kin. This dissertation demonstrates how these distinct cultural strains generated stereotypes that reflected settlers' material needs — rooted in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny — and conditioned correspondents to project the inverse of their core values onto Mexicans. As Mexicans from distinct regions of the Southwest were racialized and stripped of their individual distinctiveness in the white Anglo-Saxon mind, regionally specific othering that played a part in the process of Latinos' subordination merged into nationally known stereotypes that have prevailed since the turn of the twentieth century. In short, national visions grew from local origins. This dissertation unearths these local origins.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

Eastern newsmen's portrayal of the Borderlands does not neatly fit the category of either domestic or foreign. It is a liminal subject that belongs in both categories, or neither. "Transnational" more precisely describes the work of American correspondents in their nation's new, formerly Mexican territories. Many historians have tackled the story of newspapering on the frontier, but journalism historian Barbara Cloud noted in 2008 that no book had yet addressed the ways the nineteenth-century Eastern press portrayed the West.¹ Her sweeping study is only the latest history of the frontier press. William H. Lyon, Robert F. Karolevitz, David Halas, David Dary and others have concentrated on journalists and newspapers that published in the Trans-Mississippi West and the Far West.² This dissertation addresses something different. It represents the first

¹ Barbara Cloud, *The Coming of the Frontier Press: How the West was Really Won* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), xvii.

² For a variety of perspectives on frontier journalism, see Robert F. Karolevitz, *Newspapering in the Old West: A Pictorial History of Journalism and Printing on the Frontier* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1965); William H. Lyon, *The Pioneer Editor in Missouri, 1808-1860* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965); William H. Lyon, *Journalism in the West: From the April 1980 Journal of the West, with Three Additional Articles* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1980); David Fridtjof Halaas, *Boom Town Newspapers: Journalism on the Rocky Mountain Frontier, 1859-1881* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981); William H. Lyon, *Those Old Yellow Dog Days: Frontier Journalism in Arizona, 1859-1912* (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1994); Sherilyn Bennion, *Equal to the Occasion: Women Editors of the Nineteenth-Century West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1990); Barbara Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992); David Dary, *Red Blood and Black Ink: Journalism in the Old West* (New York: Knopf, 1998); and Jennie Carter, ed. Eric Gardner, *Jennie Carter: A Black Journalist of the Early West* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

examination of these correspondents and the interaction between their cultures and their representation of Mexicans. Because no one has yet considered the history of these transregional correspondents in depth, the literature in this review is not specific to them. Instead, it first discusses the scant literature on the ways American correspondents, travel writers, and newspapers informed readers about distant, foreign places in the nineteenth century. The second section reviews the cultural approaches journalism historians have adopted. The third discusses the literature on cultural production as it pertains to the study of nineteenth-century journalism history.

Delivering information about distant lands

The correspondents who plied the Borderlands encountered an alien world with cacti instead of oaks and Mexicans and Indians instead of whites and blacks. The West might as well have been a foreign place to Easterners. With all that they encountered, these writers had more in common with foreign correspondents than any other journalists. The only in-depth treatment of early American foreign correspondents was written by Giovanna Dell'orto, who built her 2002 book on the question of how reporters constructed the rest of the world. She asked, "What meanings did the first U.S. foreign correspondents give to foreign cultures through their reporting?" Dell'orto observed that the foreign correspondents of the *Herald*, *Times*, *Sun*, and *Tribune* of New York, the *New Orleans Picayune*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *St. Louis Republican* "understood their occupation as providing something that the factual, terse snippets" in news digests culled together from exchange papers and other sources could not.

Dell'orto found that U.S. newspaper editorials and congressional debates reflected widespread belief in American superiority and a sense of national mission. These beliefs informed Americans' understanding of realities in the rest of the world.³ They also provided the "discursive boundaries" within which the earliest American foreign correspondents created meanings about all things foreign. Dell'orto suggested that these foreign correspondents, Bayard Taylor of the *New York Tribune* among them, wrote ambivalently about the people they encountered and places in which they traveled. They described foreign lands as gorgeous and bountiful and in need of better people to run them, reflecting American superiority and mission, but they also showed empathy for the local cultures they encountered while sometimes lambasting American policies and prejudices.⁴ In her sample of foreign correspondence, Dell'orto observed that writers would compare exotic places and things with American counterparts. But Dell'orto did not attempt to explain what was going on in the heads of these correspondents by analyzing their career trajectories, artifacts that revealed their private thoughts about their encounters with the foreign, or the ways print culture shaped the way they saw the world.

The Mexican West in the eyes of Eastern journalists

Raymund A. Paredes was the first historian to systematically analyze nineteenth-century American writers' descriptions of the Mexican character. Writers in his 1977 study included travelers, trappers, government agents, soldiers, and journalists, among them Zebulon Pike, Joel Poinsett, Josiah Gregg, Mary Austin Holley, George Wilkins

³ Giovanna Dell'orto, *Giving Meanings to the World: The First U.S. Foreign Correspondents, 1838-1859* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

Kendall, Richard Henry Dana, Alfred Robinson, Walter Colton, and Bayard Taylor. Of these, only two were journalists: Kendall and Taylor. Paredes noted that in the Texas-New Mexico region, American writers characterized Mexicans generally as treacherous, cruel, cowardly, and indolent and strongly influenced American attitudes about Mexicans at the exact historical moment when the U.S. sought justification to invade Mexico.⁵

Paredes conceded that the Texans' outrage was justified by massacres at Goliad and the Alamo during Texas' War of Independence, but Anglo-Texan writers' "hatred of Mexicans exceeded its possible justification."⁶ California Mexicans were described as indolent, fond of dance parties, or "fandangos," and governed by Catholic priests. Anglos, Paredes wrote, felt compelled to justify destruction of Mexican life in the West by portraying Mexicans as "villainous and decadent."⁷ Paredes provided a necessary first step toward understanding how Anglo writers represented Mexicans. But his analysis of American travel writers' worldview is incomplete. He focused on the writers' messages as products but not on the way the messages were produced. He noted that Dana, Colton, and Robinson were New Englanders with a Puritan mindset that shaped the way they saw California Mexican culture. But he failed to describe that mindset in depth and wrote off Anglo-Texans' observations to their Texan identity without explaining how that identity influenced their ways of seeing Mexicans.

David J. Langum delved somewhat deeper into white American and European attitudes about pre-conquest California, but with some erroneous conclusions. He

⁵ Raymund A. Paredes, "The Mexican Image in American Travel Literature, 1831-1869" *New Mexico Historical Review* (January 1977): 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

proposed in a 1978 article that European observers reached the same conclusions as Americans and that this could be attributed to the influence of the Industrial Revolution rather than Protestantism, Manifest Destiny, and Anglo-Saxon racism, which he termed “the traditional mea culpa of American historians notwithstanding.”⁸ American writers commonly asserted that California would have become great long ago if it had been in the hands of a more industrious and worthy people.⁹ Guides for Easterners heading west repeated Richard Henry Dana’s themes from *Two Years Before the Mast*: The Spanish were “a proud Lazy [*sic*] indolent people doing nothing but ride after herds or from place to place without any apparent object.”¹⁰ Langum seems to have discovered a Euro-American master narrative that would preclude religion, racism, or Manifest Destiny as explanations for negative representations of the Californios, and in their place he suggested that perhaps Californios “had indeed developed an especial depth to the mañana habit because of the ease of living, bountiful nature and climate, cheap labor, and political and geographic isolation.”¹¹ But he used so many short quotes from so many sources with so little information about the identity and beliefs of the writers that it is difficult to tell whether he recognized the complete pattern of othering in these writers’ works. For example, Langum claimed that French writers, by virtue of their Catholicism and difference from the British and Americans, would not be susceptible to Anglo-Saxon racism. However, as Albert K. Weinberg explained, Manifest Destiny was supported by a

⁸ David J. Langum, “Californios and the Image of Indolence,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 9, No. 2 (April 1978): 181-196.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186, quoting mountain man James Clyman.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

whole scaffold of eighteenth-century European ideologies.¹² The political philosophy of nationalism held that homogenous groups of people had a right to form their own nations to govern their regions. The notion of homogeneity implied that citizenship was only for members of the group that formed the nation. Jan Nederveen Pieterse expanded on this, explaining, “Europe’s nation-states came into being through a process of subjugation of regions in which missions and Christianization, pacification and exploitation formed a colonial scenario similar to that of the later imperialism overseas. ... It follows that for virtually all the complexes which arise in relation to non-Europeans we can find precedents in Europe itself.”¹³ In short, Langum’s argument fell apart because he did not consider that white European racism explained the similarity between American Anglo-Saxon and European observations and attitudes toward Mexicans.

Historian David J. Weber, critiquing Langum’s article in 1979, used similar reasoning to reach the same conclusion. “Langum has based his argument on a faulty assumption. The commonality of viewpoints regarding the supposed laziness of *Californios* does not necessarily indicate that Protestantism, racism, and a commonality of the broad impulses of ‘religion, racism, and nationalism,’ which took the particular American form of Protestantism, Anglo-Saxon racism, and Manifest Destiny, influenced Europeans as well as Americans,” Weber wrote, quoting from page 196 of Langum’s article.¹⁴ Hispanophobia festered for centuries in Northern Europe, driven by the “Black

¹² Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

¹³ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 31.

¹⁴ David J. Weber, “Here Rests Juan Espinosa: Toward a Clearer Look at the Image of the ‘Indolent’ Californios,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January 1979): 61-69.

Legend.” This belief held that the Spanish were uniquely depraved, characterized by extreme cruelty, treachery, pride, fanaticism, cowardliness, corruption, decadence, authoritarianism, and indolence. Northern European Catholics in Germany, Spain, and France viewed Spanish Catholicism as an aberrant form of their faith that had been tainted by exposure to Judaism.¹⁵ Weber suggested that the Spanish missions’ mismanagement of land and labor might have diminished individual initiative and industriousness. But he wrote that this did not explain the image of *Californio* indolence. Nor did it explain why some writers accused all Mexicans of laziness while others contradicted themselves by writing that *Californios* were indolent but also lived well.¹⁶

The nomenclature of race among Mexicans and Anglos

The present project examines the othering of people in the Borderlands who would be labeled “Mexican” in current terminology. But to American writers of the mid-nineteenth century, Mexicans in the Borderlands were known by a variety of labels such as Spaniards, Mexicans, Californians or Californios, and Texans. Readers of the present understand these terms as identifiers of geographic, national, and regional origins. But it is vital to remember that these labels were laden with meaning connected to racial hierarchy, political and economic power, and hence position in the social order. It is thus instructive to consider how Europeans categorized themselves and their conquered subjects in the New World.

Under Spanish rule, from the time of the conquest to the Mexican revolution in 1821, Mexico was known as New Spain. The Spanish colonizers used labels that denoted

¹⁵ Weber, 1979, 62.

¹⁶ Ibid, 68.

categories of social identity. These categories were based on differences in physical appearance that the Spanish colonizers associated with racial distinction. The terms were not mere descriptors of racial characteristics; they also connoted position in the hierarchy of power. Pure white Spaniards, whether European-born *españoles* or New World-born *criollos*, were at the top.¹⁷ Euro-mestizos came next. These included people of mixed white Spanish and black parentage known as *mulattos* or *mulattas* (the “-o” ending in Spanish denotes masculine gender and an “-a” ending connotes feminine gender) and *mestizos* or *mestizas*, who had Spanish and Indian parents.¹⁸ A *casta* was a low-born person of mixed blood, typically of black and Indian ancestry.¹⁹ At the bottom of the hierarchy were blacks and pure-blood Indians; in some places Indians were considered superior to blacks, and in other places the opposite was assumed.²⁰

These labels meant much more in central Mexico, where status in the hierarchy was largely determined by race, than on New Spain’s northern frontier in New Mexico, Texas, and California. There, the lack of an easily exploited pool of native labor made it impossible to maintain solid racial distinctions because some *criollos* and *españoles* worked as servants while *mestizos*, blacks, and Indians moved up the social ladder.²¹ The racial hierarchy gave way to one of economic and *political* power. Those who were

¹⁷ Magali M. Carrera, “Locating Race in Late Colonial Mexico,” *Art Journal* 57, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 36-45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; the meaning of *casta* as an indicator of black and Indian parentage is found in Irene Diggs, “Color in Colonial Spanish America,” *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 4 (October 1953): 404.

²⁰ Diggs, “Color in Colonial Spanish America,” 404.

²¹ David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier: 1821-1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 214.

darker-skinned but were educated, embraced Christianity, and possessed power were conferred a degree of honorary whiteness through the distinction of *gente de razón*, or “people of reason.” Thus, to Mexicans on the northern frontier the hierarchy was based not only on race, but on cultural distinctions. This differed from customs among Anglo-Americans, who defined Indians and blacks solely by race.²² By the early 1840s, Mexicans in California clearly used cultural difference to determine racial difference. To a Mexican, an Apache who raided Mexican settlements in Arizona was an Indian, or *indio*. But an Apache who assimilated by adopting Mexican religion, dress, and customs became known to Mexicans as a Mexican.²³

The racial biases of the nouveau riche Californios increased between 1821 and 1848 because they wanted to put themselves on an equal footing with Anglos who drew stricter racial distinctions.²⁴ This may have played a role in the way Anglo-American correspondents wrote about Hispanics in California. Their labels reflected the Mexican logic that called an Apache an Indian unless he embraced a more European culture. As *gente de razón* who embraced Spanish rather than Mexican culture formed social and political alliances with influential Anglos, the Anglos came to find Spanish ways acceptable while they condemned all things Mexican.²⁵ Thus, to be labeled Spanish was to be accorded a degree of prestige and honorary whiteness. To be called Mexican was to

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, 215. Weber quoted Manuel P. Servin, ed., “The Beginnings of California’s Anti-Mexican Prejudice,” in Servin, ed., *An Awakened Minority: The Mexican Americans* (Beverly Hills, CA: Glencoe Press, 1974), 2.

²⁵ Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 206-207.

be condemned to the status of servants, cowboys, and peons. Anglo writers considered people of either category, however, to be not quite American.

Informing the East about California during the Gold Rush

Knowing what to expect on the California Trail meant life or death to Easterners who caught the gold bug in 1849. Historian Richard T. Stillson examined the flow of information to would-be prospectors in the East during the California Gold Rush. His book drew from California guidebooks, Eastern newspapers, and emigrants' descriptions of the routes they followed and how they learned the way to proceed. Stillson asked whether and how newspapers disseminated useful information for prospective goldrushers planning their journey, how gold rush news and information differed by type of newspaper or by region of the country, and how readers' perception of the credibility of newspaper information changed as they transformed from greenhorns to veteran prospectors. Stillson determined that newspapers were a major source of information, but the relationship between print and personal sources of information was complicated by a declining belief in the credibility of printed information as experience showed goldrushers the ropes of living in the West.²⁶ Stillson attempted to discern the characteristics of credibility by examining advertisements. Although that might tell what advertisers thought would sell, it is impossible to know what readers found credible without knowing what they told one another or wrote in letters or diaries.

It can be misleading to infer how readers used newspapers solely from newspaper content, but it is instructive to consider publishers' intended uses for information. Stillson

²⁶ Richard T. Stillson, *Spreading the Word: A History of Information in the California Gold Rush* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 13.

noted that this can be reasonably inferred from the ways correspondence addressed readers and packaged information. He concluded that New York newspapers turned the news into useful information for prospective gold rushers preparing to head for California.²⁷ Stillson relied on migrant miners' descriptions of their journeys and information sources to determine which sources they considered most credible, but he acknowledged that none ever mentioned what he read. With experience, gold rushers learned to distrust published information because it was often dangerously dated or incomplete. By 1850, Stillson argued, letters that contained advice that was gained from experience in the West became important sources of information and influenced the marketplaces of information.²⁸

Few studies have examined the role of early American foreign correspondents, and fewer have addressed Eastern travel writers' representations of Mexicans in the West and the flow of information from the West to the East. Just one book has explored the ways the earliest American foreign correspondents represented the rest of the world for U.S. readers, but it did not connect representations to the culture that shaped correspondents' perception and description. Those who have examined travel writers' descriptions of the Mexican West have connected negative representation to writers' belief in Manifest Destiny but have not explained contradictions in these descriptions. Literature has been sparse on readers' use of information about the West. But one study found that newspapers' descriptions of the West were vital to would-be prospectors

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

preparing to leave the East Coast during the California Gold Rush. The next section addresses the ways journalism historians have employed the methods of cultural history.

Cultural approaches to American journalism history

James W. Carey, one of the earliest proponents of cultural studies in journalism education, believed that as of 1974 journalism history had a long way to go to catch up with the methods of history at large.²⁹ The distinction between “history” and “journalism history” is a curious one. History as practiced in university departments of history had largely ignored the professions, leaving schools of law, education, business, and journalism to fend for themselves in telling the stories of their pasts.³⁰ Despite this tendency to ignore the professions, history scholars from history departments sometimes refer to themselves as “professional historians,” so that term will be used hereafter to distinguish them from journalism historians (and their more broadly defined cousins, mass media historians and communication historians). Journalism historians have been slow to embrace the methodological evolution of professional historians.³¹ In part, this is because they came to the game a little late. Journalism itself has existed as an academic discipline for only a century.³²

Communication scholar Barbie Zelizer wrote, “Historians developed so-called correct ways of doing history – and boundary crossings from scholars outside the

²⁹ Ibid..

³⁰ Barbie Zelizer, *Taking Journalism Seriously* (London: Sage, 2004), 78.

³¹ Margaret A. Blanchard, “The Ossification of Journalism History: A Challenge for the Twenty-First Century,” *Journalism History* 25, No. 3 (Autumn 1999): 107-112.

³² Betty Houchin Winfield, *Journalism 1908: The Birth of a Profession* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 16.

discipline (such as journalism history) were looked at with disdain and contacts with such scholars implicitly, if not explicitly, discouraged.”³³ Journalism historians, working mainly within journalism schools and lacking the training of professional historians, created histories that privileged their field by focusing specifically on journalists. Such stories were primarily hagiographies – stories of the great men and great institutions that made journalism great. Historians refer to this approach as the “Whig” or “progressive” school.³⁴ This school’s intent was to legitimize the discipline. In 1974, Carey lamented the proliferation of institutional histories that failed to track the actions of the people within them, noting that the field’s greatest need was a history of reporting. He urged his colleagues to attempt to grasp the consciousness of journalists and understand how they experienced events while they were experiencing them.³⁵

Since then, journalism historians began to apply the methods of social history that had seeped from the professional history field into theirs. But their efforts at a history of reporting have largely consisted of examinations of reports, not the process of creating them.³⁶ With several notable exceptions, such as Michael Schudson, Daniel Hallin, David Paul Nord, Daniel Czitrom, and Hazel Dicken Garcia, journalism historians have struggled to keep up with the methodological and conceptual developments in professional history. Foremost of these is the cultural turn, which stretches back to the

³³ Zelizer, *Taking Journalism Seriously*, 84.

³⁴ James Startt and Wm. David Sloan, *Research Methods in Mass Communication History* (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2004): 36.

³⁵ Carey, “Problem of Journalism History,” 4.

³⁶ John C. Nerone, “Approaches to Media History.” In *A Companion to Media Studies*, ed. Angharad N. Valdivia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 94-114.

French Annales School in the early twentieth century.³⁷ As social historians sought to apply social science theories, they delved into quantitative methods and analyzed what statistical data they could find to establish broader patterns in society.³⁸ Some journalism historians have done this, most notably Donald L. Shaw, who found newspapers were more responsive to technological rather than social change in the ways they adapted their reports.³⁹ But such studies do not tell how reporters collected the news and the ideological, social, and cultural forces that shaped their reporting. While David Paul Nord and other journalism historians have called for attention to this, they have provided few methodological specifics even though they have pointed to books that they consider models.⁴⁰ In *Discovering the News*, Michael Schudson provided a broad overview of the values that shaped journalism from the American Revolution into the twentieth century. But such an overview naturally drew from a sampling from key points in time and involved the media institutions with the greatest reputations for influence. Schudson's analysis constituted a high-altitude view of the landscape of journalism – far too remote from the everyday lives of the journalists of the past to constitute either a thick description or a view of the everyday actions of reporters and editors within the

³⁷ David Paul Nord, "The Practice of Historical Research," in *Mass Communication Research and Theory*, eds. Guido H. Stempel III, David H. Weaver, and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003), 362-385.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 371.

³⁹ Donald Shaw, "At the Crossroads: Change and Continuity in American Press News 1820-1860." *Journalism History* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 38-50.

⁴⁰ David Paul Nord cites as an example David Waldstreicher's *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). Waldstreicher argued that accurate inferences could be made about readers and reading culture based on contemporaneous descriptions of their practices and from artifacts such as patriotic songs. The monograph argued that readers and their culture were central to the formation of American national identity from the Revolutionary War through the 1820s.

journalistic field, the field of power in which journalism is situated, or the fields of business/industry, politics, and intellectual production with which journalism overlaps. Media scholars studying contemporary phenomena in journalism and mass media have employed cultural approaches with increasing frequency.

Journalism historian Marion Marzolf proposed that journalism historians draw from American studies and employ “content assessment” to understand journalism in cultural context. This method relies on “reading, sifting, weighing, comparing and analyzing the evidence in order to tell the story.”⁴¹ Marzolf detailed three prongs in this approach. The first, assessment of content, asks, “What was in the newspapers? What values, attitudes, social norms were conveyed through the newspapers? What picture of society, community and the various groups within that community was presented? Who was included? Who was left out? What events were important? What are the long range and continued trends in coverage? What are the brief enthusiasms?”⁴² The second prong involves people, asking, “Who were these people doing the reporting and editing? What were their backgrounds and their value systems? What ethnic groups were represented? What did the mix of women, men and ethnic identity add to newsroom judgments about news? What was the socialization process in newsrooms of the past? Were personal values and codes of behavior modified to conform to one standard for journalists? If so, what was it? How did it mark the reporting and style of writing?”⁴³ The third prong involves culture and society, asking, “What is the significance of journalism in its

⁴¹ Marion Marzolf, “American Studies – Ideas for Communication Historians?” *Journalism History* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1978), p. 16.

⁴² Marzolf, “American Studies,” 15.

⁴³ Ibid.

presentation of information, values and opinions to the elites and non-elites of society? Was the newspaper's reality the same as the social reality? Did that make any difference? Did people act on the information provided by newspapers or on other sources of information? What role did the newspaper play in the society of its time?"⁴⁴

Journalism and mass media historians were slow to embrace the methodological and conceptual developments of the broader field of history. Media historians acknowledge the need for histories that go beyond descriptions of the report itself and show how reports were crafted. But they have provided few methodological specifics for how to do this. Marzolf's content assessment is a concrete way of relating intellectual products to the people and environments that produced them. The next section summarizes scholarship on cultural theory as it relates to social identity, othering, and cultural production/reproduction.

Cultural theory

In a frontier fraught with competition over land and resources, Anglos created strategic advantages for themselves by promoting themselves as racially superior to Mexican Americans. This dissertation explores Eastern correspondents' roles in this and the cultural influences that shaped the way they saw Mexicans. The key concepts in this study are social identity, Orientalism, othering, racialization, and cultural production/reproduction.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu put it, “Social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against that which is closest, which represents the greatest threat.”⁴⁵ Dominant groups distinguish themselves as superior to other groups in order to continue those groups’ subordination. As outlined in Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism, Europeans ascribed the attributes of backwardness, degeneracy, and inferiority to the people of the Orient. They adapted Darwinism to their race thinking in order to find “scientific” validity in their understanding that humanity consisted of two classes: advanced, ruling races and backward, subservient ones. Orientals were associated with the lower elements of Western society: women, the insane, and the poor. At the height of their racialization, Orientals were virtually invisible. They were not even considered to be people, let alone citizens.⁴⁶ This social construction of otherness sprang from Europeans’ projection of the inverse of their ideals onto Orientals. Said’s understanding of the West’s interaction with the Orient can also be applied to the West’s interactions with the people of the Southwest. Just as the end of Orientalism was the accumulation, consolidation, and extension of European imperial power, an American form of Orientalism served to do the same things for Anglos in the Southwest. In Said’s examination of Orientalism, nothing was static; his study involved not just the study of the production of culture, but the reproduction of culture through writers’ interaction with previous Orientalist texts. Generations of writers formed impressions and composed literary and scholarly works about the Middle East, depositing a sediment of ideas about the nature of colonized

⁴⁵ Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of distinction is summarized by Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2004), 57.

⁴⁶ Edward Said, “Latent and Manifest Orientalism,” in *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*, eds. Tania Das Gupta, Carle E. James, Roger C.A. Maaka, Grace-Edward Galabuzi, and Chris Andersen (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., 2007), 45-47.

peoples. This sediment is collected and built upon by subsequent generations, a raw material for the perpetuation of Oriental otherness. Said acknowledged that scholars generally accepted that the conventions of writing limited creative forms taken by writing, but argued that they were reluctant to accept political, ideological, or institutional factors constrained content.⁴⁷ Simply put, Said argued that humanist scholars assumed previous writing shaped the form but not the content of cultural products. Said noted that literary scholars rarely connected representations of the Arab world with the political, institutional, and ideological constraints that acted on individual writers.⁴⁸ In *Orientalism*, Said was most interested in the intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies that went into the creation of an imperialist view of the Middle East, drawing from contemporaneous studies in philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel writing, and lyric poetry. Among Said's questions: "What changes, modulations, refinements, even revolutions take place within Orientalism? What is the meaning of originality, of continuity, of individuality, in this context? How does Orientalism transmit or reproduce itself from one epoch to another?"⁴⁹

The clearest route to understanding the concrete ways ideas from one time can influence writers of another is to consider the themes Said identified in *Orientalism* and his assumptions about the relationship between the European nations that were home to the Orientalists and the people they portrayed. Orientalism involves the "dreams, images, and vocabularies" through which the Orient was "approached systematically, as a topic of

⁴⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15.

learning, discovery, and practice.”⁵⁰ These are the concrete markers for the abstract concept of difference. Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to the culture it portrayed.⁵¹ Its American equivalent in the Mexican Borderlands – perhaps best termed Mexicanism since it represents an Eastern American view of the Western lands in the Manifest Destiny-fueled zone of colonization and empire-building – also responded more to the cultures that produced its representations of the Mexican. Newspaper articles, editorials, novels, travel books, lectures, and magazines related knowledge *about* Mexico to Easterners, but they did not speak *for* Mexicans. Instead, they represented an empire-building gaze upon an Occidental Other that sought to constrain conceptions of Mexicans’ abilities, the value of their culture and products, their suitability for intermarriage, their worthiness to continue occupying their land, the appropriateness of their religious and political institutions as compared to American institutions, and their potential for advancement in a modernizing world. As Said emphasized, Orientalism is a system of representation and not a means of natural portrayal.⁵² The elements of othering portrayal lurk in “style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original.”⁵³ To identify these elements, one must examine two factors: *strategic location* and *strategic formation*. Said defined strategic location as “a way of describing the author’s position in a text with regard to the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

⁵² Ibid., 21. Quoting Karl Marx but not translating him, Said wrote, “Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden.” In English, this reads, “They cannot portray themselves, so they must be portrayed.”

⁵³ Ibid., 21.

Oriental material.” Strategic formation is “a way of analyzing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large.”⁵⁴ Said made his means of detecting the Orientalists’ othering more explicit in *Culture and Imperialism*, in which he called his method “contrapuntal reading.”

Said drew from musical theory to explain the method he employed to analyze the relationship between Europe and its Middle Eastern and Near Eastern colonies in *Orientalism*:

As we look back to the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally, but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those histories against which (and altogether with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonial resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities.⁵⁵

Said wrote that to read contrapuntally was to understand an imperial center’s relationship to its colonial periphery in terms of, for instance, Frenchness and Africanness, or Englishness and Orientalism.⁵⁶ “In practical terms,” Said wrote, “‘contrapuntal reading’ as I have called it means reading a text with an understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 51.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 52.

process of maintaining a particular style of life in England.”⁵⁷ As Said explained, “[N]o identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions: Greeks always require barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etc. The opposite is certainly true as well. Even the mammoth engagements in our own time over such essentializations as ‘Islam,’ the ‘West,’ the ‘Orient,’ ‘Japan,’ or ‘Europe’ admit to a particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference, and those require careful analysis and research.”⁵⁸

To extend Said’s logic, nineteenth-century American identity required Mexico. But it would be a mistake to assume all Americans were alike; to do so would be to essentialize Americanness just as Said argued the Orientalists essentialized the Orient. The present study posits that to understand the center of an empire, one cannot assume that every powerful group within the empire is the same. To fully understand representations of the Mexican Other requires a finer-grained analysis that takes into account the pluralism within the imperial center. From a historical perspective, it is crucial to understand that the empire was not always the way it currently is. It has undergone constant change, and continues to do so. This is true in the case of nineteenth-century America. It is argued here that the development of the nation’s systems of mass communication played a significant role in this process of change by channeling competing sectional currents of ideology, faith, commerce, and militarism into a single national mainstream between the 1840s and 1870s.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 52.

The Orientalists in *Orientalism* fixated on perceptions of biological and religious difference while projecting their own sexual fantasies onto Middle Easterners. Orientalists of the nineteenth century emphasized Islam's supposed inferiority to Christianity, with William Muir concluding, "the sword of Muhammad, and the Kor'an, are the most stubborn enemies of Civilisation, Liberty, and the Truth which the world has yet known."⁵⁹ The parallel in the present study is the tendency of American thinkers to speculate on Roman Catholicism's threat to American civilization. The Concord Lyceum debated the question, "Is there danger to our free institutions from the spread of Roman Catholicism?" Spanning four weekly meetings in March 1837, the lyceum reached no definitive conclusion.⁶⁰ For the Protestant crusaders of Manifest Destiny who followed for the rest of the century, however, there seemed to be little doubt that Catholicism was at odds with American liberty and religious freedom.

Orientalist scholars of language linked linguistic difference to biological inferiority. "Read any page by Renan on Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, or proto-Semitic and you read a fact of power," Said observed, "by which the Orientalist philologist's authority summons out of the library at will examples of man's speech, and ranges them there surrounded by a suave European prose that points out defects, virtues, barbarisms, and shortcomings in the language, the people, and the civilization."⁶¹ Images of male

⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 151, citing William Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (1858-61) and *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (1891).

⁶⁰ "The Concord Lyceum, Its Surviving Records," in *The Massachusetts Lyceum During the American Renaissance: Materials for the Study of the Oral Tradition in American Letters: Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Other New-England Lecturers*, ed. Kenneth Walter Cameron (Hartford, CT: Transcendental Books, 1969), 145.

⁶¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 142.

perversion and female wantonness rounded out the Orientalist vision of biological strangeness and inferiority. The nearly exclusively male Orientalists, such as Gustave Flaubert, represented Oriental males as grotesquely perverted and prone to public masturbation, homosexuality and bestiality, all bizarrely committed in hope of winning public approval.⁶² Such portrayals marked the Arab as eccentric, and even not quite human. Oriental women in European novels and travel writing were “usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing.”⁶³

Intellectual capacity and honesty were nearly as bad, in the eyes of Orientalist Evelyn Baring, an Englishman who characterized the Orientals and Arabs as “gullible, ‘devoid of energy and initiative,’ much given to ‘fulsome flattery,’ intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals; Orientals cannot walk on either a road or a pavement (their disordered minds fail to understand what the clever European grasps immediately, that roads and pavements are made for walking); Orientals are inveterate liars, they are ‘lethargic and suspicious,’ and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race.”⁶⁴

The relationship between Europe and the Middle East is one of colonizer and colonized. A growing body of knowledge about the Orient and its position of strength and dominance were the key characteristics that shaped Europe’s view of the Orient.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., 103.

⁶³ Ibid., 207.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39, quoting Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1908), vol. 2: 146-67.

⁶⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

Orientalism is a discourse by which Europeans constructed the Orient in political, military, sociological, scientific, and imaginative terms to the end of controlling the Orient. Said observed that the Orient was a place visited, studied, occupied and conquered since the days of the ancient historian Herodotus. As such, the Orient alternated between being an old place that was re-visited, and a new place to be conquered by rising generations of Europeans. This constitutes a key difference from the West of the present study. The Borderlands region was, for the Americans of the nineteenth century, a place for new exploration, new study, and new conquest. It was a place for new beginnings. Not to be re-visited by the rising generations of the 1820s through the 1840s, the West had always been new to Anglo-Americans. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to assume that the Easterners of the mid-nineteenth century lacked preconceptions about Mexicans, although many of their predecessors did indeed lack experience in the Borderlands. The earliest American travelers in the Borderlands, such as Zebulon Pike and James Ohio Pattie, arrived in the Borderlands in the 1800s through the 1820s. To these fur trappers fell the task of building from scratch the Mexican image in the American mind. Through their reports, Americans began to comprehend Mexicans as “Other.” Pattie, for example, was shocked at the dissimilarity between the people of Taos, New Mexico, and the United States. Their clothes, weapons, even their saddles and horsemanship were different.⁶⁶ Pattie assumed readers would know nothing about the commonplace things of Mexican life, explaining tortillas and other everyday items that were strange to a foreigner in Mexican lands. Different as they were, Pattie did not

⁶⁶ James Ohio Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie of Kentucky* (New York: Arthur H. Clark, 1903-04), 73.

immediately cast them as inferior. “Although appearing as poorly, as I have described, they are not destitute of hospitality; for they brought us food, and invited us into their houses to eat, as we walked through the streets,” Pattie explained.⁶⁷ Thus, Anglo-American subordination of Mexicans had its beginnings in othering.

The same way anthropologists approach other places in hopes of understanding their cultures, historians must also approach the past in hopes of understanding its cultures. As Richard Johnson conceived of the discipline, cultural studies is about the historical forms of *consciousness* or *subjectivity* – in other words, the subjective *forms* we live by or the subjective side of social relations.⁶⁸ By consciousness, Johnson meant the consciousness of self and an active mental and moral self-production. This involves conceptually organized knowledge. By subjectivity, he meant the conscious or unconscious highlighting or interpretation of elements ascribed to aesthetic or emotional lives. Subjectivity, to Johnson, focuses on the “who I am” or “who we are” of culture. Writing about the frontier, Eastern correspondents such as Albert Deane Richardson, Bayard Taylor, and John Ross Browne addressed all of the aspects Johnson used to define the forms of culture: legal, political, religious, aesthetic, ideological. By assessing the *habitus* and the field of historical actors and the institutions in which they operated, we may gain a richer understanding of past events and processes, just as we understand the interior context in which Richardson produced cultural artifacts.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 74.

⁶⁸ Richard Johnson, “What is Cultural Studies Anyway?” *Social Text: Theory/Culture/ Ideology* 16 (Winter 1987): 38-80.

This project is informed by Pierre Bourdieu's cultural studies concepts. Cultural studies matters to journalism history because of what it can reveal about how individuals have shaped and been shaped by the field. A cultural studies approach to mass communication history can give us an understanding of the genesis of journalistic practices. James W. Carey noted that journalism historians who have focused on reporting have scarcely scrutinized the act of reporting, instead favoring analysis of the report itself.⁶⁹ Taking news reports at face value as the containers of objective fact ignores the principle of productivism: Narratives always construct the position from which they are to be read. One cannot assume that the form as produced will determine its uses. Hence, the report's effects cannot be inferred from the report itself. But the reports can reveal clues about the journalistic culture that produced them.

This culture builds when journalists are taught, come to understand, adopt, teach, reinforce, and manipulate the rules of the journalistic game as they become more adept at it. Social theorist Paul Willis explained that external forces socialize workers and guide them into socializing themselves by initiating them into adopting and enforcing cultural rules that guide all who share their field. They act in accord with values that generated, and were generated by, their behavior-reinforcing interplay with one another.⁷⁰ The field of journalism, like any other field, indoctrinates journalists into its values. They adopt an understanding of the rules of the game as their elders understand those rules. Bourdieu explained that players in any field come to believe that the game is worth playing and that

⁶⁹ James W. Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History" *Journalism History* 1, no. 1 (1974): 4.

⁷⁰ Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

the rules are sensible, noting, “Practical faith is the condition of entry that every field tacitly imposes. Not only by sanctioning and debarring those who would destroy the game, but by so arranging things, in practice, that the operations of selecting and shaping new entrants (rites of passage, examinations, etc.) are such as to obtain from them ... undisputed, pre-reflexive, naïve, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field.”⁷¹

Bourdieu’s *The Logic of Practice* pointed out the indicators historians may seek to understand how journalists come to abide by the field’s values: Belief in the rules of the game comes into being through actions that are guided by values. Practice conditions belief, and belief conditions future action.⁷² Nationalism and expansionism informed American foreign and domestic policy, but it was driven by material need – a nationwide example of practice conditioning belief. Need for land and the need to justify taking it from others took form in John O’Sullivan’s assertion that white Anglo-Saxons had a “manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”⁷³ Belief in this ideology, which brought Anglo-Americans to colonize the Southwest and accumulate so much profit and power, also led to the racialization of Mexicans. Barbara Cloud’s book *The Coming of the Frontier Press: How the West was Really Won* noted that booster editors in the West published favorable stories about their towns in the hope that Eastern editors would pick

⁷¹ Bourdieu, 1990, 68.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (November 1839), 6.

them up and reprint them from exchange papers.⁷⁴ Given this fact, Eastern correspondents in the Southwest wrote from a position of eyewitness authority. Correspondents had as much of a financial stake in informing readers about the West as did frontier editors. Cloud argued that the press, for frontier editors, was a substitute for the gold mines they hoped to discover when they went west.⁷⁵ Similarly, Eastern correspondents recognized the prospect for profit in delivering information to an audience hungry to learn about the West. Bayard Taylor wrote to his fiancé, Mary S. Agnew, in 1847, “Authorship is now beginning to be profitable; I may be born on the verge of a better era and so help reap the harvest of future years.”⁷⁶ Richardson, too, saw travel writing and lecturing as an adventurous way to make a living, if not generate wealth. While living in Cincinnati in 1855, he hinted at his ambition of emulating Taylor in a letter to his brother Charles A. Richardson: “I enjoy the courses of lectures this winter very much. . . . Bayard Taylor has spoken twice. I am always interested in him, sometimes think it wouldn’t be at all strange if I were some day to adopt his vocation – that of a professional traveler.”⁷⁷ To have been a traveling correspondent in the West was to make money while seeking adventure. As these correspondents grew more proficient, their stake in the game became larger and they conflated their personal ambitions with the

⁷⁴ Barbara Cloud, *The Coming of the Frontier Press: How the West was Really Won* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 68.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁷⁶ Bayard Taylor to Mary L. Agnew (July 27, 1847). In *Bayard Taylor Papers* (Ms AM 1598), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁷ Albert Deane Richardson to Charles Addison Richardson (January 25, 1855). In *Richardson Family Papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

national ambitions promoted by their editors. They acted on the logic they acquired through experience.

The popular press was one prong in the infrastructure of American colonization and racialization of Mexicans. Víctor Domínguez Rodríguez defined racialization as “the social and historical process of assigning individuals and groups a socially constructed racial identity and status.” Competition for land, resources, and power leads the dominant group to assign itself to the top of a hierarchy based on phenotypical biological factors. These factors are assumed to represent archetypes for members of a particular racial group. Members of the dominant group interpret those differences as indicators of essential, immutable differences and assign a negative meaning to them. By doing this, the dominant group subordinates less powerful groups that may challenge its dominant position by limiting their access to valued resources. Racialization occurs in four steps: seizing control of land and resources, installation of ideological and cultural institutions, negotiation and contestation of subalterns’ identity, and the crystallization of racialized identity.⁷⁸ This view sees racialization at a mass or institutional level with little allowance for agency. Hegemony, too, is viewed as a force. But hegemony goes nowhere without hegemonizers – that is where correspondents came in. Informed of the collective mind through the *habitus* from which they operated, correspondents both shaped and were shaped by the values of Anglo-American culture. Although they did not initiate the othering of Mexicans — that task fell to the first travel writers in the West, such as Richard Henry Dana Jr., Josiah Gregg, military explorers, and political observers, such as

⁷⁸ Víctor M. Rodríguez Domínguez, “The Racialization of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans: 1890s-1930s,” *Centro Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 82. Rodríguez noted that the other such institutions are the economy, education, family, religion, lawmaking bodies, and the criminal justice system.

German scholar Alexander von Humboldt — journalists played a key role in popularizing it.⁷⁹

Social identity theory explains a dominant group's motivation for marginalizing subordinate groups. Orientalism explains Europeans' construction of Near Eastern people as different and immutably inferior to their colonizers. These concepts apply to the examination of culture at the structural level. A cultural studies approach that pays attention to the production and reproduction of journalistic culture can help understand how journalists and journalism interacted with the intellectual currents that guided nineteenth-century American society as a whole toward racializing Mexican people in the American West and Southwest.

Research questions and method

The literature relating to the Eastern Anglo gaze on Mexicans in the West, correspondents, and cultural approaches to journalism history leads to a number of questions that have not been addressed. Their answers add up to a rich cultural history of nineteenth-century journalists' role in developing the American national view of the nation's neighbors south of the border:

Research question 1: What was the popular press' role in the othering of Mexicans?

Research question 2: How did Anglo correspondents from the Eastern United States portray Mexicans between 1840 and 1869?

⁷⁹ Alexander von Humboldt's *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* (1811) provided one of the first comprehensive analyses of Mexican culture by a non-Hispanic European.

Research question 3: How did their ways of seeing Mexicans reflect their own cultures?

Research question 4: What cultural influences — in popular culture, in national ideology, in religious belief, and in journalistic practice — shaped the ways these writers represented Mexican people and culture in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands?

Research question 5: What did the ways in which these authors engaged in mass communication culture say and show about print culture in the mid-nineteenth century America?

Time boundaries: two generations of sectional correspondents

Mexicans in the West first captivated Eastern readers' attention on a broad scale in 1840, when Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* became the nation's first best-selling book about the Far West. The generational cohort that accelerated the development of the Mexican image in the American mind moved on to other matters by 1870. These years provide the boundaries for this study. In the early 1840s, the construction of Mexican identity remained indistinct. Because of this, the nation saw a flurry of writing about the Southwest at a time when that region remained virtually foreign to Americans. The three decades that followed saw a confluence in the development of printing, communication, and transportation technology that turned regional print cultures into a single national one. The period also saw the maturation of President James K. Polk's vision of a nation spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific at the expense of Mexico. One expectation in this project was that the maturation of the national transportation and communication networks resulted in a quickening of the development of the nation's ways of seeing Mexicans. Just as New Englanders carried

their culture into the Midwest, across the Rockies and on to Northern California, Southerners carried their culture into Texas, across the Borderlands, and into Southern California. Manifest Destiny-driven xenophobia gave Northerners and Southerners the impetus, as historian Edward J. Blum put it, to “reforge the white republic” in the years that followed the Civil War.⁸⁰

The first period concerns initial contact between Boston traders and Californios and between Southern Anglo migrants and Tejanos between Texas independence in 1837 and California statehood in 1850. It took several years for soldiers, adventurers, and men of commerce to explore the West and report back to the nation on it, but the middle of the decade saw a flurry of publications by the first wave of New Englanders who wrote about their experiences. It was in this time of exploration and armed conflict between Americans and Mexicans that Anglo Americans, including Richard Henry Dana, James Ohio Pattie, Josiah Gregg, George Wilkins Kendall, and William Watts Hart Davis, wrote the first widely circulated characterizations of Mexicans as “other” for consumption in the East. Their writings provided the intellectual raw material for the formation of preconceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about Mexicans in the minds of the Eastern settlers, traders, and journalists who trekked beyond the Mississippi River into the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands.

The second period of this study, from 1856 to 1869, examines Eastern correspondents’ experiences, descriptions of Mexican people and customs in the printed and spoken word, and the influences that helped them form their impressions of

⁸⁰ Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002).

Mexicans. This section constitutes the heart of this study. In the 1850s and 1860s, gold fever attracted swarms of Eastern migrants to California and Colorado, while silver and other valuable ores drew another wave of Eastern Anglos to New Mexico, Nevada, and Arizona in the 1860s and 1870s. From the 1850s through 1870, correspondents were at their height of their ability to feed preconceptions about Mexicans to Easterners bound for the West. The year 1869 brought the second edition of Albert Deane Richardson's *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean*. That edition included an extended description of the Western United States based on Richardson's rail journey, paid for by the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Evidence gathering and analysis

This project employed content assessment, as described by Marion Marzolf, with an eye toward identifying the characteristics of othering that constituted a North American form of Orientalism, turned from the Eastern United States to the American West. Primary sources include the *Boston Journal*, *New York Tribune*, *New York Herald*, *New Orleans Picayune*, *Alta California*, *Doylestown (Pa.) Democrat*, *Western Mountaineer* (Golden, Colo.), *St. Louis Democrat*, *Boonslick (Mo.) Tribune*, and other newspapers; *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, *DeBow's Review*, and magazines; and best-selling books about the territories Americans wrested away from Mexico, including *Beyond the Mississippi*, *El Gringo*, *Commerce of the Prairies: Journal of a Santa Fe Trader*, *Eldorado*, and *Two Years Before the Mast*.

This study focuses more on correspondents associated with Greeley's *Tribune* and not Bennett's *Herald* for two reasons. The most important is the extent of the *Tribune's*

influence. Circulation figures from the time were often exaggerated, but where they are available they provide some indication of a newspaper's reach. In 1860, the *Tribune's* daily circulation, 55,000, lagged that of the *Herald* by 22,000. But a weekly edition amplified the *Tribune's* influence far beyond New York. The *New York Weekly Tribune* reached 112,000 subscribers and many times as many nonpaying readers.⁸¹ Its heaviest circulations were in New England and the Midwest, where settlers streamed to trailheads that would lead them across the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains.⁸² James Forde Rhodes argued that in the 1850s the weekly edition of the *Tribune* was the greatest single journalistic influence on American life and politics.⁸³ Its Whig and Republican readers in rural areas turned to the *Weekly Tribune* for political guidance so much that it was banned in the South during the Civil War.⁸⁴ Although the *Herald's* own figures argue for its circulation superiority over the *Tribune*, they also provide evidence of the *Herald's* minimal reach beyond the city limits. Only a small proportion of mail subscribers took the *Herald*, and almost all of its circulation came from New York City residents who bought the paper from newsboys.⁸⁵ Direct comparison of weekly circulations is not possible for all years through 1860 because figures for the *Herald's* total circulations are available only through 1852. That year, Bennett claimed 52,000 daily readers and

⁸¹ James Forde Rhodes, *Historical Essays* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1909), 90.

⁸² Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 Years* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 276.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 272. Mott cited James Forde Rhodes, *Historical Essays* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1909), 90.

⁸⁴ William Harlan Hale, *Horace Greeley: Voice of the People* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1950), 230.

⁸⁵ James Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 158-159.

103,000 weekly, semi-weekly, and daily readers combined.⁸⁶ Regardless of the figures cited by editors, publications in the antebellum age of social reading far exceeded market distribution. Consumers read books and newspapers aloud to friends and neighbors, and one story-paper editor in 1851 estimated that for every issue received by subscription there were at least 10 nonpaying readers.⁸⁷

The second reason is the nature of the articles in the *Tribune*. Although the *Herald* provided more reports and more detailed information about the process of gold mining, it provided little about everyday life in gold country and nearly nothing in the way of interpretation and analysis. This is not to underestimate the potential influence of the *Herald*. It enjoyed much higher circulation in the South than the *Tribune*, the product of a ban on Greeley's paper for political ideas about slavery that were deemed dangerous, distasteful, and insulting in the slave states and Bennett's pro-South, pro-slavery views.⁸⁸ This circulation edge and the information it carried about how best to reach the richest gold mining areas of California and the wealth that could be gained from them gave it the potential to encourage vast numbers of Southerners, bringing into Gold Country attitudes about race that primed them to discriminate against Mexicans. Such influence is not the subject of this study, which concerns othering that is more likely found in descriptive, interpretive writing and not in just-the-facts accounts that typified the news columns of

⁸⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁸⁷ Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Literary Dollars and Social Sense* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. xxiv.

⁸⁸ Bennett resisted abolition on the assumption of white superiority and black inferiority. He argued that Negro slaves could never be free because they could not survive without masters and pointed to the fate of freed slaves in the West Indies who did not acquire property and, he insisted, would never work. Crouthamel, 70.

the papers that this dissertation examines. The more subjective work of the correspondent is where value judgments, comparisons of Mexican and American culture, and predictions occurred. The *Herald* had comparatively little of this, whereas *Tribune* correspondents provided a rich account of society and culture in the West.⁸⁹ The man who provided these eyewitness accounts during the California Gold Rush was Bayard Taylor. Stillson wrote that he was known more for his literary credentials than his skills as a reporter.⁹⁰ But Taylor was steeped in the journalism of the day, having apprenticed himself in 1842 to Henry Evans, who printed the *Village Record* of West Chester, Pennsylvania, and having spent another two years wandering Europe as a correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *U.S. Gazette*.⁹¹ Taylor mined a treasure trove of travel anecdotes and descriptions of Mexico and California that he published in September 1850 under the title *Eldorado: Adventures in the Path of Empire*.⁹²

Preliminary archival research ascertained sectional differences in the representation of Mexicans in the nineteenth-century popular press. Reports in both the North and South carried a subtext of Anglo-Saxonism, but articles from each region consistently emphasized different sets of attributes. These attributes appear to have been informed by sectional partisan leanings, political, religious, and pseudoscientific beliefs about racial hierarchy, and previous writings by each section's writers. Each of the

⁸⁹ Stillson, *Spreading the Word*, 24.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹¹ Richard Croom Beatty, *Bayard Taylor: Laureate of the Gilded Age* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), pp. 26-40.

⁹² An annotated reprinting of Taylor's 1859 book *Eldorado* contains a foreword by James Houston and an afterword by Roger Kahn. Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado* (Santa Clara, CA: Heyday Books: 2000).

writers' works has been closely read to assess patterns in the attributes with which they described Mexican people and culture, paying attention to change over time. To form a complete picture of this phenomenon and understand the correspondents' consciousness of racial difference during their travels in the Borderlands, it is not enough to assess the content of news reports. The heart of this study compares correspondents' representation of Mexicans with what the writers included in their memoirs and personal correspondence, as well as their career and personal trajectories.

Bayard Taylor and Albert Deane Richardson, correspondents of the *New York Tribune* and *Boston Journal*, are identifiable and have left behind hundreds of pages of personal correspondence with which to answer the research questions. They represent two of the most active chroniclers of the West among Northern journalists. George Wilkins Kendall, *New Orleans Picayune* editor and U.S.-Mexico War correspondent, and John Ross Browne, correspondent for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, were two of the leading Southerners to portray Mexicans in the Borderlands. Both left behind extensive manuscripts, and both were among the most widely published Southern chroniclers of Mexicans and the Southwest. Too little is known of the careers of all of the correspondents and reporters in the mid-nineteenth century to say what might be typical of their breed. But Taylor, Richardson, Kendall, and Browne followed remarkably similar trajectories. Taylor and Richardson each were part-owners of the *Tribune*, while Browne invested in mining and profited by writing reports and sketching diagrams for mining companies. Kendall owned the *Picayune*. Browne and Richardson also engaged in land speculation in the West. All four began as printer's devils, progressed to positions as newspaper editors and correspondents, amassed capital and joined the ownership class of

the era through the purchase of stock. All worked as government agents in their careers. Analysis of the work and lives of four remarkably similar men is not normally enough to conclude that they represent a pattern in the career trajectories of Eastern correspondents who reported on the West. Then again, not many journalists had extensive experience in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. This study cannot examine in depth the reflection of culture in the work of all correspondents of the period because not all can be identified and not all left a paper trail. *Harper's New Monthly* correspondent George Douglas Brewerton also wrote extensively about Mexicans in the 1850s and 1860s, and he weaved autobiographical material into his books and articles. The correspondents mentioned are sufficient for this study because they are the ones who wrote most prolifically about Mexican people and culture in the mid-nineteenth century, while the presses that published them had the greatest circulation and therefore the greatest potential to sow preconceptions about Mexicans.

Research at the Library of Congress Manuscripts Department determined that Taylor and Richardson carried on correspondence with *New York Tribune* editor Whitelaw Reid, whose papers are in that library's manuscripts department. Bayard Taylor's papers are scattered among three principal sites: Harvard University's Houghton Library, Cornell University, and the Huntington Library in California. Browne's papers are in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, but most have been published. Kendall's papers are held by the University of Texas at Arlington libraries.⁹³

⁹³ The papers at the University of Texas at Arlington that are potentially most revealing about Kendall's private thinking about Mexicans had been missing for several months as of January 2010. However, most of them are available in copies and transcriptions in the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma.

All of Richardson's known manuscripts, business records, military records, and writings about Mexicans were gathered during research visits at the Columbia University Butler Library, the Library of Congress, Massachusetts Historical Society, Kansas State Historical Society, and Minnesota State Historical Society. Among authors who wrote during the first phase of Eastern writing about Mexicans, W. W. H. Davis and Richard Henry Dana Jr. left behind extensive manuscripts now held by the Bucks County Historical Society in Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston. The Brewerton family papers are held by the manuscript collection of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, but the most revealing glimpse into G. Douglas Brewerton's attitudes about politics and race are found in a short-lived magazine he edited, *Young America, Or, The Child of the Order*.

To assess the potential influences on these men, information about the holdings of libraries in the Northeast, schedules of lyceum lecturers and their topics, and information about circulation of printed material through the mails have been scrutinized. Much of this material has been digitized and is available online. Rare books and manuscripts items are available at special collections libraries, including the Massachusetts Historical Society, American Antiquarian Society, Houghton Library, and Boston Public Library.

Occidental Others, Anglo writers, and the seeds of Mexican stereotypes

This dissertation fills in much of the backstory of Mexican othering that previous studies have ignored and uses the methods of cultural history to understand the interaction between journalists and the Mexican people they observed. This chapter has provided an overview of the most relevant literature in three areas: nineteenth-century American writers' representations of the foreign "other," cultural approaches to

American journalism history, and theoretical lenses for understanding the interaction between journalistic culture, the logic of individual journalists' practices, and American culture in general. The literature reviewed, the concepts summarized, and the method for analysis guided the selection of the correspondents, publications, and other documents that were examined. The next chapter provides background on the burgeoning communication and transportation technology that knit together the print cultures of America's sections into a national flow of information about the Borderlands. The four chapters that follow examine representation of the Mexican Other by two generational cohorts of journalists from the Northeast and the South. Chapter Four is devoted to Northeastern writers from 1840 to 1856, while Chapter Five addresses the second wave of Northeasterners who learned from and expanded upon the work of the early cohort. Their works span from 1850 to 1868. Chapters Six and Seven do the same with Southern writers from 1844 to 1856 and 1854 to 1869. These cohorts, who came of age amid different economic circumstances, a growing crisis over the expansion of slavery, a rapidly expanding nation, and the religious revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, were conditioned to respond to the people and events they witnessed in different ways, some of them subtly so and others dramatically different.

Edward Said summed up Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon the ontological and epistemological distinction made between the ‘Orient’ and (most of the time) the ‘Occident.’”⁹⁴ This distinction had serious consequences for the colonized and served as a rhetorical weapon in the arsenal of the colonizer. “Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient,” Said

⁹⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

wrote, “dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”⁹⁵ On the other side of the globe, it was the colonizing Anglo-Americans who were in the “Orient” of North America, while Mexicans occupied the “Occident.” The concluding chapter sums up the patterns of cultural production and reproduction of the Mexican Other in the Anglo press that built into a distinct cultural process and product: Mexicanism.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND: PREJUDICE, THE PRESS, AND SECTIONAL CULTURAL VALUES

The difference between New Englanders and Southerners, Thomas Jefferson said, is that “In the North, they are jealous of their own liberties, and just to those of others. ... [I]n the South they are zealous for their own liberties, but trampling on those of others.”¹ Sectional political ideologies provided the political roots for American thinking about Mexicans. These ideologies changed as the century progressed. During the antebellum period, slavery was the foundation of the Southern economy. White Southern belief in their racial superiority and loathing for miscegenation influenced the way they saw Mexicans, whom some viewed as destined for enslavement. White Northern desire for Mexicans’ land in the West provided a motivation to portray Mexicans as unworthy of possessing the land.

Desire for Mexican land and contempt for the Mexican people set the stage for President James K. Polk to instigate war in 1846. The treaty that the United States negotiated in 1848 after its victory in the U.S.-Mexico War and lawlessness provided the means to take Mexicans’ land in California, while deft manipulation of the legal system and attempts to take advantage of Mexicans’ inability to read and write English provided the means in New Mexico and Texas. Success in all three states diluted Mexican power

¹ Christopher Phillips, *Missouri’s Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 50.

in those regions, stripped Mexicans of access to land and recourses, and contributed to perceptions of Mexicans as inferior to whites, completing a vicious cycle of racist thinking. The nation's mass media, maturing alongside the railroads, provided the means to spread ideologies of American racial and religious superiority throughout the mid-nineteenth century. By recounting the tensions between the U.S. and Mexico, examining the explosion of print culture, and explaining American thinking on race and religion, this chapter provides the political, economic, and social context necessary to understand the world in which the Eastern correspondents operated.

Print culture in the mid-nineteenth century

Newspapers and magazines proliferated in the West, but magazines and newspapers produced in the Borderlands did not circulate widely in the East.² Readers learned about the life, land, resources, and culture of the Southwest through exchanges in Eastern papers, via traveling lecturers, and through dispatches from correspondents sent west by Eastern magazines and newspapers. Illustrations and descriptions of the West and Southwest appeared regularly in New York and Boston magazines such as *Harper's Monthly*, *Harper's Weekly*, *The Continental*, *Putnam's*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *North American Review*, *The Atlantic*, *Spirit of the Times*, and *Saturday Evening Gazette*.³ Book and newspaper publishing were widely dispersed in the early republic, although technological limitations hampered how many issues or copies could be produced and how far away titles could be distributed. The spread of common schools, printing, newspapers, and post offices fueled literacy's growth in the mid-nineteenth

² Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, Vol. 2, 1850-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 118.

³ *Ibid.*, 119-121.

century in rural as well as urban areas. Printing facilities made it possible to mass-produce information, which the postal service distributed. An increasing emphasis on education created a literate populace capable of understanding that information. Although New York, Philadelphia, and Boston in the East produced the greatest number of original titles in America, newspapers sprang up across the countryside, providing intellectual raw material in the West that editors could cull for publication in the East.⁴ Two key conditions promoted wider distribution of Northern weeklies over Southern publications of any kind. First, the North had bigger, faster presses. Second, postage rates favored newspapers over other publications until Congress reduced magazine mailing rates in 1825, authorized Post Office delivery of books in 1851, and granted discount rates for book delivery in 1852. These subsidies created a favorable environment in which information could spread across a growing nation, but because the North had the printing capacity, information diffused more readily from North to South than from South to North. Before the 1840s, most newspapers gave their readers news from state and local capitals, from major centers of commerce, and from Europe.⁵ But this exchange news was unadorned and to-the-point. Those who wanted a taste of local flavor or detailed information that might help them decide whether to pull up stakes and head west had to turn to other sources. Their options included lyceum lectures, books, magazines, and the weekly editions of newspapers with a national reach and literary sensibilities.

None of this reading material would have mattered as much as it did were it not for an array of improvements that made it more readily available. Technological

⁴ Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 143.

⁵ Richard B. Kielbowicz, "News Gathering by Mail in the Age of the Telegraph: Adapting to a New Technology," *Technology and Culture* 28, no. 1 (January 1987): 26.

advances made books cheaper and easier to obtain.⁶ Completion of the Northeast rail network made it possible to spread books everywhere in the country. The development of steel spectacles lowered the price of vision correction and made it possible for the lower-middle class to see in order to read.⁷ The available reading material exploded in the first half of the century. An antebellum bookseller's catalog showed several hundred titles about the American West were printed between the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1806 and the discovery of California gold in 1848.⁸ The themes included the vastness of the region, the danger of the Indians, and the "laziness and wantonness of the Mexicans."⁹ But the sheer variety of reading material made it difficult for shopkeepers to know what to keep in stock. Country storekeepers could not afford to keep on hand all of the books that were available.¹⁰ They had to stock what they knew would sell. A sure thing like Dana's memoir of a voyage to Mexico and California, *Two Years Before the Mast*, would thus snowball on its own success and crowd other titles off store shelves.

In this context, the urban penny papers that distributed weekly editions to the countryside, such as the *New York Tribune* and *Boston Journal*, put literature and literary nonfiction in the hands of rural readers in New England and the Midwest who otherwise might not have seen it. By printing serialized versions of the works of popular writers such as Charles Dickens and high-culture writers such as Bayard Taylor, the weekly editions made literary works available to farmers in the Old Northwest and Trans-

⁶ Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸ Stillson, *Spreading the Word*, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁰ Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 15.

Mississippi West who otherwise might not have read them. Newspaper editors were more than willing to inform Americans about the spoils of the U.S.-Mexico War and try to shape the way these lands would be settled. The *Tribune's* program for Westward expansion included advocating improvements to the nation's infrastructure, government funding for a railroad that would connect the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, and a homestead law.¹¹ Greeley believed emigration to the West would uplift the underprivileged, a belief that mirrored his faith that the countryside was superior to the city.¹² This favor for rural life is reflected in Greeley's *New York Weekly Tribune*, which was not just a general newspaper but one of a growing number of publications that carried descriptive articles on farming and scientific methods of agriculture along with a selection of articles, editorials, fiction pieces, and literary reviews from the previous week.¹³

Libraries and lyceums: Spreading useful knowledge to people of modest means

Libraries provided another option for curious people who wanted to learn about Mexico and the West. Even modestly stocked libraries in the Northeast carried a variety of books on these topics. The Danvers Mechanic Institute library was typical of private philanthropic libraries in small-town New England. The institute's mission was to promote "the welfare and interest of Mechanics and others of Danvers and its vicinity, as

¹¹ Mott, *American Journalism*, 275.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.* Although Mott did not detail the contents of the *Weekly Tribune* other than to say they included farming and agricultural science articles, advertisements for the weekly that were examined for this study demonstrated the breadth of content that Greeley drew from the daily. They included almost all editorials as well as what the editor considered the most pressing political and cultural articles, judging from their prominent placement on the front page of the daily publication. Serialized versions of English novels also were common fare in the weekly editions.

well as our own moral and intellectual improvement.”¹⁴ Its library catalog in 1847 listed three books on the U.S. conquest of Mexico, including both volumes of George Wilkins Kendall’s *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fé Expedition*; two about Spain’s conquest of Mexico; five on life in the Trans-Mississippi West; one on the Rocky Mountains; and three copies of Dana’s *Two Years Before the Mast*.

Those who had limited or no access to libraries had other avenues for learning about faraway places. Lyceum lectures spread information to those who could not afford to buy books. Lectures were not just urban affairs; rural areas drew many touring performers who brought the literary world to places that could not support booksellers.¹⁵ Lyceums began with the purpose of educating working people in practical matters, particularly science. Lyceum movement founder Josiah Holbrook was a natural scientist, Yale-educated farmer, and educator who wanted to “raise the moral and intellectual taste of our countrymen” and promote the diffusion of useful knowledge.¹⁶ Lyceums brought respected scholars, pastors, explorers, and journalists to city and village alike. Lectures were arguably a form of mass communication in that, thanks to the spread of the transportation system, one lecturer could deliver the same lecture repeatedly to audiences of 100 and up in various locations from New England, the epicenter of the movement, all the way south to Florida, across the rail and canal network in the Old Northwest, and west to Kansas and south to Texas. Zboray and Zboray argued that the \$50 fee per lecture

¹⁴ Danvers Mechanic Institute, *Constitution, By-Laws, Officers and Members of Danvers Mechanic Institute, with a Catalogue of Books, Belonging to the Library, February 1st, 1846* (Danvers: G. R. Carlton – Courier Press, 1846), 5.

¹⁵ Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Literary Dollars and Social Sense: A People's History of the Mass Market Book* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 161.

¹⁶ Carl Bode, *The American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), 12.

fetched by regulars on the New England lecture circuit in the late 1850s testified to public demand for oral performance “to maintain a sense of intellectual community.”¹⁷

Angela G. Ray claimed that lyceums functioned as a means by which New England, Anglo-American, Protestant white elites reproduced their culture across the rest of the nation, inculcating their values of republican governance, tolerance, deliberation, and self-improvement among the working class.¹⁸ Keeping lectures affordable played a role in this. Cost of membership in a lyceum was as low as 25 cents a year, with most of the New England lyceums for which records still exist charging \$1 a year or \$10 for life membership, raising the fee to \$2 or \$20 for life membership in the 1850s. The Franklin Lyceum in Providence, R.I., never charged more than \$4 a year through the end of its run in 1881.¹⁹ Gentlemen, scholars, mill girls, farmers, and mechanics alike took in the lectures. Although they were first intended to teach practical matters of science and geography and other topics that would make audiences more productive as workers, more cultured, and more effective in self-governance, by the late 1850s lyceums came to be places where political and social controversies such as feminism and emancipation and the value of preserving the Union were discussed. Eastern correspondents such as Albert Deane Richardson, Bayard Taylor, and J. Ross Browne extended their knowledge of the Far West beyond the pages of the penny papers and into the minds of lyceum lecture

¹⁷ Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *Literary Dollars and Social Sense: A People's History of the Mass Market Book* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 166.

¹⁸ Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

audiences.²⁰ That lyceums had been established from coast to coast extended their ability to inform and persuade. By the 1860s, lyceum lectures were heard in California's central valley.²¹

Improvements in transportation and communication technology combined to bring reading material to an ever-increasing number of readers. Print culture increased opportunities for writers to spread their ideas beyond the printed page and for lecturers to disseminate ideas beyond the lecture hall. The ideas they promoted had enormous potential to shape Americans' thinking about culture, politics, science, and race.

Race thinking, cultural and physical difference, and “othering”

Humans have conceived of their relations with strangers as the relationship between self and “Other” for thousands of years. The history of the “Other” reaches back to the Greco-Roman Period. Class differences informed the othering perceptions of the earliest Europeans who embarked on empire-building missions in Africa. Exploration, warfare, and commerce brought Europeans into continual contact with people who were physically and culturally different.²² Greeks and Romans noted Africans' distinguishing physical characteristics, including skin color, hair type, and nose shape. Although Greco-Roman values identified blackness as negative, skin color carried no stigma, and Africans were accepted as capable of wisdom, piety, justice, reason, and freedom. But medieval times brought a Christian preconception of darkness with evil and savagery that grew

²⁰ The *Boston Daily Journal* promoted his lecture “Out West” before the First Congregational Church in his hometown of Franklin, Massachusetts, in a column titled “Amusements this day and evening” on January 7, 1860. The lecture took place just weeks after he returned to New England after his horseback journey between El Paso and Denver. He detailed the journey in a series of forty letters to the *Journal*. In them, he mused on the primitive state of New Mexican culture and industry and remarked on Anglo-Saxons' natural urge to follow the sun westward and subdue the people and places in their path.

²¹ Ray, *Lyceum and Public Culture*, 11.

²² Robert Miles and Malcolm Brown, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 23.

stronger over the next few hundred years. While feudal Europeans came to see Africans as aggressive, sexually unrestrained wild men at the edge of civilization, they also came to think of Islam and its adherents as religious rivals to Christians competing for souls – as well as material resources and power.²³

Thus, religion joined phenotype as a category of othering. When European nations embarked on missions of colonization, they established diplomatic and trade relations with indigenous people beyond their nations' original boundaries. Europeans immersed in this project found still more categories of difference. Military, diplomatic, and commercial intentions and objectives shaped the ways European travelers perceived indigenous Others in Africa, Asia, and America. Given his mission in the New World, it made sense that Christopher Columbus described American Indians as savage but not “monstrous.”²⁴ To portray foreigners as backward but benign, rather than fierce and threatening, ran little risk of frightening off would-be colonizers and jeopardizing royal support. Europeans bent on extracting resources from Africa focused on the characteristics of the natives that their countrymen would find the most repugnant and alien – all the better to obliterate any sense of their common humanity.²⁵ Such representations could only have the effect of inviting colonizers to join in replacing primitives with progress and the savage with the sophisticated. Colonists need not worry about being overcome by rival natives; the indigenous peoples so portrayed would be seen as harmless obstacles to be ruled, moved out of the way, enslaved, or killed.

²³ Ibid., 27.

²⁴ Ibid., 33.

²⁵ Ibid.

In the late eighteenth century, Europeans used geographic determinism to explain Africans' physical differences, e.g., associating their dark skin with geographic origins in the harsh sun of the tropics. But they also linked "savagery" and backwardness with climate, a school of thought that endured into the antebellum period. Louis Agassiz, the Swiss naturalist who taught at the University of Neuchâtel, Harvard University, and Cornell University, wrote in 1845 that the races of man developed in distinct "zoological provinces: Negroes were from hot and humid places, Caucasians from the temperate zone, Eskimos from the arctic regions."²⁶ Europeans believed their African "inferiors" could be civilized through their own effort and, of course, the tutelage of white masters.²⁷

By the nineteenth century, doubts were raised about the possibility of improving non-whites, as race came to be understood as an immutable characteristic derived from biology. From the 1830s through the 1860s, scientific discussions about the differences among the races of man made their way into the popular consciousness through pamphlets, lectures, and articles in influential journals such as the *Democratic Review*, *Southern Literary Messenger*, *American Journal of Science and Art*, *Charleston Medical Journal and Review*, *Southern Journal of Medicine and Pharmacy*, and *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*.²⁸ Scientific racists sought evidence for whites' position at the top of the biological hierarchy of the races.²⁹ Medical men such as Samuel George Morton compared the dimensions of skulls to establish this in the 1830s and 1840s, erroneously determining that Caucasians were the smartest based

²⁶ Edward Lurie, "Louis Agassiz and the Races of Man," *Isis* 45, no. 3 (September 1954), p. 233.

²⁷ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 40.

²⁸ Lurie, "Louis Agassiz," 230-238.

²⁹ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 41.

on meticulous experiments in which skulls were filled with seed, lead shot, and other materials to measure the size of the brain that could fit inside them.³⁰ Soon phrenologists argued that the structure of the brain differed from race to race. In 1861, French zoologist Louis Pierre Gratiolet claimed that whites' brains were superior because the coronal suture of whites' skulls sealed later than that of non-whites, resulting in more time to mature, hence greater intellect and, therefore, greater worthiness to rule over the other races.³¹

Anglo-Americans' perception of Mexicans in California corresponded with a pattern of prejudice directed at other nonwhites in California. Campaigns to limit the rights of Chinese laborers and segregate whites from blacks suggest this.³² Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argued that the boundaries of racial categories were malleable to the extent that changing them would promote the interests of the dominant culture:

So may the initial inscription be reinforced by traditional narrations and ritual repetitions of the history of conquest or rejuvenated by similar conquests in later periods. The 'degenerate Mexicans' of 1840s imagery might become honorary 'Caucasians' in the context of school segregation later in the century, only to be reinscribed as a dangerously shiftless and unassimilable element when Pancho Villa rides (or when intolerance of undocumented immigrants mounts in Pete Wilson's California).³³

Beyond the black-white dichotomy, scholars of the 1850s attempted to categorize each of the peoples of the world into their own assigned race, but the meaning of "race"

³⁰ Stephen Jay Gould, "Morton's Ranking of Races by Cranial Capacity," *Science* 200, no. 4341 (May 5, 1978):503. By analyzing Morton's data afresh, Gould determined that the ethnologist unconsciously "finagled" his statistics by rounding statistics in ways that made whites seem smarter and non-whites, less intelligent. Gould found no statistically significant difference in cranial capacity among the racial groups Morton analyzed.

³¹ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 115.

³² Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 142.

³³ *Ibid.*, 142.

remained unsettled through the mid-nineteenth century. Europeans who conceived of the term considered themselves to be members of a race and believed Europe to be constituted of the Teutonic/Nordic, Mediterranean, and Alpine races. Americans assigned a hierarchy to these, assuming that the intelligence of the members of these races was hereditary and therefore unchangeable. Accordingly, they deemed Teutonics who resembled themselves to be acceptable immigrants while rejecting the Mediterranean.³⁴

But even the Teutonics became subject to subcategorization. The Irish, whom the English and Americans of English descent despised for their nationality as well as their Catholicism, inconveniently shared Western European ancestry. American nativists increasingly spoke of nationalities as races and categorized the phenotypically white Irish as non-whites by branding them with racial markers similar to those they used for blacks: “low-browed,” “savage,” “groveling,” “bestial,” “lazy,” “wild,” “simian,” and “sensual.”³⁵

Catholicism as a category of othering

Irish immigrants had to earn white privilege by cleaving themselves to the dominant white culture. One way to do this was to repeat racist jokes about blacks.³⁶ Another was to prove they were loyal to the United States and not the Roman Catholic Church by taking up the American flag in conflicts against Catholic nations, such as the U.S.-Mexico War.³⁷ The most effectual was through their right to vote as naturalized

³⁴ Miles and Brown, *Racism*, 43.

³⁵ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (London: Verso, 2007), 133.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

³⁷ Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 102-103.

citizens; political influence made them a desirable target for co-option by the Jacksonian Democrats, who forged majorities through Anglo-Celtic allegiance.³⁸ But in a young republic whose founders were steeped in anti-papal zealotry, Catholicism constituted a stigma that Irish immigrants found hard to shake. After the Irish, the next target of this prejudice was Mexico.

By the time the U.S.-Mexico War broke out, negative preconceptions about Mexican Catholicism abounded in the popular imagination. Much of the public learned about the country from Harvard-trained historian William H. Prescott's immensely popular *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. Published in 1843, the book chronicled Spain's defeat of the Aztec empire, which Prescott said was due to the Indians' tyrannical religion and despotic monarchical government and not any virtue of Spanish military civilization.³⁹ Prescott contended that Providence ordered that Mexico "should be delivered over to another race, who would rescue it from the brutish superstitions" and conquer the inferior culture.⁴⁰ He conceded that Spanish Catholicism brought Christianity to the land with "dazzling pomp" that proved persuasive to "savages" and "the rude child of nature." But he claimed the Spaniards' bigotry and immorality diluted the spirit of Christian faith and concluded Aztec religion simply gave way to a European version of what it already had: a hierarchy run by despotic priests and an undemocratic society

³⁸ Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), 198-199; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 130-134.

³⁹ John C. Pinheiro, "Extending the Light and Blessings of Our Purer Faith": Anti-Catholic Sentiment among American Soldiers in the U.S.-Mexican War." *Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 129-152.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

whose foundation rested on an unrepugnant church-state complex.⁴¹ Prescott credited the Catholic Church for winning over indigenous Mexicans with the “spiritual weapons ... of love and mercy.”⁴² But in his eyes, this virtue failed to outweigh the vices of the Spanish church.

The war awakened the nation’s curiosity about its southern neighbor, and Americans snapped up copies of Prescott’s history. Waddy Thompson, the former U.S. minister to Mexico, also helped satisfy demand for literature about Mexico with his 1846 *Recollections of Mexico*. Widely quoted by journalists, pastors, soldiers, and lawmakers, Thompson depicted the United States and Mexico as two republics, the first a success and the second a failure due to Catholic despotism that imposed “disgusting mummeries and impostures” on the faithful. He did concede that the Catholic ritual’s “pomp and pageantry” were striking.⁴³ But Americans were troubled by the notion that loyalty to Catholicism might trump loyalty to their nation. Rumors of Catholic desertion to the enemy alarmed nativists, while stories circulated that the pope was behind plots to poison native-born American soldiers.⁴⁴ And the arrival of Irish Catholics fleeing the potato blight of 1846 only exacerbated nativist fears that they were losing control of their own country.⁴⁵ Despite Irish immigrants’ steps across the line from racialized minority to the privileges of whiteness, American nativists continued to find ways to distinguish themselves from the great unwashed. The term “Anglo-Saxon” was adopted in the 1840s

⁴¹ Ibid., 132.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁴ Billington, *Protestant Crusade*, 238.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

to distinguish “virtuous,” “racially pure” “self-governing citizens” from “pathetic Celtic newcomers.”⁴⁶

Markers of Mexican racial otherness

White, “racially pure” Americans also used the term “Anglo-Saxon” to draw a bright line between themselves and “mongrelized,” “degenerate” Mexicans with whom they came into conflict over the land and resources of the Southwest.⁴⁷ Markers that Anglo-Saxons first applied to Africans and later transferred to the Irish could be readily adapted to the task of othering Mexicans, but such adaptation was gradual.

Ultimately, racism backed by science bubbled into policy debates about the merits of annexing all of Mexico in the winter of 1847-48. Many in Congress argued that such war spoils were not worth the risks posed by absorbing eight million Mexicans into the republic. “If we annex the land, we must take the population with it. And shall we, ... by an act of Congress, convert the black, white, red, mongrel, miserable population of Mexico – the Mexicans, Indians, Mulattoes, Mestizos, Chinos, Zambos, Quinteros – into free and enlightened citizens, entitled to all the privileges which we enjoy?”⁴⁸

Congressman Jacob Collamer of Vermont argued that to do so would “destroy our nationality by an act. We shall cease to be the people that we were; we cease to be the Saxon Americanized.”⁴⁹ Maintaining American racial purity and preserving the nation’s democratic system were the foremost concerns. Foes of the All-Mexico movement

⁴⁶ Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 206.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 242-243.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

contended expanding the nation's boundaries beyond white-controlled territory would threaten both. Nascent perceptions of the Mexican character provided the reasons they believed this. In the eyes of Ohio Congressman Columbus Delano, an anti-slavery Whig, Mexicans were a "slothful, ignorant, indolent race of beings."⁵⁰ Congressman Thomas Corwin, his fellow Ohio Whig, denounced Mexicans as a "half-savage, half-civilized race." South Carolina Democrat John C. Calhoun railed against absorbing Mexicans into the union. Conceding that they had "Castilian blood in their veins – the old Gothic, quite equal to the Anglo-Saxon in many respects – in some respects superior," the mixed-blood majority were wholly unfit for self-governance because they consisted of "impure races, not as good as the Cherokees or Choctaws."⁵¹ These characterizations reflected the nation's sectional differences in race thinking. The Northerners emphasized the non-enterprising image of the Mexican, while Southerners fixated on the dangers of hybridity. As Anglo writers came into contact with Mexicans in the years following the U.S.-Mexico War, these sectional distinctions would sharpen until they merged into a single national preconception in the final quarter of the century.

American racial thinking was a natural outgrowth of the ways European whites distinguished themselves from people of color in their African and Asian colonies. The othering in which they engaged began with intellectual curiosity about differences among darker-skinned peoples, then grew into justifications for conquest and colonization. Whereas European whites initially believed that indigenous others could be civilized, nineteenth-century scientific racism held that intelligence, virtue, and other elements of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 240.

⁵¹ Ibid., 241.

racial character were immutable factors fixed by the natural laws of biology. The next section compares Northern and Southern thinking about how best to extend the emerging American empire.

Sectional competition and Manifest Destiny

As Americans' desire for Mexican resources grew, their view of their neighbors south of the border grew dimmer and dimmer. But conflict over extension of slavery reflected the jaundiced view many Northerners and Southerners took of one another. Whigs, dominant in the North, encouraged internal improvements over expansionism through the 1840s. Democrats, dominant in the South, clamored for acquisition of territory by whatever means necessary: through treaty, purchase, or war. In the 1850s, the Free Soilers and Republicans who took up the mantle of the failed Whig Party saw slavery as anathema to economic efficiency because slaves lacked motivation to be productive. Radical Republicans had their roots in New England Puritan culture. When they uprooted themselves from New England, New York, and eastern Pennsylvania, they brought their Puritanism, their schools, and their religious and social values into the West.⁵² In the South, the dominant ideology held slavery as a sacred right that must be carried into the West. Free Soilers and Democrats alike came to regard Mexican peonage as little different from slavery, justifying both Free Soilers' loathing for Mexicans and Southerners' covetousness of Mexico as a source of cheap and docile labor.

North and South may have disagreed about the future of slavery, but ultimately they came to agree on the need for expansion. Animosity toward Mexicans was a byproduct of Manifest Destiny. Three chief factors drove U.S.-Mexico relations,

⁵² Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, Second Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995),102.

according to Richard Griswold del Castillo: the Texas boundary question, the expansion of slavery, and internal political factors in both Mexico and the United States.⁵³ The Mexican government encouraged Anglos to settle in Texas during the 1820s. At that time, Mexico wanted a buffer zone to hold off Indian incursions in its northern provinces, so it enlisted impresarios such as Stephen F. Austin to recruit American families. These families came from slave-holding states and were largely from Kentucky and Tennessee, so Texas was initially peopled by settlers informed by Southern attitudes on white racial superiority. White immigrants to Texas were required to swear loyalty to Mexico, learn Spanish, and convert to Catholicism.⁵⁴ Texas' war of independence was brought on by increasing taxation and lack of aid by the Mexican government, but one of its prime movers was Mexico's abolition of slavery.⁵⁵ Even if Texans refused to free their slaves, abolition meant that slaves could easily escape to freedom in other Mexican provinces. The Battle of the Alamo provided white martyrs as well as justification for the Anglo slaughter of Mexicans at the Battle of San Jacinto, setting a precedent for subhuman treatment of Mexicans in the Texas Republic. U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton said the Texas revolt "has illustrated the Anglo-Saxon character, and given it new titles to the respect and admiration of the world. It shows that liberty, justice, valour — moral, physical, and intellectual power — discriminate that race wherever it goes."⁵⁶

⁵³ Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 3.

⁵⁴ Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 41-42.

⁵⁵ Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 39. See also Paul D. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (October 1985):181-202.

⁵⁶ Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 213.

After Texas won independence, *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* editor John L. O’Sullivan called upon Americans in 1839 to achieve their “manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”⁵⁷ He contended that Mexico, “imbecile and distracted,” could never hold on to its provinces of California and New Mexico. The following decade, *New York Herald* editor James Gordon Bennett echoed Texas statesman Sam Houston’s declaration that “‘in a few years the Anglo-Saxon star-striped banner of liberty would float triumphant on the walls of the city of Montezuma;’ and we shall live to see his declaration fulfilled IN TOTO.”⁵⁸ These words proved prophetic when U.S. troops besieged Mexico City and forced Mexico to turn over half its territory in exchange for \$15 million dollars and the settlement of debts claimed by Americans. With that land opened to legal American settlement, frontiersmen pushed the conflict over slavery into the Far West. Waddy Thompson, who had gone to Mexico in 1842 as an emissary, called Mexicans in general “lazy, ignorant, and, of course, vicious and dishonest,” and he said Mexican blacks were “the same lazy, filthy, and vicious creatures that they inevitably become where they are not held in bondage.”⁵⁹

Christopher Phillips’ biography of Claiborne Fox Jackson provides a view into the rootless ambition that drew Southerners west. Jackson grew up on a farm of 250 acres, a middling plot for the farmers of western Kentucky. He, his brothers, and his male cousins joined the Kentuckians and Tennesseans who flooded into Missouri in the 1820s

⁵⁷ John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* (November 1839): 6 (5-10).

⁵⁸ Isaac C. Pray, *Memoirs of James Gordon Bennett and His Times* (New York: Stringer & Townsend, 1855), 370.

⁵⁹ Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 212.

who hoped to earn a place among the planter class.⁶⁰ Jackson finally reached his goal by marrying into the family of a wealthy doctor, building a substantial stock of slaves, and climbing to the pinnacle of political power as governor of Missouri.⁶¹ His family's story is a microcosm of the experience and social logic of Southern pioneers.

Jackson descended from Virginians who migrated to Kentucky to improve their economic and social standing, and he strived to reproduce the culture of his forefathers. That culture included notions of white superiority and a belief that owning slaves was a sacred right. The Southerners who moved to Missouri in the 1840s and 1850s saw it as their natural right to extend slavery into Kansas. In the late 1850s, they were outraged when New Englanders bent on preventing the westward spread of slavery shut off Kansas to the peculiar institution. Dependent on slavery as the engine of their economy, and with racial attitudes that reinforced the rightness of slavery through a binary, white-over-black way of seeing race, the issue of race touched most facets of Southern thinking. If slaves could not be taken to Kansas or to California, which entered the Union as a free state in 1850, then the only options left were Texas and the Southwest. Though Mexicans had no place in the black-white binary, their place would be settled from 1850 through Reconstruction.

The U.S.-Mexico War as watershed event in the status of Mexicans

The Southern view of Mexicans had been in flux during the 1830s and early 1840s. Because they did not fit the racial binary of Southern society, and because they were not black, Mexicans were considered white. After the U.S.-Mexico War, however,

⁶⁰ Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

the Southern view of who qualified as “white” became much more rigid. As political and social circumstances changed in the South, beliefs about the racial status of Mexicans shifted. For example, a New Mexican named Santiago “James” Tafolla (whites called him “Mexican Jim”) ran away from home in 1848. After he arrived in St. Louis, he improved his English with help from a plantation owner, got an education, and then took a job as a plantation overseer in Georgia, where a black-white racial binary governed notions of race. Since there was no category for him, and since he had no black blood and was not a slave, he was considered white.⁶² When he later joined the U.S. Army in Baltimore, he lost some of the honorary whiteness that had been conferred on him as a slave overseer, and he was thus consigned to menial tasks reserved for nonwhites. Frustrated, he ran off and joined the Confederate Army. When he served in Texas, his comrades refused to treat him as white. Tafolla deserted when his fellow soldiers tried to lynch him.⁶³

Mexico had every reason to expect conflict with the United States. After Polk won the presidency in 1844, he announced to his Cabinet that his top priority was the acquisition — by diplomacy or by force — of California and its ports of San Diego and San Francisco.⁶⁴ President John Tyler, in pushing Texas annexation at the end of his term in 1845, escalated the likelihood of conflict with Mexico. The precise location of the northern border was one of the points of contention between the two republics. A vast body of documentation supported Mexico’s assertion that Texas’ border was the Nueces

⁶² Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 24.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: An Interpretive History* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000), 204.

River, not the Rio Grande.⁶⁵ Spain originally defined the Nueces as Texas' southern border, some 130 miles northeast of the Rio Grande. Mexico had given jurisdiction of the strip of land between the Nueces and Rio Grande to the state of Tamaulipas. Although Texas claimed that strip, it never had control over it. Mexicans did, and they had established settlements on the northern side of the Rio Grande. And most contemporary maps and atlases showed the Nueces as Texas' southern border.⁶⁶

Such was the geopolitical understanding of Mexico and the rest of the world at the time that Polk issued orders to Gen. Zachary Taylor to march from his encampment in Corpus Christi, Texas, into the Nueces strip in January 1846. His incursion prompted the hasty flight of Mexican settlers north of the Rio Grande across the river to Matamoros and safety.⁶⁷ This was part of a two-pronged approach to obtain Mexican land through war if diplomacy failed.

Convinced that President Polk and the Democrats were bent on taking Mexican territory for the expansion of slavery, Congressman David Wilmot proposed in 1846 a ban on slavery in any land gained in the war.⁶⁸ The Senate rejected this measure, and Whigs used this as evidence of the Democrats' true designs. Indeed, when the Senate debated whether to curtail operations in the war, Southern senators conceded that they wanted Mexican land but not the Mexican people. The reason for rejecting Mexicans was founded on racism: Opponents thought Mexicans were racially inferior and incapable of

⁶⁵ Oscar J. Martínez, *Troublesome Border* (Tucson, The University of Arizona Press, 1988), 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ William L. Barney, *The Road to Secession: A New Perspective on the Old South* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 100.

self-government.⁶⁹ Southerners decried the possibility of racial amalgamation between whites and Mexicans, whom they saw as “mongrel” mixes of Spaniards and Indians. Edward Blum argued in *Reforging the White Republic* that imperial designs on Latin American territory in Puerto Rico and Cuba re-knitted American unity, based primarily on white supremacy, in the Spanish-American War.⁷⁰

Religious resentment informed white American soldiers’ perception of Mexicans during the war. Anglo-Saxon Protestant thinking fueled much of the attitude formation about Mexicans, whose Catholicism made them suspect because American Protestants believed Catholics were backward, dangerous, and opposed to individual liberty.⁷¹ American volunteers routinely criticized the Catholic Church, which they blamed for what they saw as Mexico’s backwardness.⁷² They bitterly complained that they were “forced” to take part in the Catholic ritual when it was far more common for Catholics to be forced to take part in Protestant services.⁷³ In *A Short, Offhanded Killing Affair*, Paul Foos vividly illustrated the ways religion combined with class to shape attitudes about Mexicans during the war. Although the much-maligned professional army did the most difficult work of the Mexican campaigns, American culture valorized volunteers. Many of the volunteers were glory-seeking dilettantes bent on finding adventure. Their recruiters offered a chance at that adventure, along with the promise of

⁶⁹ Streeby, *American Sensations*, 172.

⁷⁰ Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 212.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁷² Richard Winders, *Mr. Polk’s Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 182.

⁷³ Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhanded Killing Affair* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 131.

plunder. But some promised more. New York and New Jersey recruiters vowed to give volunteers large plots of land that they were unable to deliver.⁷⁴ Frustrated American volunteers, who were already primed to hate Catholics, looted Mexican churches.⁷⁵

The Southern racial hierarchy also played a role in American soldiers' views of Mexicans. Among the most valorized American fighting men were the Texas Rangers, who were known for their brutality against Mexicans. Shooting Mexicans with little provocation was common, and for this the Rangers were held up as heroes.⁷⁶ Southern volunteers meted out brutal punishments to Mexicans without their officers' permission because, as sons of a slaveholding society, they believed that it was whites' place to keep nonwhites in their place and they saw their whiteness as the only permission required to do this.⁷⁷

The U.S- Mexico War and its consequences for annexed Mexicans

Richard Griswold del Castillo argued that President James K. Polk and the U.S. Senate made clear with their actions during ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that expansion at Mexico's expense was the main reason for the U.S.-Mexico War. After Polk stampeded the United States into the war in 1846, the victorious Yankees annexed a third of Mexico's lands, including California, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and parts of modern-day Arizona, Nevada, and Wyoming just eight days before gold was discovered in California in 1848.⁷⁸ At Polk's recommendation, the Senate struck an entire

⁷⁴ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 146.

⁷⁸ Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press: 1949), p. 57.

article in the treaty that explicitly protected the property rights of Mexicans who were annexed into the United States.⁷⁹ Another article was substantially altered to allow Congress to indefinitely delay admitting annexed territories to statehood, thus depriving New Mexicans the full rights of citizens.⁸⁰ The United States wanted land, and it got the land along with people it did not really want. Mexico was not as fastidious about record-keeping as the U.S., and under Mexican and Spanish law titles were recognized as valid even if they had not been perfected. By striking the protection of such titles, the Senate opened the door for squatters to push Mexicans off their land in California. Polk's emissaries justified removal of these protections in the Protocol of Queretaro, which offered assurances that U.S. law would provide more than enough protection without explicitly stating it in the actual treaty. But the protocol was not included with the treaty at final ratification by the U.S., and the Americans subsequently denied that they ever agreed that the protocol would be binding.⁸¹

Once hostilities ceased and the treaty was signed, Americans turned to dividing and developing the spoils. Southerners argued that even their slaves were superior to Mexicans. When the North moved to block the expansion of slavery, some Southerners determined, based on the growth in the slave population, they had better find new regions that could serve as a demographic escape valve in the Southwest and Mexican lands.⁸² Southern intellectuals such as James Chesnut determined that slavery fit with a natural

⁷⁹ Griswold del Castillo, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo*, 45.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸² Mike Dunning, "Manifest Destiny and the Trans-Mississippi South: Natural Laws and the Extension of Slavery into Mexico," *Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2001), 113.

law of race distribution that put each race in its ideal climate zone. These proponents of scientific racism theorized that because African slaves came from the tropics of the Eastern Hemisphere, tropical lands were the best places in the Western Hemisphere for them. Adherents to this principle believed that Africans were inferior to Anglo-Saxons and therefore were naturally only fit for slavery if they were to contribute to society.⁸³ Chesnut argued in a *Southern Quarterly* article in 1853 that Mexico was suited naturally to slave labor and population and that Mexicans were inferior in intellect and energy to whites and inferior in physical capacity and stamina to blacks, so Mexicans must therefore make way for the slaves of Southerners.⁸⁴

In California, Anglos who were aware that they could find the legal means to turn Mexican land into their own were jubilant about the riches that awaited them. James McHall Jones, a delegate to the California Constitutional Convention who later became a judge in Southern California, was ready to make a mint. He wrote to his mother on August 26, 1849, that his knowledge of Spanish would give him a real advantage in the coming land-grab because “there will be titles annulled, judgments reversed, property seized (and) I’ll have a whole fist in the pie.”⁸⁵ The Gold Rush of 1849 drew tens of thousands of treasure-seekers, but most of them never struck it rich as prospectors. Despite this failure, they believed they had a right to prosperity as yeoman farmers and

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Dunning quoted James Chesnut, “The Destinies of the South,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 23 (Jan. 1853): 178-205.

⁸⁵ Sheridan Harvey, Janice E. Ruth, Barbara Orbach Natanson, and Sara Day and Evelyn Sinclair (eds.), *American Women: A Library of Congress Guide for the Study of Women’s History and Culture in the United States* (Washington: Library of Congress, 2001), 358.

turned their eyes to the rich farmlands held by the Californios.⁸⁶ Anglos squatted on Mexican-owned land that they knew was involved in difficult litigation. There they waited until they could put in their own American-recognized claims. Through legislation and the courts, historian Douglas Monroy argued, Anglos deprived Mexicans of economic opportunity and forced them into dependence on wage labor in the decades to come.⁸⁷

The Annexation of Texas and the U.S.-Mexico War accelerated America's racialization of Mexicans by providing a motivation to regard Mexicans not just as different, but as inferior. After the war, a torrent of white, Anglo-Saxon settlers brought their material and ideological desires and their political, religious, and cultural values into formerly Mexican territory. Northern Whigs who abhorred war for territorial gain could not sit out the land grab in the Southwest and Far West while Southern Democrats flooded into that region. They, too, joined the quest for riches and power. Gold-seekers, railroad men, traders, soldiers, and yeoman farmers from North and South alike brought their cultures with them. Many did not like what they found in their first encounters with Mexican life and culture.

Ideology, conflict, and the communication system: Prejudice blossoms in print

Nativism and anti-Catholicism tainted the Americans' view of Mexico regardless of regional identity. Belief in white, Anglo-Saxon superiority took hold of the nation, and Northerners and Southerners alike agreed on the need to acquire Mexican lands and subdue their inhabitants. But American preconceptions about Mexicans grew over time.

⁸⁶ Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 204-205.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 205.

In the early nineteenth century, Mexicans were perceived only as different, but not necessarily inferior.

Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike published an unvarnished transcription of the diary he kept on his 1807 exploration to the headwaters of the Red and Arkansas rivers shortly after the Louisiana Purchase.⁸⁸ The journey carried him and his military expedition of fifteen soldiers into New Mexico, then known as New Spain. Pike's observations about the Spanish and Indian populations were largely neutral and even positive in places.

Throughout the diary of his travels in New Spain, Pike remarked on the hospitality and generosity of Spaniards.⁸⁹ A priest who offered him wine and supper earned Pike's praise for his knowledge of botany.⁹⁰ Pike described Catholic Masses that he observed without judging or comparing them to Protestant worship.⁹¹ And when he described people and architecture, he did not generalize that a peasant farmer's "mud-walled" house represented the extent of architectural progress in New Spain. The noble and the impoverished alike appeared in Pike's journal. His summary of the characteristics of New Spain, at the end of his 1810 *Account of the Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi*, said, "The houses are generally only one story high, with flat roofs, and

⁸⁸ Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi, and Through the Western Parts of Louisiana, to the Sources of the Arkansas, Kansas, La Platte, and Pierre Juan Rivers; Performed by Order of the Government of the United States During the Years 1805, 1806, and 1807; and a Tour Through the Interior Parts of New Spain, When Conducted Through These Provinces, by Order of the Captain-General, in the Year 1807* (Philadelphia: C. & A. Conrad, 1810).

⁸⁹ Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, During the Years 1805-6-7, Vol. 2*, ed. Elliott Coues (New York: F. P. Harper, 1895), *passim*.

⁹⁰ Pike, *Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 604.

⁹¹ Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *The Southwestern Journals of Zebulon Pike, 1806-1807*, ed. Stephen Harding Hart and Archer Butler Hulbert, new introduction by Mark L. Gardner (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 240.

have a very mean appearance on the outside; but some of them are richly furnished, especially with plate.”⁹² Agriculturally, Pike wrote, New Mexico was “a century behind us in the art of cultivation; for, notwithstanding their numerous herds of cattle and horses, I have seen them frequently breaking up whole fields with a hoe. ... Their carts are extremely awkward and clumsily made.”⁹³

Pike’s observations about New Spain’s resources and potential as an export market had material consequences. New Spain’s northern provinces in the present-day Mexican states of Chihuahua and Durango abounded in silver and gold mines, he wrote, and the country had so little manufacturing capacity that fine cloth sold for \$20 a yard and superfine cloth for \$25 a yard. The potential to spin thread into riches attracted American traders eager to open up a potentially rich textile market.⁹⁴ Pike’s book, first printed in 1810 in Philadelphia, drew interest from across the United States and Europe. It appeared in London in 1811, and translations soon were published in French in 1812, and Dutch and German in 1813.⁹⁵ Pike proclaimed that Americans had a duty to help Mexico win independence from Spain and become a democratic republic, writing, “Twenty thousand auxiliaries from the United States, under good officers, joined to the independents of the country, are at any time sufficient to create and effect the revolution.” Contrary to the religious bigotry that nativists would promote in the decades to come, Pike urged that “the most sacred regard should be paid not to injure the institutions of their religion, thereby showing them we have proper respect for all things in any way

⁹² Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 740.

⁹³ Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 741.

⁹⁴ Pike, *Southwestern Journals of Zebulon Pike*, 5.

⁹⁵ Pike, *Southwestern Journals*, 3.

connected with worship of the Deity, at the same time that we permit every man to adore him agreeably to the dictates of his own judgment.”⁹⁶

At the end of his Southwestern Journals, Pike summarized the geography, natural resources, population, and general character of New Spain and each of its provinces. Although he generalized about the morals and manners of the colony’s inhabitants, Pike also included a short description of each of New Spain’s provinces. He implied or declared approval of the places whose residents most embraced values similar to those of Americans.

On the whole, Pike wrote that “For hospitality, generosity, and sobriety the people of New Spain exceed any nation perhaps on the globe; but in national energy, patriotism, enterprise of character, or independence of soul, they are perhaps the most deficient. Yet there are men who have displayed bravery to a surprising degree, and the Europeans who are there cherish with delight the idea of their gallant ancestry.”⁹⁷ Even given their shortcomings, Pike declared that “From the physical as well as moral properties of the inhabitants of New Spain, I do believe that they are capable of being made the best troops in the world, possessing sobriety, enterprise, great physical force, docility, and a conception equally quick and penetrating.”⁹⁸ Here he contradicted his previous statement that the New Spaniards lacked enterprise.

The Catholic clergy bore the brunt of Pike’s criticism of New Spain because of how jealously it protected its political, economic, and intellectual power in the kingdom. The whole country was “subject to the ordinances of the high court of inquisition held at

⁹⁶ Pike, *Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 806.

⁹⁷ Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 788.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 799.

the capital of Mexico, Pike wrote, adding that the inquisition “condemned a man to the flames, for asserting and maintaining some doctrine which they deemed heretical; and a Jew who was imprudent enough to take the image of Christ on a cross, and put it under the sill of his door, saying privately he would make the dogs walk over their God.”⁹⁹ Any books containing religious or political ideas that contradicted Catholic teaching were burned, Pike wrote. This included the philosophical works of Jean-Jaques Rousseau and Voltaire and the writings of French revolutionary and statesman Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau.¹⁰⁰ While they impeded philosophical progress, Pike wrote, the kingdom’s Catholic bishops and archbishops grew wealthy off their parishioners, who were obliged to tithe ten percent of their income to the church, “besides the fees of confessions, bulls, burials, baptisms, marriages, and a thousand impositions which the corruption of priestcraft has introduced, and which have been kept up by their superstition and ignorance.”¹⁰¹ By contrast, parish priests were “liberal and well-informed” and “will lead the van whenever the standard of independence is raised in that country.”¹⁰²

New Mexicans, Pike wrote, were the bravest and hardiest subjects of New Spain. Their isolation demanded that they become self-reliant and support one another in their defense against Indian raids. Pike found virtue in their Catholic faith, which he credited for New Mexicans’ generosity and charity.¹⁰³ Texas, too, received Pike’s praise, but for

⁹⁹ Ibid., 802.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 803.

¹⁰³ Pike, *Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 755.

different reasons. He found that the Texans demanded that Indians stop wandering and take up the plow. The more Mexicans showed that they valued that trait so dear to Americans, industriousness, the more morally upright Pike believed them to be. Pike was less charitable about the provinces immediately south of New Mexico. In Biscay, he found “a much greater degree of luxury among the rich, misery among the poor, and a corruption of morals more general than in New Mexico. As to military spirit, they have none.”¹⁰⁴ Pike’s description of religiosity in Biscay, like that of the whole kingdom, was a harbinger of the image of the priestly corruption that correspondents from the U.S.-Mexico War onward would repeat: The bishop was paid \$100,000 a year, and “The Catholic religion is here in its full force, but the inferior clergy are very much dissatisfied. The people’s superstition is so great that they run after the holy father in the streets, endeavoring to kiss the hem of his garment; and should the bishop be passing the street, the rich and poor all kneel.”¹⁰⁵ Sonora was “in every respect similar to Biscay, except that they are more celebrated for hospitality.”¹⁰⁶ Sinaloa, however, earned Pike’s approval. “It was evident to the least discerning eye that, as we diverged from these parts which produced such vast quantities of the precious metals, the inhabitants became more industrious, and there were fewer beggars. Thus the morals of the people of Cogquilla [now known as Coahuilla] were less corrupt than those of Biscay or New Leon, their neighbors.” The Spaniards of Texas also garnered Pike’s praise because they had embraced a way of life more similar to that of American farmers. Though the presence of bison herds made it natural to emulate the nomadic ways of the Plains Indian tribes,

¹⁰⁴ Pike, *Account of Expeditions*, 770.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 771.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 772.

Texas' governor restricted bison hunting and required every household to cultivate the land. This "checked the spirit of hunting or wandering life which had been hitherto so very prevalent, and has endeavored to introduce, by his example and precepts, a general urbanity and suavity of manners which rendered St. Antonio one of the most agreeable places that we met with in the provinces."¹⁰⁷ Again, the more Mexicans embraced that value so dear to Americans, industriousness, the more morally upright Pike believed them to be.

James Ohio Pattie: From neutrality to othering

The theme of Mexican indolence, not present in Pike's 1811 account of life in New Mexico, appeared in James Ohio Pattie's 1831 narrative of an expedition he embarked on with his father and a group of fur trappers in 1826. Pattie did pick up Pike's observation that Mexican agricultural progress lagged that of the United States. But Pattie's characterization of "indolent" Mexican farmers is contradictory. On one hand, he wrote that the typical Mexican plow was "clumsy and indifferent" and "Their hoes and axes and other tools are equally indifferent; and they are precisely in such a predicament, as might be expected of a people who have no saw mills, no labor saving machinery, and do every thing by dint of hard labor, and are withal very indolent and unenterprising." In Pattie's day, to be "indolent" was to be "habitually idle or indisposed to labor; lazy; listless; sluggish; indulging in ease," while "indolence" implied "a constitutional or habitual love of ease."¹⁰⁸ By Pattie's logic, then, people who worked hard because they lacked labor-saving devices were somehow lazy. But Pattie also accused Frenchmen with

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 786-787.

¹⁰⁸ Noah Webster and John Walker, *An American Dictionary of the English Language; Exhibiting the Origin, Orthography, Pronunciation, and Definitions of Words* (New York: S. Converse, 1832), 447.

his trade expedition of indolence when they failed to prepare defenses against Indian attack, so the assertion of indolence was not just an othering of Mexicans, but of non-Americans.¹⁰⁹ By all appearances, Pattie's mind appears to have been a clean slate concerning the character of Mexicans before he embarked on the trapping and trading trek from Missouri to New Mexico and California that he described in his *Personal Narrative*. His prejudices simmered to the surface as his narrative progressed. On the whole, he portrayed Mexicans as decent, hardworking, religiously devoted people, but the elements of othering popped up throughout his book. Differences in artistic, cultural, religious, agricultural, and military life drew Pattie's gaze.

On his first encounter with the justice of the peace and other people in the village of San Francisco de Taos, New Mexico, Pattie was shocked to find that they were not white like him. "This was a man of a swarthy complexion having the appearance of pride and haughtiness," Pattie wrote. "The door-way of the room, we were in, was crowded with men, women and children, who stared at us, as though they had never seen white men before, there being in fact, much to my surprise and disappointment, not one white person among them. I had expected to find no difference between these people and our own, but their language. I was never so mistaken."¹¹⁰ Their clothing and weaponry were alien to Pattie, who nonetheless showed no urge to associate these differences with racial or ethnic inferiority. Rather, the New Mexicans in Pattie's narrative had the character of

¹⁰⁹ James Ohio Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie of Kentucky* (Cincinnati: John H. Wood, 1831), 87.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42. Pattie referred to the village as "San Ferdinando," a bastardization of "San Fernandez de Taos" confirmed by historian Reuben Gold Thwaites in James Ohio Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie of Kentucky* ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1905), 42. The town is now simply known as Taos.

working people in a frontier village even if their style was a little different.¹¹¹ Pattie echoed Pike's observations on Mexican generosity: "Although appearing as poorly as I have described, they are not destitute of hospitality; for they brought us food, and invited us into their houses to eat, as we walked through the streets."¹¹²

Tempered as was Pattie's description of their clothing, New Mexicans' attainment in fine and applied arts garnered his admiration. On the architecture of Santa Fe, he wrote, "It is pleasant to walk on the flat roofs of the houses in the evening, and look on the town and plain spread below. . . . The churches are differently constructed from the other buildings and make a beautiful show."¹¹³ Introducing the fandango to his readers, Pattie described Mexican dancing as different but not inferior. He wrote that the women's dance was "a curiosity to me" but commented that it "produces a fine effect, when twenty or thirty perform it together."¹¹⁴

Pattie held his heaviest fire for the battlefield performance of Mexicans who fought alongside him against hostile Indians, and he noted the relatively primitive arms that the civilian population used to repel attackers. The villagers of San Fernandez had none of the weapons that would be associated with the militias of the American states in the East. These were farmers, not fighters. "They have few fire arms, generally using upon occasions which require them, a bow and spear, and never wear a hat, except when they ride," he wrote.¹¹⁵ A combination of timidity and indolence, Pattie claimed,

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 42.

prevented Mexicans from defending themselves against Indian livestock thieves and murderers.¹¹⁶ While he labeled the peasants “timid,” Pattie reserved stronger judgment for New Mexico’s military men while implying American superiority in arms.

After Pattie’s party had arranged a mining partnership with the Spanish, the Americans warned Indian leaders to halt generations of hostility toward the Spanish or risk the Americans’ wrath. They told the Indians, “If they would not be peaceable, and allow us to work the mines unmolested, the Americans would consider them at war, and would raise a sufficient body of men to pursue them to their lurking places in the mountains; that they had good evidence that our people could travel in the woods and among the mountains, as well as themselves; and that we could shoot a great deal better than either they or the Spaniards, and that we had no cowards among us, but true men, who had no fear and would keep their word. The chiefs answered, that if the mines belonged to the Americans, they would promise never to disturb the people that worked them. We left them, therefore, to infer that the mines belonged to us, and took them at their word.”¹¹⁷ The implication was that the Indians respected the Americans as brave fighters, but considered the Mexicans to be unreliable at best and cowardly at worst. The most negative image in Pattie’s story is that of the cowardly Mexican. “The chiefs laughed, and said to each other, these Americans know how to fight, and make peace too. But were they to fight us, they would have to get a company entirely of their own people; for that if they took any Spaniards into their company, they would be sure to desert them in the time of action.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 22-23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 77.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 79.

Pattie felt the same. On a mission to defend New Mexican settlements against Indian attack, Spanish military authorities cooperated with the Pattie expedition in New Mexico. But Pattie wrote that “the Spaniards, after one discharge from their fire arms fled.” Pattie’s commander rallied his men, saying “stand resolute, my boys, and we make them repent, if they follow us, although those ** Spaniards have deserted us, when we came to fight for them. We are enough for these ** devils alone.”¹¹⁹ After the battle, Pattie was stunned to see Spanish cavalry riding over the dead and injured Indians, killing any who were injured. The scene would tend to promote American belief in the *leyenda negra*, a notion that the Spanish were naturally cruel owing to their intermarriage with non-Christian Moors.

That Pattie described Mexican Catholic rituals and beliefs at length indicates that he likely thought they would be unfamiliar to his readers. He wrote that an itinerant priest went down into a New Mexico mine “to release the spirits of those who had died since his last visit, from purgatory, and to make Christians by baptizing the little persons who had been born in the same time.” Pattie, like Pike, associated Mexicans’ Catholic faith with their generosity and hospitality¹²⁰ The theme of Catholic piety came up again when Pattie described his visit to a priest’s mission in California. At sundown, the priest kneeled to say the Lord’s Prayer and Pattie joined him in it. This puzzled the priest, who asked why he had prayed. Pattie answered, “for the salvation of my soul.” The priest told Pattie that his prayer made him seem Christian, “but that he had been informed that the people of our country did not believe that man had a soul, or that there is a Saviour. I

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 47. Asterisks in original.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 42-43.

assured him, that he had been entirely misinformed, for that we had churches on every side through all the land, and that the people read the Scriptures, and believed all that was taught in the Gospel.”¹²¹ The priest countered, “your people do not believe in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary,” but Pattie said he knew too little of the Scriptures to decide whether he did.¹²²

Making the case for acquiring Mexican territory

As Americans came to covet Mexican resources, they found themselves torn between the values of promoting democracy in Mexico, as Pike urged, and seeking profit south and west of the border, as Pattie exemplified. After American slaveholding immigrants in Texas allied with Spanish elites and gained their independence from Mexico in 1837, the prospect of Texas annexation posed a troubling situation for abolitionists in the North and compelling possibilities for the South. Northern publications, broadsides, and lecturers cried out against absorbing a pro-slavery Texas Republic. In the meantime, the Southern press set about building a case for the rightness of annexation on the grounds that slavery was good for America, that Mexico never really had a legitimate claim to Texas, that even the Mexicans rejected their own government’s meddling in the affairs of the country’s northern provinces, and as the perceived Northern threat to slavery grew, that anti-slavery Mexicans were a mongrel species in need of the guiding hand of whites.

After the U.S.-Mexico War, the federal government confronted the puzzle of how it could most efficiently put into place the internal improvements in transportation and

¹²¹ Ibid., 179.

¹²² Ibid.

communication that would knit together a sprawling nation. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which sealed the peace in 1848, added 600,000 square miles to the United States.¹²³ Trappers like James Ohio Pattie stretched the truth for the sake of a good story, merchants and civic leaders in Mississippi River towns puffed the advantages of using their towns as the terminus of a railroad to connect the heart of the country with freshly acquired Pacific Ocean ports, and sectional squabbles boiled over the extension of slavery from the 1840s through the early 1850s. Since it could not count on getting the complete truth from any of these parties, the federal government turned to its corps of Army surveyors to assay the natural resources, character of the people, and terrain through which to build a railroad. The reports of the military surveys echoed and amplified the othering in the writings of Pike and Pattie. These echoes would reverberate into the consciousness of news correspondents who plied the Southwest in search of stories and information about the frontier for the *New York Tribune*, *New Orleans Picayune*, *DeBow's Review*, *Harper's Monthly*, and mass produced nonfiction books.

It was only natural that the Southern press would take an interest in Mexico, given the Southern states' proximity and the prospect of extending slavery south of the border. Because local papers produced little original content about affairs abroad, it fell to the South's leading regional magazines, published in Charleston, South Carolina, Richmond, Virginia, and New Orleans, to gather intelligence about Mexico and the American West. The leaders, in the order in which they were published, were the *Southern Literary Messenger* (1834-1864), *Southern Quarterly Review* (1842-1857), and *DeBow's Review* (1846-1880).

¹²³ Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2009), 449.

The *Southern Literary Messenger's* purpose, as set out by its editors many times in statements of purpose within its pages, was “to foster and encourage native genius” of the South.¹²⁴ The lack of a Southern literary magazine meant that until the *Messenger's* founding, Southern readers looked to the literary journals of the Northeast for material. Edited by Thomas W. White and Edgar Allen Poe for its first three years of existence,¹²⁵ the *Messenger* carried only the sparsest material on Mexico. Edward Thornton Taylor's account of a visit to Mexico City consisted mainly of geographic and architectural descriptions. Grand though he found his surroundings, the people left him less than impressed. “My first feeling was disappointment – not so much with the city, as with the crowds of wretched ill-dressed people, of beggars, and poor half-naked Indians, bending under heavy burdens,” he wrote. “There are no carts or drays for the transportation of goods, which are carried upon the backs of these poor creatures, who are enable to carry a load of three hundred pounds, by means of a leather band or strap, the *cargador* leaning forward at an angle of about 45 degrees.”¹²⁶ The image of the Mexican Indian as beast of burden left the impression that they were little more than animals.

Seven years later, a fellow correspondent for the *Messenger* likened a group of Mexicans to a menagerie. “The next day we had time to look about us, and admire the strangest collection of men and animals that had perhaps ever met on the frontier of the United States,” wrote correspondent Philip St. George Cook. “There were a few Mexicans – creoles – polished gentlemen, magnificently clothed in Spanish costume; a

¹²⁴ Edward Reinhold Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines* (Richmond, VA: The Williams Printing Co., 1902), 92.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 94-98.

¹²⁶ Edward Thornton Taylor, “Extracts from My Mexican Journal, Part I,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 1, no. 6 (February 1835): 276.

large number of grave Spaniards, exiled from Mexico, and on their way to the United States, with much property in stock and gold – their whole equipage was Spanish; there was a company of Mexican regulars, as they were called, in uniform, (mere apologies for soldiers, or even men;) several tribes of Indians, (or Mexicans,) much more formidable as warriors, were grouped about with their horses, and spears planted in the ground. Frenchmen were there *of course*; and our 180 hardy veterans, in rags, but well armed and equipped for any service: four or five languages were spoken: but, to complete the picture, must be mentioned the 2,000 horses, mules, jacks, which kept up an incessant braying.”¹²⁷

While the *Messenger's* take on Mexicans was based on pure subjectivity with little concern for justification, the *Southern Quarterly Review* tried to tackle the issue of race beneath the cover of public policy and objective science. The New Orleans publication declared in its inaugural prospectus that “To protect the rights of our Southern soil from invasion, and to promote the cause of learning, arts and literature among us, we have projected this *Southern Quarterly Review*.”¹²⁸ Most cherished of those rights, at least for the plantation class, was the right to property – slave property – and the means to profit from it. That Texas and the Southwest represented the means to expand slave-based agriculture made the Lone Star Republic the subject of some editorial attention in the *Review*.

The July 1843 issue included an article that argued Mexico's northern states, due to their proximity to the United States, were “deeply imbued with a love of rational

¹²⁷ Philip St. George Cooke, “Scenes and Adventures in the Army: Sketches of Indians and Life Beyond the Border,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 8, no. 7 (July 1842): 466.

¹²⁸ Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines*, 61.

liberty, and merits rather to be cherished than oppressed by us, or by Texas.”¹²⁹

Throughout the Mexican republic, people were fed up with the central government, according to the *Quarterly's* transcription of letters between J. Maria de Bocanegra, Mexico's minister of foreign relations. Echoing Zebulon Pike's prediction that an American force would be greeted as liberators, a letter written by U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster to the U.S. envoy to Mexico, Waddy Thompson, predicted, “As auxiliaries to reestablish free government, the Texans would be hailed with enthusiasm, and received with kindness and gratitude; as invaders, they would be opposed at every step, and be viewed as the enemies of the country, and the destroyers of every hope of liberty.”¹³⁰ The implication was that the U.S. should find a way to spin any military involvement as a mission of liberation, and that one way another such intervention would occur.

Whether Mexicans were socially advanced enough for self-government was raised in an 1845 piece on the development of the races.¹³¹ Josiah Nott claimed that despite archaeological evidence of Mexican Indians' prowess as temple builders, it was possible that animals could have created such structures and, therefore, indigenous Mexicans might only be as advanced as animals. “Many of the remains of this people are stupendous, and show considerable architectural skill,” Nott said, “but my conviction is that too much importance has been attached to architectural remains. The talent of constructiveness may be developed in a very high degree, but without the higher faculties of comparison and causality necessarily being in proportion. The beaver, many birds, and

¹²⁹ “Mexico and Texas,” *The Southern Quarterly Review* 2, no. 3 (July 1843): 107-112.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹³¹ “Unity of the Races,” *The Southern Quarterly Review* 7, no. 14 (April 1845): 372-448.

insects, show this talent to a surprising degree. Read the Natural History of the honey bee, and you will see things almost as remarkable as any thing we have spoken of in Central America.' P. 36." Countering Nott's argument, the article's author pointed out, "But these same Mexicans seem to have had some knowledge of Astronomy also, and of several of the arts, in as high perfection as they are now known. They had a calendar more accurate than the Greeks and Romans, and intercalated for the six hours' excess of the solar over the civil year."¹³² Human or not? Although the article came down on the side of Mexican mathematical superiority, the *Review* shed a degree of credibility on Nott's argument by considering it to be even worthy of consideration. And in the next issue, the *Review* argued that the practice of human sacrifice canceled out any inference of Aztec cultural superiority, based on mastery of astronomy.¹³³

The *Review* continued to build a case for Mexican inferiority in the issue that followed when it ran excerpts from a book by Charles Wilkes, commander of a U.S. Navy expedition that sailed around the Horn and up the Pacific Coasts of South America and North America to British Columbia and out to South Africa and back from 1838 to 1842.¹³⁴ Wilkes argued that the Spanish friars in California had done a great service by educating California Indians and that Mexico made a grave mistake in prohibiting them from continuing to do so.¹³⁵ This was not so much an argument in favor of the Spanish as it was a statement of Mexican ineptitude and greed. The Indians, Wilkes claimed, were

¹³² *Ibid.*, 403.

¹³³ "An Issue with the Reviewer of 'Nott's Caucasian and Negro Races,'" *The Southern Quarterly Review* 8, no. 15 (July 1845): 148-190.

¹³⁴ Charles Wilkes, "Exploring Expedition, Part II," *The Southern Quarterly Review* 8, no. 16 (October 1845), 265-298. Excerpts came from Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842* (Philadelphia: S. Shermon, 1844).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 282.

“utterly incapable of providing for themselves, when they were turned loose by the mistaken zeal of the Mexican authorities. ... By their aid, and the prudent direction of their task masters, the missions became very prosperous. Each mission was regarded as a separate family of Indians, who, if they were well worked, were likewise well clothed, well fed and happy.” The priests managed the proceeds wisely and spent them on items that would keep the Indians healthy and happy, wrote Wilkes, but the Mexican government demanded a piece of the action and ruined a virtuous system by taking over Indian affairs from the priests.¹³⁶

Bridging a growing credibility gap: Federal railroad surveys

Inaccurate and sometimes even deadly information in settlers’ guides to the West,¹³⁷ partisan and sectional political battles over the future of slavery, and puffed-up claims by civic and mercantile leaders who hoped to make their cities on the Mississippi River the terminus for a Pacific railroad combined to create a crisis of credibility for the federal government. Whom could the federal government believe? Ultimately, no one but itself. Instead, in 1853 Congress called on U.S. Army surveyors to assess the resources, potential rail routes, and character of the Mexican people in the nation’s newly acquired real estate from New Mexico to California. The result was *Reports of Explorations and Survey to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 24 February 1855*.

Lieutenant A. W. Whipple led a 14-man team of specialists in mining, topography, astronomy, and meteorology to determine the best possible route following

¹³⁶ Ibid., 283.

¹³⁷ The dangers of inaccurate trail guides are detailed in Richard Stillson, *Spreading the Word: A History of Information in the California Gold Rush* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

the Thirty-Fifth Parallel from Fort Smith, Arkansas, through New Mexico to the California coast.¹³⁸ Ethnographic observations were sparse in Whipple's report to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. One page addressed relations between settlers and the Indian tribes of New Mexico, concluding that once the nomadic tribes were taught to till the earth and look after livestock, they would acquire a surplus to trade that would give them common interests with whites. Only then would "savage warfare" cease.¹³⁹ Mexicans are largely absent from these speculations. When they do appear, it is only to provide a basis of comparison for the Indians. "It is a singular fact that, throughout New Mexico, Pueblo Indians are universally conceded to be the most sober, honest and industrious portion of the inhabitants of this Territory. ... The Indians of Zuñi ... are more shrewd and more enterprising than the lower class of Mexican population." To Whipple, this superiority could be inferred from the Zuñis' excess of corn for trade and their attendant eagerness to see a railway run through their lands to open up trade with whites.¹⁴⁰ In the far western reaches of New Mexico Territory, in modern-day southwestern Arizona, Whipple's surveyors found an estimated 1,660 square miles of land on the Colorado River where Indians cultivated maize, wheat, beans, melons, sugarcane, rice, and cotton that the Southerners in the survey party deemed almost as good as the Sea Island cotton of South Carolina. Looking on the land, with his Southern perspective, Whipple declared, "There can be no doubt that the valley of the Colorado is

¹³⁸ Whipple's mission is detailed in A. W. Whipple, "Report of Explorations for a Railway Route, Near the Thirty-Fifth Parallel of Latitude, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean," *Report of the Secretary of War Communicating the Several Pacific Railroad Explorations*, House Doc. 129, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess., 1853-1854.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

destined, at some future day, to be divided into plantations, supporting a numerous population.”¹⁴¹ Clearly, Whipple had in mind not just transportation, but white, Southern migration and agriculture. A railroad engineer on the expedition, A. H. Campbell, commented in a separate report on the route’s suitability for railroad construction, specified that “intelligent Mexicans” (apparently assuming that most were not intelligent) recommended a certain valley for a route due to its lack of natural obstacles.¹⁴²

Brevet Captain John Pope’s party, surveying a potential railroad route along the Thirty-Second Parallel through Texas and New Mexico to California, brought fewer men with scientific and engineering expertise than did Whipple’s, relying instead on a captain who served as “acting mineralogist” and a physician who served as “acting naturalist.”¹⁴³ But their observations bear the signs of scientific method.

Mexicans warranted mention only as members of a civilized population who were terrified by Indian raids. A secondhand account in Pope’s report on the potential for a rail route connecting the Red River in Texas to the Rio Grande in New Mexico held that the Comanches:

[A]re objects of the extremest terror to the Mexican; and it is even related that a single Camanche [*sic*] alone, and at mid-day, dashed at speed into the public square of the city of Durango, and by his mere presence caused the hasty closing of the stores and public places of the city, and the rapid retreat of a population of thirty thousand souls to their barred houses. He remained an hour roaming through the deserted streets, and was only captured by being lassoed from the window of a house as he was riding triumphantly but carelessly from the suburbs. Such an occurrence must appear amazing to the last degree to an American, who has been accustomed to deal with the Indian upon terms of advantage; but in the Mexican, the sight of a half-naked Camanche, with his shaggy horse and

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁴² Ibid., 37.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 67.

his quiver of arrows, produces a paralysis of fear, from which he seems never to recover. These wretched people, shut up in their barred and grated villages, will look forth despairingly, but without even an inclination to resist, upon one-third of their number of half-armed Camanches, ravaging the fields and haciendas under their very eyes, and carrying off into hopeless captivity the miserable women and children who have not succeeded in making good their escape.¹⁴⁴

Indians were feared, while Mexicans were pathetic, in Pope's estimation.

Mexican women taken prisoner married into the tribe, while Mexican men, with "their cowed and sullen look, and shuffling, timid manner," were enslaved by the Comanches.¹⁴⁵ Thus, Pope conveyed an image of male Mexican effeminacy, an echo of the Mexicans described by James Ohio Pattie, and female Mexican sexual openness. Buried in his diary of the journey, in an appendix to the official report, was an account of Mexicans who tracked down a pack of about 100 Apache raiders, surrounded them, and killed all but two or three.¹⁴⁶ Similarly buried in the appendix was the survey party's reliance on Mexican cowboys to do the hard work of herding cattle and tracking down stray mules.¹⁴⁷

Laziness and inefficiency, by turns, were used by the Army surveyors to explain the ways Mexicans coped with Indian attacks. The Jornada del Muerte, a barren, waterless desert route whose name translates as "Journey of the Dead Man," follows the Rio Grande north to Santa Fe from southern New Mexico. Pope explained in his report that a shortcut departed from the river, putting traffic in the open and vulnerable to Indian

¹⁴⁴ John Pope, "Report of Exploration of a Route for the Pacific Railroad Near the Thirty-Second Parallel of Latitude, from the Red River to the Rio Grande," *Report of the Secretary of War Communicating the Several Pacific Railroad Explorations*, House Doc. 129, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess., 1853-1854, 21.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67, 69.

attack but cut only fifteen miles off the trip. “Water is very scarce,” he explained, “there is no wood, and the grass is very indifferent. The small gain in distance ... by no means compensates for these disadvantages, and nothing but the natural indolence of the Mexicans has ever diverted the travel from the valley of the river.”¹⁴⁸ This was a waste of good farmland near the Rio Grande, but Pope confidently declared that a military presence would “soon secure its settlement and cultivation ... and the dangers of the ‘Jornada del Muerto’ will only be mementoes of the past.”¹⁴⁹

Indolent, ignorant, cowardly, and effeminate summed up the Army surveyors’ assessment of the Mexicans of New Mexico and California. Pope explained that “the want of means to open them, and the ignorance of mining, characteristic of the New Mexican, have altogether prevented” exploitation of the vast reserves of silver and lead that lay in the Organ Mountains, West of the Rio Grande.¹⁵⁰

The reconnaissance of railroad routes through the Southwest took into account the need for safety, forage for horses and livestock, level ground to lay train tracks, and water. Army surveyors also had an eye on future development and inventoried the potential to develop mines and agriculture. But Pope recognized the means to transmit data on prices and quantities available would be crucial if industrialists were to turn a profit on the commodities of the Southwest. Salt from New Mexico’s dry lakes, for example, was so abundant and easily extracted that “with cheap communications with a

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 42.

market, they would supply the United States at a cost far below the present market prices.”¹⁵¹

The Army surveyors, with West Point educations in mathematics, geology, and geography, recognized what less-studied observers of Mexican agriculture could not: that the crude implements of Mexican farmers were uniquely well suited to dry-land crop production. Mexican irrigation replenished the soil by spreading river sediment onto the land. Their wooden plows, which turned up only three to four inches of soil, were perfect for the four- to five-inch topsoil that resulted from irrigation. Supposedly superior American iron plows, with their nine-inch blades, rendered the soil infertile by mixing in sand and rock with the rich loam at the surface.¹⁵² As evidence, Pope related a tale of two harvests from two adjoining fields of identical size. The first was “cultivated with great care by the government, after the American fashion,” which reaped next to nothing. The second, “the property of an old Mexican, who cultivated it himself, without assistance,” averaged thirty to forty bushels of corn per acre.¹⁵³

The inefficiency of Mexican wooden scratch plows required an immense amount of labor – so much that the reality of Mexican farming clearly contradicted Anglo claims of Mexican indolence. Pope strained to explain how New Mexican ranchers could bear the danger of driving their immense herds of cattle to market in California, where they realized large profits. “These expeditions are attended with great difficulty and some danger, and it is with much reluctance that the New Mexican overcomes his two besetting

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 44.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

evils, timidity and reluctance, even with the prospect of the largest gains, to undertake the journey to California.”¹⁵⁴

Although the Pacific Railroad Surveys relied mostly on first-hand observation, their writers also drew from the sparse literature available about the Borderlands. Whipple quoted from Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies* for context on gold mining, noting that “gold-dust has been abundantly found by the poorer classes of Mexicans” in the mountains near Santa Fe.¹⁵⁵

If Whipple’s report on the qualities of the Thirty-Third Parallel route revealed his own contempt for Mexicans, his day-by-day diary showed that he also detected Mexican antipathy toward Americans. Villagers in La Cuesta at first took them for a band of Comanches, but once they learned they were not, the Mexicans insisted that Whipple’s party accompany them to a ball in the village. “But at the same time,” Whipple wrote, “they were heard talking to each other of the ‘Gringos,’ and joking regarding the outrages that had lately been committed by their friends upon Americans in Santa Fe.” Whipple’s footnote defined “Gringo” as “a Mexican term of contempt.” When Whipple’s men had enough, they “chastised” the villagers, who “immediately apologized, and afterwards treated us with respect.” Whether the chastising came at the barrel of a gun was not explained.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵⁵ A. W. Whipple, “Reports: Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Made Under the Direction of the Secretary of War, in 1853-4, According to Acts of Congress of March 3, 1853, May 31, 1854, and August 5, 1854, Vol. III,” House Ex. Doc. No. 91, 33d Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, Printer, 1856). In this section, Whipple quoted Josiah Gregg’s observations on Mexican gold mining techniques and New Mexico Territory’s gold resources on pages 92, 94, 95.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 43.

Sectionalism, Manifest Destiny, and print culture and the Mexican image

If Northerners and Southerners failed to see eye to eye on whether slavery should be extended westward, they still agreed on the need to acquire Mexican lands and subdue their inhabitants. Desire for Mexican territory spawned hatred for the Mexicans who occupied it. By disparaging and racializing Mexicans, Americans created the justification they needed to take Mexican resources and freeze Mexicans out of economic and social power. Chapters Four through Seven will trace the development of the regionally distinct ways that Northern and Southern correspondents portrayed Mexicans on the frontier.

The influence of the Pacific Railroad Reports on policy decisions, commerce, and even journalistic coverage is difficult to overestimate. Their strength was that their recommendations were based on information gathered by the best scouts, naturalists, and engineers that the U.S. Army had to offer. That the U.S. government executed the surveys is significant in examining the diffusion of prejudice against Mexicans because the survey teams frequently commented on the social and moral character of the occupants of the Borderlands, but also because the reports represented some of the most widely disseminated information in the nation. Ten thousand copies were ordered for distribution across the U.S., along with 500 copies for the War Department and fifty more for each of the survey teams' commanding officers. Information from the railroad surveys came to be quoted and consulted by the leading correspondents who roamed the West on behalf of publications in the East.

Their status as official government documents lent the railroad surveys the credibility that Horace Greeley so cherished when the *New York Tribune* dispatched Bayard Taylor to cover the Gold Rush in 1849 and the birth of the state of California in

1850. The surveys provided a guide for other journalists, such as Albert Deane Richardson of the *Boston Journal*, who set out for the Borderlands in the late 1850s, and W. W. H. Davis, author of *El Gringo*, New Mexico Territory secretary, and *Doylestown Democrat* editor. The reports' nonpartisan nature made them less susceptible to questioning by correspondents who would cast a skeptical eye on information from partisans and civic boosters. Such correspondents knew all too well the risks of trusting people with conflicts of interest because many, like Richardson, had their own conflicts. Davis, Richard Henry Dana Jr., Richardson, and Taylor are the subjects of Chapters Four and Five.

While Northerners and Southerners alike had their federal reports to draw from, the Southern correspondents had the benefit of a set of regional journals that had proximity to the Southwest and contributions from Southern congressmen, diplomats, and Cabinet leaders with insider knowledge of the intricacies of federal policy and Democratic Party strategy. As the nation prepared to annex Texas and sought a way to acquire California and New Mexico, assertions of Mexican inferiority grew. In no Southern journal was this more apparent than in *DeBow's Review*, founded by James Dunwoody Brownson DeBow in New Orleans in 1845. DeBow, born in Charleston, S.C., studied law but dropped his aspirations to the bar in favor of writing, mostly for the *Southern Quarterly Review*, of which he served as associate editor from 1844 to 1845. Doubtful that the *Review* could survive, he resigned to found *DeBow's Review* in New Orleans.¹⁵⁷ *DeBow's Review* and George Wilkins Kendall's *New Orleans Picayune* came to maturity together as the South's engines of intellect, commerce, and politics. They,

¹⁵⁷ Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines*, 20-21.

along with trader and author Josiah Gregg, will be the subjects of Chapter 6, which covers the major Southern correspondents through 1853. Their writing and explorations laid the foundations for a subsequent generation of Southern correspondents, led by J. Ross Browne, a government agent and frequent contributor to *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, and G. Douglass Brewerton. Because of its longevity as an influential Southern journal, *DeBow's Review's* representation of Mexicans from 1854 to 1870 will join Browne and Brewerton as the subjects of Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY NORTHERN CORRESPONDENTS: RICHARD HENRY DANA JR. AND W. W. H. DAVIS

Even before Manifest Destiny became America's beacon into the future in the 1840s and 1850s, the Mexican Borderlands called out to men with adventure in their souls. The earliest New Englanders who chronicled Mexican life and culture answered the call of the West by taking to the seas for California and traveling overland to New Mexico. Southerners seeking adventure and profit roved to New Mexico from trailheads in Ohio, Missouri, and Texas. These men's ways of seeing the Mexican "other" were shaped by American ideologies, expansionism, and Protestant belief. They could not help but absorb these ideas, which were promulgated by print culture of the era. While Yankee superiority was familiar to them, the territories of the Borderlands were not. Two writers educated in New England played a critical role in introducing Anglos in the East to the rugged, exotic, and alien terrain that awaited them in the West. The first section of this chapter examines the writings of writings and mentality of Richard Henry Dana Jr., whose best-selling *Two Years Before the Mast* provided American readers the most widely disseminated glimpse of California Mexican culture from the 1840s onward. The second section examines the experiences and writings of newspaper editor, soldier, and

civil servant W. W. H. Davis, one of the earliest Yankees to write about New Mexicans based on lengthy immersion in their culture.

Dana and Davis characterized Mexicans in terms of the ways they were unlike Americans. The correspondents' characterizations reflected both their cultural identities as Northerners who believed in their own superiority as Americans and their own needs as participants in the games of politics and commerce. For Dana, projecting an image of indolence reflected an inverse image of the things a Puritan from New England would have valued. A Puritan was industrious, thrifty, savvy at the bargaining table, efficient in means of production, always saving for a rainy day, and sexually abstemious. His California Mexican opposite was lazy, profligate, ignorant of the value of the cowhides he traded, unable to turn them into shoes which could be sold at a profit, and morally degenerate. If the Boston trader took advantage of the Mexican vaquero, it was because the Bostonian was worthy and the vaquero was ignorant – and anyway, he was also a child of nature for whom the wilds of California would always provide. Dana's representations of California Mexicans are discussed in the first half of this chapter.

Davis played by a different set of rules than did Dana, who was equal parts young adventurer and aspiring maritime lawyer. Davis' game was political. A series of letters he wrote to his father, the politically connected General John Davis of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, showed that he wrote *El Gringo* as a portfolio of his understanding of New Mexican problems and, therefore, that he was in a position to solve them. For an ambitious Democrat aspiring to be appointed territorial governor of a mostly Mexican territory, it was perfectly valid to find fault with Mexicans' character. To do so showed allegiance to the United States in a time when Manifest Destiny was on the march to

plant the Stars and Stripes across the continent. But because he aspired to be appointed territorial governor of New Mexico, he could not afford to offend Mexicans with racist vitriol. At the same time, to portray New Mexico as a wasteland beyond redemption ran the risk of quashing American settlement there. If New Mexicans were backward, they needed only the tutoring hand of Americans to guide them, by Davis' reasoning.

Despite any nuance in Davis' representation of Mexicans, however, he was American first. The very title of his book, *El Gringo, or, New Mexico and Her People*, positioned him as opposite of the people he came to know while serving as U.S. attorney, territorial secretary, and acting governor. Whereas Dana detailed the character flaws of the Californios as a means of justifying their exploitation, Davis emphasized New Mexican technological backwardness. This was a problem that could be solved by American manufacturing and agricultural know-how. As a political animal, Davis also faced the problem of ingratiating himself with New Mexico's elite. To rule the poor and the Mexican, he had to ally with the rich and the Spanish. Thus, political power, race, and class intersected in Davis' characterizations of the New Mexican people, as will be detailed in the second half of this chapter. *Two Years Before the Mast* and *El Gringo* represent the most popular examples of writing in which early Northern observers cast their gaze a Mexican other whose identity is more a reflection of the Yankee mind than Mexican reality.

Richard Henry Dana Jr.: *Two Years Before the Mast*

Frail health and a thin emotional skin made Richard Henry Dana Jr. an unlikely adventurer. The son of an elite Cambridge mercantile family, Dana received a gentleman's education in his primary and secondary schooling: Latin, Greek, French,

history, theoretical mathematics, geography. His instructors were strict, administering floggings for minor offenses.¹ A biographer wrote that Dana showed a “stiff stoicism and priggish pride” in his family name.² He enrolled at Harvard College in 1831. Upholding the Dana reputation meant playing by the rules, though the boredom and pointlessness of daily recitations held him back from embarking on advanced study. In his sophomore year, he caught a break when he and his unruly classmates disrupted an assembly by hooting and hissing their support for a scholar who had been fired for refusing to report on students’ misbehavior. He was suspended for six months, which he spent away from his stultifying Harvard environment in private study with Andover Theological Seminary scholar Leonard Woods Jr., later the president of Bowdoin College. Woods led him through a rigorous program of study that included Greek, Latin, German, and advanced geometry. This left him better-equipped than ever, and if he hated returning to Harvard, at least his sharpened mind found drills to be child’s play once he resumed his studies there. After junior year, an attack of the measles damaged his eyesight. The resulting inability to read made a return to college impossible until he recovered.³ A physician advised that exercise and exposure to the outdoors would aid his recovery. But his uncle had squandered five generations worth of inherited family fortune by investing in the construction of docks and wharves on the Charles River in the hope that Cambridgeport would be the host of a bustling shipping industry. It never did. His father, Richard Henry Dana Sr., dithered in his law practice while writing romantic

¹ Robert L. Gale, *Richard Henry Dana* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), 23.

² Gale, *Dana*, 24.

³ Samuel Shapiro, *Richard Henry Dana Jr.* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1961), 8.

poetry and editing the *North American Review* after the family estate was sold to pay off debt, so he could not afford to send Richard Jr. on a grand tour to restore his health. At the same time, heading to the Adirondacks of New York state or the woods of Maine would have been beneath his family's dignity. His only option was to work for his passage.

So young Dana signed on to the crew of the *Pilgrim*, an eighty-seven-foot brig bound for Cape Horn and on to the California coast, where the ship would trade New England manufactured goods for beef hides to be brought back for the shoe industry. He recovered his eyesight before he had been a week at sea.⁴ The voyage resulted in his best selling *Two Years Before the Mast*, a title so popular it has never been out of print. An estimated 175,000 copies were sold from 1840 to 1849.⁵ Despite its popularity, publisher Harper & Brothers would pay Dana only the \$250 copyright fee they had agreed upon, refused to tell him how many copies had sold, and would not pay him anything beyond their contract.⁶ Editors requested articles from him but failed to offer any payment.⁷ Nonetheless, the book helped Dana build a maritime law practice, mostly suing captains on behalf of sailors.⁸ *Two Years* tells the tale of the author's twenty-five months as a sailor, including nearly sixteen months in California on land or shuttling up and down the coast.⁹ The book is best known now as a work of juvenile literature. But Dana wrote it

⁴ Shapiro, *Dana*, 9.

⁵ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowler, 1947), 303.

⁶ Shapiro, *Dana*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Gale, *Dana*, 31.

with an adult audience in mind. He intended to expose ship captains' cruel treatment of sailors and generate traffic for his maritime law practice. Rich description of the seafaring life consumes two-thirds of his narrative. The rest details his encounters with Mexican people and culture. What incensed Dana the most about the Californios was what he saw as laziness, lack of enterprise, and Catholic corruption. These dominant themes are consistent with his Calvinist upbringing.

Historians have debated the book's role in drawing American attention to the Mexican province then known as Alta California. Franklin Walker called it "the most influential report of California life to appear before the American conquest."¹⁰ Justin Smith declared that *Two Years Before the Mast* "fixed American attention on California."¹¹ Robert Glass Cleland asserted that Dana's work "made the name of California widely known" from its publication in 1840 through the 1850s.¹² Historian Tony Stanley Cook speculated that *Two Years* was more widely read by armchair explorers than enterprising Yankees looking for a land of opportunity.¹³ Regardless, *Two Years* provided the intellectual raw material with which the Anglo-Saxon mind could develop the idea of the Mexican. What Dana saw paralleled what W. W. H. Davis saw of Mexicans, first during the U.S.-Mexico War in 1846-48, later as U.S. attorney and secretary to New Mexico Territory in the 1850s, and ultimately in the pages of his popular book *El Gringo; Or, New Mexico and Her People*.

¹⁰ Franklin Walker, *A Literary History of Southern California: The American Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), p. 25.

¹¹ Justin Smith, *The War with Mexico*. 2 vols. 1919; reprint, Gloucester, Mass., 1963), 1:323.

¹² Robert Glass Cleland, *A History of California: The American Period* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 96-96.

¹³ Tony Stanley Cook, "Richard Henry Dana and American Immigration to California, 1840-1850," *Southern California Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1968): 97-118.

California: A living too easy for a Puritan's heart

What a paradise was California. At first glance, Dana seems to have marveled at the natural bounty of the land, with its hundreds of miles of coastline, several good harbors, thick northern forests, seas full of fish, “plains filled with thousands of cattle” (as if they were naturally occurring wild herds, like bison, rather than the result of breeding and maintenance by Mexican vaqueros), a mild climate, and an absence of disease. “In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be!” Dana declared.¹⁴ But his antipathy for California was plain to see. The only thing in California “from which I could ever extract anything like poetry” was a desolate island where the remains of a brig captain lay buried.¹⁵ And he cautioned that balmy weather and abundant food was seductive and could wither American initiative to the level of the Californios, warning, “Yet, how long would a people remain in such a country? The Americans ... are indeed more industrious than the Spaniards; if the ‘California fever’ (laziness) spares the first generation, it always attacks the second.”¹⁶ In writing this, Dana suggested that the comfortable environment would destroy any settlers’ industriousness. This implies that environmental factors and not anything inherent in race or nationality brought about Mexican character flaws.

On his first visit ashore, in San Diego, Dana and a party of sailors who were granted shore leave asked several Mexicans where they could get horses, and “all that we

¹⁴ Richard Henry Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast. A Personal narrative of Life at Sea*, ed. John Haskell Kemble, 2 vols. (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1964), 1:172.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:112.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:172.

could get out of the lazy fellows ... [was] ‘Quien sabe’ (‘who knows?’).”¹⁷ Dana did not state which language they used or the precise wording of the question, so it is possible the Mexicans’ response implied “who knows (what you are trying to say)?” The sailors had better luck when they found another English-speaker, the captain of another ship. The constant recurrence of the “Quien sabe?” response frustrated Dana, who called it “the answer to all questions.”¹⁸ He was even less charitable to the Indians, whose language he called “the most nasty and brutish language, without any exception, that could well be conceived of. It is a complete *slabber*. ... [that] cannot have been the language of Montezuma and the independent Mexicans.”¹⁹

Laziness coincided with thriftlessness, in Dana’s calculation. The profitability of trading along the California coast depended on it. The *Pilgrim* carried an astounding array of goods from New England: “We had spirits of all kinds, boots and hoes from Lynn, calicoes and cottons from Lowell, crapes, silks; also shawls, scarfs, necklaces, jewelry, and combs for the ladies; furniture; and in fact, everything that can be imagined, from Chinese fire-works to English cart-wheels – of which we had a dozen pairs with their iron rims on.” What made this profitable was the deficiency of the Californians, whom Dana called “an idle, thriftless people, and can make nothing for themselves.”²⁰ Dana could not comprehend why Californians would buy bad wine from Boston when they had plenty of grapes to make their own. Inability to bargain shocked him: Their hides, too, which they value at two dollars in money, they give for something which costs

¹⁷ Ibid., 1:119.

¹⁸ Ibid..

¹⁹ Ibid., 1:122.

²⁰ Ibid., 1:82.

seventy-five cents in Boston; and they buy shoes (as like as not, made of their own hides, which have been carried twice round Cape Horn) at three and four dollars.”²¹ Willingness to pay a 300 percent markup over Boston prices was not just baffling to Dana; it was unconscionable. Though he did not condemn the practice in *Two Years*, while moored off Monterey in 1835 he wrote his father that Anglo traders “go on making money by selling diluted rum and brandy to the Spaniards and Indians, at a Real (12½ cents) per glass; cheating the customs, — stealing horses and cattle, — breaking the Sabbath, — marrying and bringing up children to go and do likewise. As is generally the case, the Foreigners excel the natives in following up the vices of the country.”²²

Inefficiency among laborers went hand-in-hand with laziness and thriftlessness. Whether Dana was prone to exaggerating Yankee superiority or foreigners’ inferiority is unclear, but Spaniards and Mexicans were not the only ones to suffer in comparison. Comparing his Anglo-crewed ship with one that had a mixed crew of Hawaiians (whom Dana referred to as “Sandwich Islanders”), Spanish Indians, Americans, and Englishmen, he insisted that foreign vessels went to sea with three times as many crew as American and English ships of comparable sizes and that “no vessels in the world go to sea so poorly manned ... and yet none do so well.”²³

²¹ Ibid., 1:82.

²² Richard Henry Dana Jr. to Richard Henry Dana Sr., 31 December 1835. Dana Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²³ Dana, *Two Years*, 1:139.

Pride in labor and disgust at sloppy work constituted another area of difference. Dana groused about how long it took to process beef acquired in trade from California because “the Spaniards are very careless in skinning their cattle.”²⁴

Dana’s depiction of Californio men’s character was a moral inverse of the New England Puritanical ideal. According to him, “The men are thriftless, proud, and extravagant, and very much given to gaming; and the women have but little education, and a good deal of beauty, and their morality, of course, is none of the best; yet the instances of infidelity are much less frequent than one would at first suppose.”²⁵ Women had their own pride, as well: vanity, which manifested itself in a taste for fancy dress that Dana found excessive.²⁶ When the Pilgrim anchored at port for trade, Dana wrote, “They used to spend whole days on board our vessel, examining the fine clothes and ornaments, and frequently made purchases at a rate which would have made a sempstress [*sic*] or waiting-maid in Boston open her eyes.”²⁷ What Dana leaves out of his judgments of extravagance and thriftlessness is the fact that the Californios seem to have had plenty to spend, even if silver and beef substituted for dollars and cents. It was not possible for them to go into debt, as he observed, because “they have no credit system, no banks, and no way of investing money but in cattle.” Dana was judging their very different economic system in terms of Boston’s. California economics was driven by Indian slave labor, not factory wage labor. Although Dana made no comment on this in *Two Years*, belief in the wage system was part of his New Englander worldview.

²⁴ Ibid., 1:153.

²⁵ Ibid., 1:171.

²⁶ Ibid., 1:84.

²⁷ Ibid.

In terms of domestic relations, Dana portrayed men as hot-tempered and jealous and the women as loose. He wrote, “The women have but little virtue, but then the jealousy of their husbands is extreme, and their revenge deadly and almost certain A few inches of cold steel has been the punishment of many an unwary man, who has been guilty, perhaps, of nothing more than indiscretion of manner.”²⁸ Whether he learned about Mexican domestic relations the hard way is not revealed in *Two Years*, but a shipmate teased him after its publication because he omitted “the beautiful Indian Lasses, who so often frequented your humble abode in the hide house, and rambled through those splendid groves attached thereto ... or sitting at twilight on those majestic rocks, with a lovely Indian Girl resting on your knee.”²⁹ What happened in California stayed in California, but Dana did allude in his journal to the immorality he omitted from the book, writing:

As the occurrences of this voyage are given in full to my published book, I shall not go over them here. Yet well do I know that many things omitted there from necessity, though nothing is there given which I did not believe to be strictly true. From that book I studiously kept out most of my reflections, & much of the wickedness which I was placed in the midst of. These I have no inclinations to go over again. The dangers to a young man’s moral purity, & to his nicer sentiments, as well as to his manners, are more to be dreaded in such life, than gales, mast-heads & yard-arms.³⁰

Religious difference

What most jarred Dana about California Catholicism was that any American or Englishman who intended to live there was required to become Catholic. Disgustedly, he

²⁸ Ibid., 1:171.

²⁹ B. G. Stinson to Richard Henry Dana Jr., 16 March 1841, Dana Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

³⁰ Richard Henry Dana Jr., *The Journal of Richard Henry Dana Jr.* vol. 1, ed. Robert F. Lucid (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 28.

wrote, “A man must leave his conscience at Cape Horn.”³¹ This was particularly bothersome because of the depth of his exposure to Protestant thought and his careful consideration of his own faith. Though raised a Congregationalist, the official denomination of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts until 1833, the death of a friend forced him to reassess his faith. Because he felt Unitarian preachers went over his head and Orthodox preachers appealed to his mind but shocked his instinct, he decided to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church on his return to Boston.³² Beyond the establishment of religion, Dana found enough odd and unfamiliar about Californio faith that he provided detailed observations of Catholic rituals and folkways. Mexican funeral customs presented one such point of difference. Dana learned about them after committing the gaffe of assuming a fandango had been held in honor of “Easter holydays” when the real reason was the death of the host’s daughter.³³ The act of explaining the funeral suggests he believed holding a party in honor of the deceased would be foreign to his readers.

Dana voiced a degree of jealousy to see Catholic crewmen be granted shore leave during church holidays. “The Easter holydays are kept up on shore during three days; and being a Catholic vessel, the crew had the advantage of them. For two successive days, while perched up in the rigging, covered with tar and engaged in our disagreeable work, we saw these fellows going ashore in the morning, and coming off again at night, in high spirits.” He concluded, “There’s no danger of Catholicism’s spreading in New England; Yankees can’t afford the time to be Catholics. American ship-masters get nearly three

³¹ Dana, *Two Years*, 1:87.

³² Charles Francis Adams, *Richard Henry Dana, A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1891), p. 21.

³³ Dana, *Two Years*, 1: 134.

weeks more labor out of their crews in the course of a year, than the masters of vessels from Catholic countries. Yankees don't keep Christmas, and shipmasters at sea never know when Thanksgiving comes."³⁴

Catholicism, to Dana, was associated with not just idleness, but moral bankruptcy and intemperance. When the Spanish took control of California from the Indians, they put the Indians under control of the priesthood, who avoided labor by enslaving their charges.³⁵ While Spaniards rarely drank to excess, he claimed the only one he ever saw tipsy was "a priest whom I met riding up to the Mission late one afternoon, so tipsy that he could hardly sit upon his horse."³⁶

Government and justice

In Dana's eyes, Mexicans could not be counted on to self-govern and maintain order. Revolutions were common occurrences in California, he wrote, and its congressmen would stay in Mexico City permanently rather than risk being overthrown, with the result that the province was virtually lawless. He described the murder of an American who had naturalized and started a family in San Pedro. When Mexican law enforcement would do nothing about it, a band of forty trappers and hunters from Kentucky had set up business nearby and took it on themselves to arrest, try, and execute the man's killer, a Mexican. While this got the attention of the general at the region's presidio, he did nothing about the vigilantes, "for forty Kentucky hunters, with their rifles, were a match for a whole regiment of hungry, drawling, lazy half-breeds."³⁷ When

³⁴ Dana, *Two Years*, 1:137.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:171.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:170.

the perpetrator was an Indian, Dana claimed, Mexican justice was much swifter and the accused would be immediately detained and punished.³⁸

W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo*, and the perfectibility of Mexicans

Americans knew less about New Mexico Territory than any of the other lands of the West in the antebellum period. California, though farthest from the cities of the East, was connected by the ocean to the ports of New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Charleston.³⁹ But an ocean of prairie separated New Mexico from the East Coast, while hundreds of miles of deserts and mountains isolated it from the West Coast. Without railroads or telegraph tethering them to the rest of the country, journalists in New Mexico fed little news to Anglos in the East, and American settlers there received mail from the States just once a month. Agriculture continued to function at a subsistence level, while mining, manufacturing, and a market economy were just starting to develop in the early 1850s. This isolation barred all but the most adventurous, enterprising, and politically ambitious Americans from going there. W. W. H. Davis was all three.

William Watts Hart Davis was uniquely suited to write *El Gringo*, Americans' first extended glimpse into life in New Mexico Territory.⁴⁰ Experience in Mexico, knowledge of Spanish, prolonged contact with New Mexicans of all walks of life, official positions that gave him access to the old Spanish archives, editorship of a Santa Fe

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Rolander Guy McClellan, *The Golden State: A History of the Region West of the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia: William Flint & Company, 1876), 46.

⁴⁰ With *El Gringo*, Davis became the first American to write a comprehensive sketch of New Mexico life, according to Mabel Major, *Southwest Heritage — A Literary History with Bibliography* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1948), 70. According to Major, *El Gringo* and a later Davis work, *The Spanish Conquest of New Mexico* (1869) “made accessible in a clear, pleasant style, the materials of the early Spanish narratives.”

newspaper, and a curious mind prepared him to observe and write the work, whose subtitle *Or, New Mexico and Her People*, alluded to the dual purpose of introducing people to the alien landscape and the Mexicans who lived there.

Davis was hardly exaggerating when he wrote, “There is no country protected by our flag and subject to our laws so little known to the people of the United States as the territory of New Mexico.”⁴¹ Its high deserts running up against mountains, its scrubby drought-resistant vegetation, its thin air: All were alien to a new arrival from the East. Stranger to Anglo-American newcomers were the people. Now, Davis was no stranger to Mexican culture when he journeyed to Santa Fe in 1853. He fought with the First Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry during the U.S.-Mexico War from 1847 to 1848. His service as aide-de-camp to General Caleb Cushing put him in a sound position from which to study Mexican ways while the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was negotiated in the spring of 1848. During that time, he drilled himself in written Spanish and practiced speaking the language with Mexican civilians. Spanish fluency and familiarity with Mexican culture, and perhaps a little string-pulling by his father, General John Davis, set him up for a presidential appointment as U.S. attorney for the New Mexico Territory.

Davis’ father and mother, Amy Hart, married March 13, 1813.⁴² John Davis had little money, but the Harts had farmland and respect in the community. After the wedding the couple set up housekeeping on Hart family land, where John farmed and harvested timber. He set agriculture aside to volunteer with the militia and defend Philadelphia in

⁴¹ W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo: Or, New Mexico and Her People* (Boston: Harper Bros., 1856), 57.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 44.

August 1814 after the British burned the U.S. Capitol.⁴³ That was the start of military career that saw him ascend to the rank of general. He was promoted to captain on the strength of heroism during the War of 1812 and earned higher ranks through elections and gubernatorial appointments. John Davis read books and periodicals voraciously. He took a particular interest in publications about history and American politics, which he made his career.⁴⁴

William Watts Hart Davis was born July 27, 1820, and lived to be 90 years old, dying December 26, 1910.⁴⁵ He inherited his father's appetite for reading and ambition in politics. Davis took 18 months to complete a three-year course of study, graduating in 1842 from Norwich University, a military academy in Vermont. He became a military instructor at a military school in Portsmouth, Virginia. From there he moved on to law school at Harvard University, but his studies were interrupted when the U.S.-Mexico War broke out. Davis volunteered to join the Doylestown Guards, his hometown unit, but Pennsylvania had filled its quota. So he joined the First Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry as a private.⁴⁶ Volunteer units had the right to elect their officers, and the First Massachusetts picked Davis to be their lieutenant in December 1846.⁴⁷

⁴³ W. W. H. Davis, *Life of John Davis* (Doylestown, PA: Doylestown Democrat Job Office, 1876), 57.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁵ Bucks County Historical Society, *A Collection of Papers Read before the Bucks County Historical Society, Vol. 7* (Doylestown, PA: Bucks County Historical Society, 1937), 343; *Washington Post*, 27 December 1910, 5.

⁴⁶ William A. Christman, "The Success and Failures of Wm. W. H. Davis," master's thesis (West Chester University, 1967), 5.

⁴⁷ David Marple to W. W. H. Davis, Jan. 11, 1847, W. W. H. Davis Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

The details of Davis' time as editor of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* are sketchy. His editorial duties are not mentioned in any of his available correspondence or journals, although he alluded to a controversy concerning territorial government payments to the *Gazette* for printing legal notices. Few copies of the *Gazette* remain. The December 24, 1853, edition is one of them, and it contains an editorial introducing Davis as editor and Davis' prospectus for the paper. True to his party, Davis declared the paper's editorial stands would support the Democrats, though he emphasized his first loyalty was to "the Democracy of the Constitution and the Union, broad and liberal in its sentiments," while striving "to attract public attention to New Mexico "and to point out to her people, their rights and duties, under a Republican form of government." And though it would not align with any religious denomination or faith, Davis emphasized the *Gazette* would uphold "the great principles of religion and morality."⁴⁸

Davis learned Spanish during his service in the U.S.-Mexico War; workbooks in a collection of his papers demonstrate the effort he put into his study.⁴⁹ His position as regimental adjutant and aide-de-camp to the commander of the First Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry put him in a position to absorb Mexican customs as America's armies awaited negotiation of the treaty that ended the war.⁵⁰ His observations and opinions on life in New Mexico reflected the culture of Yankee superiority in which he was steeped — indeed, he wrote in his unpublished war journal, "Our country is so much superior in public and private virtue, in morality and religion, in industry and patriotism, that I am

⁴⁸ *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, 24 December 1853.

⁴⁹ Davis' Spanish-language primer and workbooks are part of the W. W. H. Davis Papers at Yale.

⁵⁰ Davis mused on day-to-day life in Mexico City during peace negotiations in 1847 and 1848 in his unpublished memoir about the war and letters to his family, all available in the W. W. H. Davis Papers in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

induced to believe we have been blessed beyond any other people.”⁵¹ But by the time he headed home to Pennsylvania in 1856, he acquired a more nuanced view of the culture in New Mexico.

Davis had multiple objectives when he wrote *El Gringo*. Of course, he intended to convert his experiences in the West into a profitable book. His deal with Harper & Brothers gave him royalties of ten percent beyond the first thousand copies sold.⁵² But letters to his family show he had more than money on his mind. Davis intended his treatise on New Mexicans to serve as a demonstration of his frontier expertise, understanding of the people’s deficiencies, and the rightness of his thinking about how to guide the territory’s development. He was frantic that his political allies put it in the hands of President James Buchanan in the hope that it showed he was the right man to be appointed governor of the territory. So although the book has been categorized as travel literature, *El Gringo* was something more.⁵³ It was a political prospectus.

It’s not that Davis loved New Mexico or its people. The territory meant opportunity for material wealth and political climbing. He reserved judgment about New Mexico when he took up residence in Santa Fe in 1853, and he missed family and friends more than he disliked his new home. “I am not disappointed in the appearance of things

⁵¹ W. W. H. Davis, *The Journal of a Volunteer Officer in the Mexican War, by W. W. H. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-Camp of Brigadier General Cushing, 1846-48*, unpublished memoir (Doylestown, PA: 1849), 609. W. W. H. Davis Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

⁵² Contract between W. W. H. Davis and Harper & Brothers for the writing and publication of *El Gringo; or, New Mexico and Her People*, 5 August 1856. Davis Papers, Yale.

⁵³ See, e.g., Raymund A. Paredes, “The Mexican Image in American Travel Literature, 1831-1869,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 52, no. 1 (1977): 5-13; Deena J. Gonzáles, *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press), 60; Frederick Samuel Dellenbaugh, *Books by American Travellers and Explorers from 1846 to 1900* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1920), 132.

here, and think I can spend three or four years in Santa Fe quite pleasantly,” he wrote his sister Sarah. “... I feel I am in horrible exile, but mean to content myself until my time is up.” The differences between Americans and Mexicans fascinated Davis, whose private letters, monthly dispatches to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, and his book minutely dissected the details of architecture, farming, worship, cuisine, clothing, character, and custom that he found.

But the territory’s novelty wore off, and Davis came to despise the place. Isolation, austerity, and Davis’ perception of Mexican backwardness, superstition, and moral degeneracy made him pine for Pennsylvania. In his book and newspaper dispatches, he portrayed the territory as a land of opportunity for enterprising American settlers and a chance to spread American democracy. But after he had been there over a year, Davis revealed in private that he thought New Mexico was a desolate backwater whose main virtues were that he might extract mineral wealth or political capital from it. “To tell you the truth, Lizzie, I am awful tired of living in this horrible country,” he confided in a letter to his sister in 1855. “... There is but one thing, Lizzie, reconciles me to remaining here a year or two longer, and that is the hope of amassing a little more of the bare yellow metal, we are all so anxious to obtain.”⁵⁴

Military service in the U.S.-Mexico War allowed young Davis to prove himself as a leader of men, but he and his comrades were well aware that they could leverage service into monetary gain. Heroism could be turned to a political patronage appointment. That appointment could be leveraged into a higher appointed office, even governor if he played his cards right (and it turned out that he did not). And governorship could lead to

⁵⁴ W. W. H. Davis to Elizabeth Davis, 26 March 1855. Davis Papers, Yale.

elected office. When it became clear that President Buchanan would appoint a rival, Davis decided to return home to Pennsylvania rather than continue as territorial secretary, toiling in the shadow of the new governor, attempting to school New Mexican legislators in the art of lawmaking, and serving as acting governor in his rival's absence with no increase in pay or prestige.

1847: An ambitious young man sails off to war

Davis' odyssey into the West began while he studied law at Harvard, but before he studied law he was a military man, and he knew well from his father's experience in the War of 1812 that heroism in war could be converted into political advantage. His comrades, too, recognized this. A friend wrote to Davis after he embarked: "I hope you may find it of advantage to you to have gone. Men who go there might certainly expect to have an ample return for the sacrifice they make."⁵⁵ Always, Davis kept his sights set on the pecuniary and political horizon. When Davis' mother died of dysentery and complications of palsy that October, he refused to allow family ties to interfere with his ambition. In response to his father's request that he come home, Davis wrote: "My dear Father I could not possibly leave the Army and return home without giving good cause to be censured. ... I am now living for the future, and as I hold my spotless reputation dearer than life, I wish to give those who would hereafter injure me, no chance to do harm. What a grand opportunity it would be for political capital."⁵⁶

Beyond political gain, he came to covet the land just as did the expansionists who pressed for acquisition of Mexican territories. "The country along the Rio Grande for

⁵⁵ Edward J. Fox to W. W. H. Davis, 1 January 1847, Davis Papers, Yale.

⁵⁶ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis, 4 October 1847. Davis Papers, Yale.

some distance appears to be entirely of an alluvial formation, and in the hands of enterprising Yankees would soon become a fertile country,” he wrote his sister Sally while on the March along the Rio Grande in April 1847.⁵⁷ Davis shared his observations with the *Doylestown Democrat* as well, describing the town of Monterey as “a perfect little paradise before the attack.”⁵⁸

Life in the Yankee camps steeped Davis in his comrades’ prejudices, which he conveyed to his family in Doylestown. “Here is a curious circumstance connected with the dead Mexicans: the wolves and buzzards will not eat them,” he wrote his mother in July 1847. “’Tis said the reason is, because they eat so much red pepper.”⁵⁹

Even before the end of the war, Davis positioned himself to take advantage of the war spoils his nation had wrested from Mexico. In May 1848, he wrote a letter on behalf of his regiment asking that he and his comrades be transported not to Boston, but to New Orleans, a point of debarkation from which they could visit relations in the South and seek their fortunes in the territories newly acquired from Mexico.⁶⁰ Davis was appointed U.S. attorney for New Mexico Territory in 1853. The post put to use his Harvard law education, fluency in Spanish, and familiarity with Mexican culture. It also put him in the saddle for months. Davis covered thousands of miles on horseback, riding all over a territory that covered present-day New Mexico, Arizona, and part of Colorado in his two years as U.S. attorney.

⁵⁷ W. W. H. Davis to Sally Davis, 1 April 1847, Davis Papers, Yale.

⁵⁸ W. W. H. Davis, “Letter from the Army,” *Doylestown Democrat*, 20 June 1847.

⁵⁹ W. W. H. Davis to Amy Hart Davis, 28 July 1847. Davis Papers, Yale.

⁶⁰ W. W. H. Davis to William L. Marcy, 13 May 1848. Davis Papers, Yale.

Hundreds of Davis' letters to friends, family, and business associates remain, but none tells when he first planned to write a book about New Mexico. Government service provided Davis his first look at the territory, but just a year into his time there New Mexico's untapped mineral wealth had him pondering business partnerships in mining. When those dreams failed to materialize, and when New Mexico's rustic living began to wear on him, government patronage seemed a richer lode to excavate. In seven letters to his father, he pleaded for assistance in securing a presidential appointment as territorial governor of New Mexico.⁶¹

The tone of Davis' biographical writing did not quite jibe with his actions. In a biography about his father, Davis wrote that "a public office was considered a public trust and not a perquisite," that the 1820s through 1860 were "the day of political leaders, not bosses, and what is now known as machine politics had not been fashioned."⁶² His disapproval of party machinery belied the political favor-seeking in which he enlisted his father to engage on his behalf. He nagged John Davis to make a trip to Washington and put a copy of the book in the hands of President James Buchanan in the hope that the book would prove he had the know-how, vision, and leadership ability to govern.⁶³ "Did Mr. Buchanan see my book?" he asked. "That will show him that I am pretty well acquainted with the country and people of New Mexico. Don't let me be defeated if you can help. If my enemies know that I am an applicant they will bring all their batteries to

⁶¹ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis,

⁶² W. W. H. Davis, *Life of John Davis* (Doylestown, PA: Doylestown Democrat Job Office, 1876), 145.

⁶³ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis, 27 February 1857; 28 February 1857; 26 March 1857; 28 March 1857; 29 April 1857.

bear upon me.”⁶⁴ Hedging his bets, he pressed his father for help in winning a lucrative customs house post, consulship, or other federal duty that paid “not less than \$2,000 a year” and included a wish list of twenty-one positions, from custom house deputy to U.S. consul in Quebec. “But any of them are far preferable to New Mexico, and much easier of access. My mind is more fully made up than ever to leave this country if I am not offered Governor,” he emphasized.⁶⁵ The best he could muster was a U.S. Treasury Department appointment as disbursing agent for the erection of public buildings in New Mexico.⁶⁶ Disgusted, Davis returned to Pennsylvania, where he bought the *Doylestown Democrat* and took up the life of a newspaper editor. When the Civil War erupted, he raised a volunteer infantry regiment, becoming commander of the Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Infantry in April 1861. He distinguished himself throughout the war. He was awarded the rank of brevet brigadier general for meritorious service with the 104th Pennsylvania Infantry during the siege of Charleston in 1865.⁶⁷

No record exists of the profits he realized from *El Gringo*, but the book was widely circulated in the East. To write it, he mined his experience, two trail journals he kept in pencil throughout his journeys, rough drafts of correspondence he sent back home to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, and an unpublished memoir of his wartime service that he penned on his return to the States in 1848. These personal writings constituted the bulk of his book *El Gringo; Or, New Mexico and Her People*. For the book, he also drew on

⁶⁴ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis, 28 March 1857.

⁶⁵ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis, 27 May 1857.

⁶⁶ W. W. H. Davis to John Davis, 29 May 1857.

⁶⁷ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 361.

background information from the limited number of first-person writings on Mexico and the American Southwest for background information. These sources included Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies* (1844), George Wilkins Kendall's *Narrative of the Texan-Santa Fé Expedition* (1850), Alexander von Humboldt's *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* (1811), Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera's *Narrative of the Expedition to Cibola Undertaken in 1540* (1596 original version in Spanish, with English translation available in 1851), J. D. B. DeBow's *The Industrial Resources, Etc., of the Southern and Western States* (1853).

Beyond this use of published matter, Davis claimed to be the first American writer to get his hands on Spanish-language government documents in New Mexico's archives. His position as U.S. attorney for New Mexico Territory and subsequent service as territorial secretary put him in a position not only to gain access to them, but also time to sift through them to provide background information about New Mexico from the arrival of the conquistadores to the American conquest. *El Gringo* is equal parts natural history, travelogue, and cultural critique of Hispanic life in New Mexico Territory. The bulk of the book consists of reprints of ten dispatches he wrote to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, supplemented by lengthy excerpts from his unpublished war memoir and the diaries he kept during his rounds on the court circuit. At times sympathetic, it is clear that Davis saw himself and Americans as the bearers of light in a backward land. Frequent references to the passage of Mexican customs as "superior" American ways took root make it clear that while sympathetic to Mexicans, they must change and embrace American ways. In contrast to the modernity that Anglos represented, Davis made Mexicans seem more exotic by describing the poor not as farmers and laborers, but

as “the peasantry,” a term that cast them as part of a feudal and therefore comparatively primitive state.⁶⁸

Again and again, Davis cited examples of Mexican agriculture and technology that were inferior to that of the United States. Mexicans had “made no effort to improve” their methods and machinery for plowing, animal husbandry, timber harvesting, carpentry, transportation, and manufacturing since the time of the Spanish conquest. He claimed beans were the only vegetables cultivated in New Mexico before the U.S. acquired the territory, a falsity that likely reflected his inability to obtain produce at market.⁶⁹ In a letter to his sister Anna Erwin, he complained, “The living is slim as well can be, and we have meat, bread, and hard Mexican beans, neither vegetables or [*sic*] butter.”⁷⁰ But Mexicans and Indians were no strangers to agriculture. Corn, squash, and tobacco were staple crops for Pueblo dwellers of the Upper Rio Grande Valley before the arrival of the Spaniards, who introduced peaches, apples, plums, grapes, wheat, rye, barley, and “all kinds of vegetables.”⁷¹ New Mexicans had expertise as growers, but lack of access to export markets meant they lacked incentive to expand agriculture beyond subsistence and lacked training in the most advanced techniques of farming and animal husbandry. Davis pointed at Mexicans’ rustic farm implements as signs of Mexican

⁶⁸ Davis, *El Gringo*, 179.

⁶⁹ Davis, *El Gringo*, 173.

⁷⁰ W. W. H. Davis to Anna Erwin, 25 June 1857. Davis Papers, Yale.

⁷¹ Cultivation in New Mexico’s pueblos is detailed in William E. Doolittle, “Agriculture in North America on the Eve of Contact: A Reassessment,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (September 1992): 386-401. The agricultural contributions of the Spaniards are described in detail in “Report of Governor Fernando de Chacón, Santa Fe, 28 August 1803, doc. No. 2, 1670a, Spanish Archives of New Mexico, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, cited by Marc Simmons, “Report of Governor Chacon, 1803” in Marc Simmons (ed.), *Coronado’s Land: Essays on Daily Life in Colonial New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 162-171.

inferiority and Anglo superiority. Grain farmers continued using wooden or iron plows that created shallow furrows until the end of Mexican rule in 1846, when Americans introduced the first two-handled steel plows capable of turning the soil.⁷² Vineyards were a rare bright spot in the territory's agricultural scene, as Davis saw it. He cited J. D. B. DeBow, who proclaimed, "The most important production of the valley is grapes, from which are annually manufactured not less than *two hundred thousand gallons of perhaps the richest and best wine in the world.*"⁷³ Davis, and DeBow, neglected to mention that the grapes were sown and tended by Spaniards and Mexicans long before the arrival of Anglo-Americans. Spanish and Mexican viticulture was thus relegated to the status of happy accident or natural occurrence.

Mexican manners, customs, and material culture

As a territorial official, Davis was received in New Mexican villages as a man of high social standing when he visited them on business in the courts. Invitations to dinners, receptions, and fandangos gave him ample opportunity to observe and differentiate Mexican manners from his own. Manners, clothing, and customs were the key areas he discussed concerning social differences between Mexicans and Americans. Implicit in his narrative was the notion that inferiority and ill-breeding were to be expected among Mexicans. When a Mexican demonstrated refinement, he wrote it off to his Spanish lineage. His description of a stay with an American settler and his Mexican wife, who lived three miles north of El Paso, exemplifies this. "Judge Hart is a native of Kentucky, and settled at this point at the close of the war, in which he served as an

⁷² Robert MacCameron, "Environmental Change in Colonial New Mexico," *Environmental History Review* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 26.

⁷³ Davis, *El Gringo*, 379.

officer. Mrs. Hart is a Mexican by birth, a Chihuahuanian [*sic*], but of fine Spanish blood, and is a lady of refinement and intelligence.”⁷⁴

Davis found curious the Mexicans’ greetings and goodbyes. While he applauded the near-universal courtesy of the people, he found it laughable that beggars in the street also engaged in embracing one another upon greeting and parting.⁷⁵ He observed that nearly everybody smoked tobacco, a practice he called “bad enough in men but intolerable in women.”⁷⁶ At times it was unclear whether Davis drew from observation or from his copious reading about Mexican culture, but when he cited others’ writings he selected authors with experience south of the border. In describing the way one took “leave of a Spanish grandee,” he cited the former U.S. minister to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, who emphasized that one must bow as he left a room, reached the head of the stairs, and after descending the first flight.⁷⁷

That New Mexico’s “better classes” were learning to forsake traditional Mexican attire, pleased Davis, although ladies still preferred to wear long shawls called rebozos over their heads rather than bonnets and usually went barefoot.⁷⁸ Davis admired the dress of the caballero, whose outfits of jackets and pantaloons with silver adornments he thought “striking and handsome.”⁷⁹ But he proclaimed almost any adoption of American attire an improvement over traditional serapes.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 376.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 181.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 182.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 183.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 189.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 191.

Difference was to be found among working people as well as the grandees. In one of his monthly letters to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, he likened Mexican villagers to livestock in a barnyard: “The most respectable denizen of the village was a clean white pig chained in the cavity of a large rock, which made as comfortable a dwelling as any occupied by his biped brothers.”⁸⁰ Without having seen the pastime himself, Davis cited Josiah Gregg’s description of an equestrian sport called *corer el gallo*, or “chicken race,” in which vaqueros rode at high speed, leaning low alongside their mounts while trying to pluck a rooster buried neck-deep in the sand. As if to emphasize Anglo progress in the land, he claimed that this and other “various primitive sports” were “gradually going out of use.”⁸¹ That might have been overstating Yankees’ influence, however. Davis also said that the sport was not just for “the rancheros and peasantry” and that “the young bloods of the capital also indulge in it.” In addition, he wrote that on St. John’s Day, when the game was customarily played, “the Plaza is thronged with caballeros riding to and fro, and testing the stretching qualities of the chickens’ necks.”⁸²

In nearly all of his descriptions of Mexican life, Davis assumed an othering gaze. This applied to material goods as well as customs. Davis did not just describe household furnishings — he continually compared Mexican goods with American ones, nearly always concluding that the Mexican article was more rustic and therefore inferior to American products. The Mexicans used folded-over mattresses rather than sofas in sitting areas, low wooden frames were used instead of bedsteads and trunks, and “antiquated

⁸⁰ W. W. H. Davis letter, *Bucks County (PA) Intelligencer*, Jan. 22, 1856. Reprinted in Hepler, *William Watts Hart Davis in New Mexico*, 121.

⁸¹ Davis, *El Gringo*, 188.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 189.

chests” took the place of bureaus.⁸³ As he became familiar with Mexican ways, Davis came to admire villagers’ ability to make do with what they had. “In building they have no idea of architectural taste, but they construct their houses in the same style as their ancestors – rather comfortable, but very homely affairs.”⁸⁴ Ignoring Mexicans’ ingenious adaptation to the harshness and scarcity of their environment, Davis wrote off the simple as primitive. In describing the typical building he introduced his readers to adobe construction, explaining that most homes and offices were made of straw-and-mud bricks. Davis recognized this would seem alien to his readers and explained that adobe was well adapted to the arid climate.⁸⁵ But he claimed adobe bricks took neither skill nor practice to make – just the right materials and a frame in which to set them up.⁸⁶ All aspects of Mexican material culture seemed inadequate to Davis, who failed to account for the scarcity of metal hardware, tools, and access to manufactured goods or factories that resulted from New Mexico’s isolation from the States.

Church and state

A thousand-mile-plus ride on horseback across the northern third of New Mexico immersed Davis in day-to-day life among the territory’s Mexican villagers as he made his appointed rounds as U.S. attorney.⁸⁷ His first journey lasted from March through May 1854 and carried him across the northern third of the territory, which then included the

⁸³ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 211.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 166.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 176.

⁸⁷ Davis noted the duration of his journey in a letter to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, 22 January 1856, reprinted in Hepler, *Davis in New Mexico*, 121.

southern hundred miles of Colorado and Utah and all of Arizona.⁸⁸ Trying cases on behalf of the territory exposed him to folk beliefs that he found shockingly behind the times. In Taos, a man was accused of sorcery in connection with the deaths of several children and would have been burned alive had a priest not intervened. He asked his *Bucks County Intelligencer* readers, “Who would have imagined that the scenes of Salem would have been re-enacted in this distant region of the world, and that too, in the middle of the nineteenth century, when intelligence and civilization are so widely diffused throughout the world? It seems hardly possible, that any people, laying claim to being civilized, should entertain such crude notions of the accountability of man.”⁸⁹

What ignorance he saw in the courtroom, he also saw at the Capitol. Davis recounted two stories about Mexicans in the territorial House of Representatives that seem to have been calculated to make Mexicans appear to be dullards. Upon hearing an American legislator respond “blank” on a voice vote he did not care about, the Mexican who voted next supposedly said, “Yo voto para Señor Blank tambien” (I also vote for Mr. Blank).⁹⁰ In another incident, which also seems apocryphal, Davis wrote about a Mexican who kept demanding “what do you want with me” when his name was called for a vote.⁹¹ It is hard to tell which deficiency Davis intended to illustrate with this anecdote: difficulty understanding English or difficulty understanding American lawmaking. A native speaker of Spanish would not normally have included the pronoun “yo” because the word is implied in the form of the verb “voto,” the first-person singular

⁸⁸ Davis, *Bucks County Intelligencer* (March 12, 1854).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Davis, *El Gringo*, 171.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

for “to vote.” Therefore, it is plausible that Davis’ Spanish was faulty or he that he uncritically passed along a story concocted by an American who wanted to make New Mexicans seem to be dullards. In his *El Gringo* narrative, Davis did not state the year that this took place. It is likely that it occurred later in his tenure, perhaps 1856, when more Anglo lawmakers attained office than when he first arrived in 1853. At the end of his first legislative session in Santa Fe, in February 1854, Davis wrote to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, “Nearly all the members of both houses were Mexican, and the business was transacted in Spanish. When we consider that these people have had no previous experience in legislation, and are but learners themselves, the order and regularity with which they transact the business of law making [*sic*] does them much credit.”⁹²

Unwillingness or inability to adopt English might be the reason the Mexican lawmakers drew Davis’ ire by the time he became territorial secretary. Davis estimated that half the Mexican population of New Mexico could not read. That only one in every 125 inhabitants attended school showed “a fearful amount of ignorance among the people, and is enough to make us question the propriety of intrusting them with the power to make their own laws.” He blamed this low rate of education on Spanish and Mexican policies that discouraged education.

Despite the dozens of pages Davis devoted to describing Mexicans’ moral, religious, and governmental shortcomings, he somewhat tempered the picture he painted of Mexican life. Some women were “as virtuous as can be found in any section of our extended and happy land,” and some men were “high-minded and honorable.”⁹³ As for

⁹² W. W. H. Davis, letter to the *Bucks County Intelligencer*, Feb. 24, 1854.

⁹³ Davis, *El Gringo*, 231.

the immoral ones, “the vices that prevail are constitutional and national – more the result of habit, example, and education – or, rather the want of it – than from natural depravity.”⁹⁴ Their bad habits were inherited from the Spanish. “Charity should induce us to make a reasonable allowance for their infirmities. They should be compassionated rather than shunned because of their degraded condition, and an efficient effort should be made to raise them to the standard of enlightenment that is found in other sections of our land; and they should be none the less kindly welcomed to our great political brotherhood because they do not bring with them all the virtues and wisdom possessed by our own people, who have been reared under a purer code of morals and a wiser system of laws. We claim that our free institutions make men better, wiser, and happier; then let us endeavor, through their agency, to work out the regeneration of the people of New Mexico, morally, socially, and religiously, and the triumph will be a greater one than any we can achieve upon the field or in the cabinet.”⁹⁵

While Davis decried Mexican clergymen’s corrupting influence on public life, he greeted corruption with a wink and a nod when he witnessed it among the Americans. Noting that the duty on Mexican silver entering the United States was eight percent, he claimed that merchants managed to pay half that “by making a *private arrangement* [italics in original] with the officer, who is always ready to ‘turn an honest penny.’ Each man has his price, and if one sum will not buy him another will.”⁹⁶ Davis did not identify the customs officer by name, but President Pierce did not appoint a Mexican to this lucrative government job. The collector of customs in El Paso at the time of Davis’ visit

⁹⁴ Ibid., 231.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 231.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 383.

was an Anglo named Caleb Sherman.⁹⁷ In addition to the sum he received for looking the other way, Sherman drew an annual federal salary of \$2,000.⁹⁸

Moral degeneracy and the Catholic clergy

Gambling was a sign of the corruption and backwardness that Davis saw in every aspect of Mexican culture. Davis, like other American observers in New Mexico, found this habit appalling. That the most respectable citizens of the territory – even priests – indulged in it underscored the moral degeneracy that permeated the culture. “So thoroughly is this vice ingrafted into the population, that I have frequently seen children of ten years of age playing cards for pennies with as much apparent interest as professional gamblers,” Davis wrote.⁹⁹ People of all walks of life played monte and gambled on bullfighting and cockfighting.¹⁰⁰ Worse yet, the laws of the land sanctioned a variety of games of chance. He quoted a passage from Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*, which commented that gambling “is impregnated with the constitution – in man, woman and child.”¹⁰¹

Davis’ war journal revealed few preconceptions about Mexican Catholicism when he witnessed his first Mass in Matamoros in 1847. He was Baptist his whole life.¹⁰² But

⁹⁷ W. H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 2004), 138.

⁹⁸ Leon C. Metz, *Pat Garrett: The Story of a Western Lawman* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 242.

⁹⁹ Davis, *El Gringo*, 184.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁰¹ Davis, *El Gringo*, 187. The passage Davis quoted is found in Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 239. Gregg attributed the phrase to a “Madame Calderon,” a reference to Frances Calderón de la Barca.

¹⁰² Edward C. Starr (ed.), *A Baptist Bibliography: Being a Register of Printed Material by and about Baptists; Including Works Written Against the Baptists, Vol. 6, Section D* (Rochester, NY: American Baptist Historical Society, 1959), 59.

denominational difference does not seem to have predisposed him to think poorly of the Catholic Church; instead, his 1849 war memoir revealed a fascination with it. The vestments of the priests, a procession of candle-bearers, and an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe borne aloft on a pole provided quite a spectacle for him. Still, he did not know what to make of it all. “I did not fully understand the meaning of all the performances, but to them it seemed of much importance, and they appeared to enjoy themselves very much.”¹⁰³ He confessed respect for the Irish priest who presided over Easter Mass that year and defended the U.S. use of Catholic ministers in the field. “At the time of their appointment, much was said in opposition to it in the United States, and religious bigots even found fault with the men themselves because of the creed they professed,” Davis wrote in his journal. But he admired their care and kindness toward the sick and the poor.¹⁰⁴ Compared to Protestants, Davis declared that Mexicans were “certainly the most republican worshipers in the world” because no pews were reserved for the wealthy. “All kneel upon the same cold earth, or on the same board floor. This was the most beautiful exemplification I ever saw of the religion of Christ, which teaches that his followers shall meet together as one flock, and as one people ... Might not we Protestants, who pride ourselves on a strict observance of the doctrines of the Saviour, learn a lesson here?”¹⁰⁵

Although he admired Catholics’ faith and works, Davis condemned the church, blaming Mexicans’ character faults on their Catholic leaders, “who have never instructed them in that beautiful doctrine which teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Their want of tolerance and their cruelty may also be excused to a degree, because of their

¹⁰³ Davis, *Journal*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

impulsive nature, and the easy sway their superiors have always exercised over them, and to whom they have ever yielded the most implicit obedience.”¹⁰⁶ Much as he criticized Mexicans as a people, Davis rebutted claims that their soldiers were cowards. Peasant soldiers behaved gallantly in the U.S.-Mexico War, and if they ever appeared cowardly Davis blamed it on lack of confidence in their leaders and not fear of the enemy. It is logical that Davis, a veteran of the war, argued that his enemy was gallant because victory over a worthy adversary rather than a cowardly one would make American veterans seem all the more gallant. Rotten Mexican government and a corrupt church meant “their manhood has been almost crushed out of them; and when led to the field, they had no interest in the contest, and nothing to fight for. They had been so long taught to believe themselves an inferior race, and destitute of manly attributes, that they came to believe this their condition, and ceased to have confidence in themselves.” How could they be redeemed? American officers to lead them, of course. With Yankee leadership, Mexicans would make excellent troops, Davis claimed.¹⁰⁷ His argument makes sense, given that Americans had embraced a mission to improve the other nations and races of the world. That is not to say that he believed Americans were faultless. Mexicans possessed virtues that the Yankees lacked: While Mexicans were peaceful, quiet, temperate, polite, kind, and orderly, Americans possessed a “turbulent and uneasy spirit.”¹⁰⁸ Still, instability and vengefulness when wronged meant Mexicans must be treated carefully, Davis wrote. “They bear a deadly hatred toward their enemy, and will manifest it whenever the opportunity offers,” Davis warned. “If they obtain an advantage

¹⁰⁶ Davis, *El Gringo*, 217.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

over an enemy, they will oppress him beyond measure, and deem it a virtue. ... They possess great talent for intrigue and chicanery, but lack stability and firmness of purpose.” But he advised any future American overseer, and he hoped that he might be the territory’s next governor, “With all their faults, they are easily governed if they are treated with kindness and justice.”¹⁰⁹

Davis wrote that the Catholic Church handled funeral arrangements for Gertrudes Barcelo, proprietor of the leading monte hall in Santa Fe, for a fee of \$1,600. The bill included the price of having the bishop celebrate the funeral Mass: \$1,000.¹¹⁰ It is unclear which aspect of New Mexican life Davis was trying to emphasize more with this example: the prevalence of gambling or the corruption of the Catholic Church. He provided a more typical example of church funeral charges for comparison’s sake. From the cost of candlesticks on up to the price of the Mass and burial, it totaled \$141.¹¹¹ Considering that a peon only made five dollars a month, it was reasonable for Davis to think it an outrageous sum. “It is an abuse in the Church that has grown up in the course of two hundred and fifty years of unlimited sway in the country, but which should not be indulged in this enlightened age,” Davis wrote about these exorbitant burial expenses.¹¹²

The high price of dying was reason enough to abolish the tithing system and instead pay priests a fixed salary, Davis argued. “Religion and the attending rites should

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 220.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 186.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 186.

¹¹² Ibid., 187.

not be made a luxury only to be enjoyed by the rich, but all its offices and consolations should be within the reach of the poorest in the land,” he wrote.¹¹³

Race, nationality, and miscegeny

All of the vices and deficiencies that Davis identified could be traced to their Spanish lineage, a conclusion that was at odds with his assertion that good, American government could elevate Mexicans. “They are of Eastern origin, and in general possess all the vices of those whose homes are washed by the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea, whence a branch of their ancestors originally came,” Davis wrote. From their Moorish blood, they inherited “imaginative temperament and fiery impulses,” while their Spanish blood endowed them with “politeness and spirit of revenge” and the “cruelty, bigotry, and superstition that have marked the character of the Spanish from the earliest times.”¹¹⁴ The Spaniards who conquered the New World had left behind their “dark-eyed maids of Castile,” so they “took to their bed and board Indian maidens. Here was a second blending of blood and a new union of races: The Spaniard, Moor, and the aboriginal were united in one and made a new race, the Mexicans.”¹¹⁵

Davis found the results of three centuries of racial mixing curious, writing in *El Gringo*: “Among the present population there is found every shade of color, from the nut-brown, which exhibits a strong preponderance of the aboriginal blood, to the pure Castilian, who is as light and fair as the sons and daughters of the Anglo-Saxon race. ... The great mass of the population are very dark, and can not claim to be more than one fourth or one eighth pure Spanish.” Here Davis made explicit his belief in white

¹¹³ Ibid..

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 217.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 216.

superiority: “The intermixture between the peasantry and the native tribes of Indians is yet carried on, and there is no present hope of the people *improving in color* [emphasis added].”¹¹⁶ That assertion represented a mild moderation from the shock and disgust he showed as a young volunteer officer in the U.S.-Mexico War just ten years before, when he wrote his mother, “The inhabitants are a wretched and forlorn looking people. Most of them are as dark as Negroes, and have but little of the real Castilian blood in their veins. ... All the *senorita*’s [*sic*] that I have seen are about as much like ladies as our colored kitchen girls in the north. They have fine eyes and beautiful teeth, and you must stop there, for they have no other charms.” Davis, in his unpublished war journal, compared Mexican laborers to beasts of burden, “trudging through the sand, nearly naked, and appeared but little superior to the mules and donkeys around them.”¹¹⁷

White racial purity transcended Mexican nationality during his volunteer service – marriage to a Mexican was conceivable to Davis, but only if she were white enough. During a moment of lust in the middle of his volunteer service in the war, he confessed his feelings for a Mexican girl he had been assigned to escort between Mexico City and a neighboring town. “I sometimes feel inclined to make love to her,” he wrote privately. “How would you admire a Mexican sister-in-law?”¹¹⁸ The young officer was careful to distinguish this object of desire from unacceptable potential paramours. This one had been educated for seven years in New York and was just returning to her parents – signs of good breeding and wealth. Racial purity and upper-class standing made Spanish and Mexican women objects of desire to Davis, as well as to other Anglos in the Borderlands.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹¹⁷ Davis, *Journal*, 18.

¹¹⁸ W. W. H. Davis to Lizzie Davis, 14 March 1848. Davis Papers, Yale.

But so did exoticism. Such women were “pretty, agreeable and very social,” had “that ease and elegance of manners which have always distinguished the Spanish women of rank.”¹¹⁹ Their exoticism entered into the alchemy of desire: “They have beautiful black eyes, fine teeth, faultless in their proportions, and walk like queens.” Their lack of education made them inferior to whites in Davis’ eyes. He pronounced Mexico’s Spanish women “far below the women of the United States” in this respect.

Racial mixing amalgamated the national character of Moors and Spaniards with those of the Indians, whom Davis said possessed “cunning and deceit.” This tri-racial mix had “a great deal of what the world calls smartness and quickness of perception, but lack the stability of character and soundness of intellect that give such vast superiority to the Anglo-Saxon race over every other people.”¹²⁰ His stance here was softer than in his unpublished war journal, in which he declared that although they were “grave and dignified; courteous and hospitable,” the race “seems to be degenerating, a fact which may be attributed to two causes — the climate, which relaxes the whole nervous system; and the presence of bondsmen, which relieves him of the least necessity to labor. They have intermarried with the natives of the country, but mingling of the bloods seems to have weakened both races.”¹²¹

Davis deplored what he saw as Mexican immorality as much as he disdained the laziness of the Mexican *ricos*. Child-rearing out of wedlock and faithless marriages were the norm, but he blamed three causes for this. First was the immorality of the Catholic

¹¹⁹ W. W. H. Davis, *The Journal of a Volunteer Officer in the Mexican War, by W. W. H. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-Camp of Brigadier General Cushing, 1846-48*. Typescript of an unpublished journal (Doylestown, PA, 1849). W. W. H. Davis Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana.

¹²⁰ Davis, *El Gringo*, 217.

¹²¹ Davis, *Journal*, 24.

Church. “A majority of the priests themselves lived in open prostitution” and remained in good standing if they confessed regularly.¹²² Second, peasants could not afford to pay for expensive wedding ceremonies.¹²³ Third, he claimed widowed women were driven to prostitution to support themselves because the institution of slavery kept them from finding respectable work for pay.¹²⁴ New Mexico’s Catholic Church as an institution – not necessarily as a faith – was, to Davis, a poison spring from which wickedness flowed.

Despite his denunciations of the Catholic Church, however, he proclaimed that he would not tolerate the nativist, Know-Nothing party. The Know-Nothings’ principal goals were to deny political office and voting rights to Catholics and foreigners. It makes sense that Davis denounced the Know-Nothings, given his desire to be appointed governor of an almost exclusively Roman Catholic and Mexican population. During his service as secretary of the territory, he was charged with the duties of acting governor in the absence of Governor David Meriwether, like Davis an appointee of President Franklin Pierce. In his one address to the territorial legislature, in December 1855, he condemned “secret oath-bound societies waging a politico-religious crusade against our adopted citizens, seeking to deprive them of their constitutional rights, and to reduce them almost to a state of vassalage.”¹²⁵

He observed other Mexican differences with a mix of curiosity and pity. Whereas Davis saw worship in Mexico City during the war as a deeply spiritual, egalitarian

¹²² Ibid., 221.

¹²³ Ibid., 222.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 223.

¹²⁵ W. W. H. Davis, “Message of W. W. H. Davis, Acting Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, Delivered to the Legislative Assembly, Dec. 3rd, 1855,” reprinted in Robert Daniel Hepler, “William Watts Hart Davis in New Mexico” (master’s thesis, University of New Mexico, 1941), 154.

exercise of faith, he detested New Mexico Catholics' religious processions during Holy Week. Davis regarded these rituals as empty, meaningless, and even hypocritical exercises. "The image of the Savior, and others of a similar character that held a prominent place in the exercises, were disgusting to the sight, and failed to create in my mind other feelings than those of pity for the worshipers of these unmeaning bits of ill-carved wood. Some of the *virgins* [italics in original] were known as among the most notorious females in town, but character seemed no requisite to fill a prominent place in the exercises. These parades are not seen in the States, and the sight of such an exhibition in the streets of our large cities would shock the feelings of all religious denominations. It is one of the practices of a darker age that still clings to the worship of the people of New Mexico."¹²⁶ Davis, whose Presbyterian father and Baptist mother raised him in the Baptist church, called New Mexican Catholics' belief in intercession by the saints a superstition. In *El Gringo*, he dismissed prayers to the saints as "semi-heathen incantations."¹²⁷ But in private he was scathing, writing to a sister:

The people are as bad as the country; their morals are rotten to the very core, in fact they have none, never having been taught that such things were necessary for this world or the world to come. They are familiar with every vice known in the calendar of the evil one and practice them without let or hindrance. The church winks and does not discountenance such things and of course when their spiritual advisers take this course what can you expect of an ignorant and superstitious people? The Catholic Church here is corrupt and wicked beyond measure and sanctions the most unholy practices.¹²⁸

Despite these harsh criticisms, and despite attitudes that would be condemned as racist today, Davis believed these "inferior" traits resulted from bad teaching, not bad

¹²⁶ Davis, *El Gringo*, 346.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹²⁸ W. W. H. Davis to Lizzie Davis, 27 May 1854. Davis Papers, Yale.

breeding. His solution for this, as he conceived it during his military service in Mexico, was that the Catholic Church must be disestablished “and the immense wealth it has wrong from the hard earnings of the poor, given back to them. All sects should be tolerated and protected in their worship.”¹²⁹

Despite these differences in politics, religion, customs, agriculture and technology, Davis concluded that Mexicans had their virtues. In the spirit of Yankee superiority that reigned among Americans, he declared that Mexicans could be modernized. Even without this, Davis wrote that his thousand-mile circuit ride as U.S. attorney gave him an excellent opportunity to see the land and people and observe the workings of the judicial system among a people who were new to it. “Every thing convinced me that they are an orderly and respectful people, and I have observed better decorum among them in the court-house than I ever noticed in the States in the most intelligent community. In every instance I was treated with great kindness, and hardly saw an instance of rudeness.”¹³⁰

Although he never stated specifically that he opposed slavery in his writings, Davis implied disapproval of bonded labor systems in his address to the legislature and in a section on the Mexican system of peon labor. Peons were mainly manual laborers who contracted with masters for five dollars a month, amassing debt by borrowing from the master and edging into the equivalent of slavery. Though territorial statutes allowed peons to leave their masters after paying off their debt, their wages were so low that they remained in debt until they died.¹³¹ Parents were allowed to bind their children out as

¹²⁹ W. W. H. Davis, *Journal*, 341.

¹³⁰ Davis, *El Gringo*, 388.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

peons, “and with this beginning they become slaves for life.” Because the master did not own the laborer, he was not responsible for the peon in sickness or old age, so “when he becomes too old to work any longer, like an old horse who is turned out to die, he can be cast adrift to provide for himself.”¹³² These aspects, Davis argued, added up to de facto enslavement.

Dana and Davis: Parallel thinking on race, religion, rusticity, and government

A line from an 1835 letter to his brother and sister-in-law, sent from San Diego, California, distilled the view of Mexicans that Richard Henry Dana Jr. would subsequently scatter across *Two Years Before the Mast*: “This is a beautiful country, a perfect climate, and every natural advantage; but the people are lazy, ignorant, irreligious, priest ridden, lawless, vicious, and not more than half civilized.”¹³³ What distinguishes this view from the Southern outlook on Mexicans was the absence of judgment based on race. Instead, Dana focused on the fruits of environmental and social impacts: bad government, hence poor education and lawlessness; forgiving climate, hence laziness resulting from a lack of want; corrupt religion, hence faithlessness. All of these themes, which Dana gleaned in young manhood from 1835 to 1837 aboard the brig *Pilgrim*, were reflected in Davis’ later writings about Mexican life and culture in the Borderlands.

That Davis’ descriptions were more nuanced reflected the depth of his experience in the heart of Mexico during the war and in the northernmost reaches of the Mexican cession. Dana saw only land that needed to be wrested from Mexicans by enterprising Yankees who would make of it what God intended. This reflected his membership in a

¹³² *Ibid.*, 233.

¹³³ Richard Henry Dana Jr. to Charlotte Dana and Edward Trowbridge Dana, March 20, 1835. Dana Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

mercantile elite anxious to make a profit above all else. Davis saw a redeemable people, and their redeemer would be not just American profits but American values and culture that would wipe away their backwardness. Both views condescend, and both views reflect a belief in American superiority to all other nations. Dana and Davis alike condemned Mexican misbehavior but looked the other way when Americans engaged in swindling. But Davis' conclusions demonstrated a desire to spread a democratic republican ideology and not just a means by which to be profitable. Both envisioned missions of empire. But Davis' close, extended contact with Mexicans and a comparatively open mind allowed him to see that not all Mexicans were the same indolent, superstitious, foolish wretches that Dana perceived a decade and a half before in California.

Their perceptions of racial difference differed as well, though more in degrees than in general principle. Davis did not see racial differences in terms of Mexican versus American nationality or white versus brown appearance. To him, racial difference evidenced itself through behavior. Those who labored, he compared to animals. Those who were well-off and demonstrated social graces, he accepted as equals, or something close to equals. These Mexican equals enjoyed the conveniences that upper-class Americans did, such as servants, luxurious homes, and fine clothes. This desire for material comforts was a forerunner of the intolerance for discomfort that accompanied the arrival of modernity, as T. J. Jackson Lears pointed out.¹³⁴ Comfort, then, constituted modernity; Mexican elites' desire for this gave them commonality with American elites who desired the same. They displayed gentility similar to their American counterparts.

¹³⁴ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 11.

While Davis gasped at the inhuman living conditions of the peons and beggars (their discomfort was at odds with the modernity of comfort), and while he mocked their backwardness he marveled at the splendor and craftsmanship of the Mexican cathedrals where they worshiped. Demonized though Catholicism was by American nativists of the 1840s and '50s, an open-minded Protestant like Davis could see the beauty of the Catholic ritual and the Christian virtues of kindness and charity instilled by Mexico's national religion. He did not quibble about Catholic creed, only the threat that the church posed toward the power of the American political system. Davis, being a patriot, naturally sided with American secular religion that endowed the federal system with the powers of the Creator: the judiciary, with its power to pass judgment and forgive, and the legislative, with its power to dictate the bounds of legal behavior. And what of the third branch, the executive? In Davis' time, the president exercised the power to "create" more America by launching a war of conquest (the U.S.-Mexico War) and negotiating peaceful acquisition of land (the Louisiana Purchase, the Gadsden Purchase).

In light of Davis' personal trajectory, his sometimes moderate tone about New Mexican character makes sense. If appointed governor, he would never have been able to work with New Mexican elites if he engaged in character assassination against Mexicans as a group. But it was in his interest, for purposes of proving he was competent to lead the territory, to show his intimate knowledge of its flaws and understanding of how to rectify them. So Davis walked a fine line with *El Gringo*. His attitudes about Mexicans were riddled with contradictions. Use of scratch plows demonstrated silly inefficiency that grated on his Yankee desire for efficiency and progress. Such brutish implements required greater toil. The Puritan in him admired peons' capacity for hard labor and

condemned the grandees' laziness (a characteristic that his predecessor Dana preferred to call "indolence"). Yet he recognized the limitations imposed by the environment. Sparse rainfall was the mother of Mexican invention: ditch irrigation systems maximized agricultural potential to the best of their ability but that only guaranteed subsistence farming. Isolation prevented access to export markets, which meant Mexican farmers had little incentive to even try to grow surplus crops. The indolent grandee class contented itself with creature comforts reaped by the labor of the peons and saw no need to improve their society. But all of these shortcomings could be fixed if only Mexicans would drop the crucifix, take up the flag, and begin acting like Americans. Because their failings sprang not from their institutions and not their blood, Mexicans could be "redeemed" into Americans if power could be pried loose from the grips of a corrupt Catholic priesthood. That the Mexican character was transmutable constitutes a key difference in Northern and Southern prejudices regarding race. Miscegeny horrified Southerners. If racial "beauty" was only skin deep in the eyes of Northerners, in the Southern mentality typical of the antebellum period it penetrated one's very soul.

CHAPTER 5

LATE NORTHERN CORRESPONDENTS: BAYARD TAYLOR AND ALBERT DEANE RICHARDSON

The two top correspondents for the *New York Tribune* believed that Mexicans were inferior to Americans. Where they disagreed was whether the people absorbed by the United States after the war with Mexico could be elevated to the point where they could join in the great American experiment of self-governance. Bayard Taylor and Albert Deane Richardson grew up in similar circumstances but arrived at vastly different conclusions about the Latinos of California, New Mexico, and Texas. Taylor believed *Californios* could learn American ways – indeed, he had seen them do just that when they joined Anglos in framing the California Constitution – as long as they were of European and not mixed descent. Richardson, however, made no such distinctions. In his eyes, the whole lot were demoralized, backward, half-breed, and priest-ridden, and the only way to make New Mexico worthy of statehood was to bring more Americans into it. What best explains this divergence is the difference in their religious backgrounds, their divergent life experiences, and the conditions under which they first came to encounter Mexicans in the Borderlands.

Both were young men when they set out for the West. Taylor, a Quaker eight years older than Richardson, was sent off by Horace Greeley to cover the California Gold

Rush of 1849 at the age of 24. By that time, he had already tramped around Europe and become fluent in German, French, and Spanish. Richardson was far less cosmopolitan but came of age when American sectional strife reached fever pitch. Unlike Taylor, he had no qualms about taking up arms. Before he rode off to Texas he had served as adjutant general of the Kansas Territorial Militia. Congregationalist in upbringing, he covered the battle over popular sovereignty in Kansas and was friends with Henry Ward Beecher, the firebrand who armed Free State settlers for their guerrilla war against border ruffians who tried to bring slaves across the river from Missouri. Taylor's relative degree of tolerance for Mexicans came from the tolerance taught by Quaker belief and the degree of cosmopolitanism he developed through his European adventures. The two men enjoyed similar educational opportunities, attending school and feeding their minds with lyceum lectures and library books. But Richardson had been exposed to people and ideas different from those that influenced Taylor: the anti-Catholicism of Congregationalism and the anti-Mexicanism of Texas.

These Late Northerners built on the notions of the Mexican other that had been built by Early Northerners Richard Henry Dana Jr. and W. W. H. Davis. Dana planted the seeds for the idea of Mexican indolence that flowered into Taylor's belief that Mexicans stood in the way of vigorous Anglo-Saxons who came to extend democracy into the Golden State. Davis, along with Early Southerner Josiah Gregg, pushed the idea of Mexican backwardness, Roman Catholic wickedness, and priestly corruption that Richardson lampooned in his *Boston Journal* articles and 100,000-copy-selling *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean*. What made Richardson and Taylor different from these earlier writers, however, was their exposure to Southern

ideas, the emergence of class as a category of difference between Yankees and Mexicans, and a decade and a half in which anti-Mexican prejudices bloomed in the American mind.

Bayard Taylor: Genteel observer of Manifest Destiny

Bayard Taylor hoped writing would make him rich from the beginning of his career. “Authorship is now beginning to be profitable; I may be born on the verge of a better era and so help reap the harvest of future years,” Taylor wrote his first love, Mary Agnew, who died of consumption shortly after they married. “At least, I have made a very auspicious commencement for an American writer. God grant me continued strength, for I have appointed myself a great work to do, before I die!”¹ Taylor’s travels turned him into a man of the world, a believer in American superiority who nonetheless warned that nature limited its possibilities. When the *New York Tribune* assigned him to chronicle the changes imposed by the tide of Americans who poured into California during the Gold Rush of 1849, he trained a sympathetic but condescending gaze on the Mexicans and Californios whose society was displaced. Taylor became one of America’s most prolific writers, composing some fifty volumes of prose and poetry and about 20,000 letters.² Taylor developed as great a reputation for wanderlust as for devotion to writing and became known as “The Great American Traveler,” a title he disliked.³ “He was a simple, honorable, upright man with a lofty literary ambition and the most unwearied devotion to literary work,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* editor George

¹ Bayard Taylor to Mary S. Agnew, 1847, Aug. 15, 1847, Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

² Wermuth, *Bayard Taylor*, i.

³ Kathleen A. Boardman, “Colorado: A Summer Trip (Review),” *Great Plains Quarterly* (Fall 1991): 275-276.

William Curtis wrote in a eulogy for Taylor, who died while writing a travel piece in Berlin on Dec. 19, 1878. "... Taylor would sometimes, perhaps often, toil laboriously with his brain and his pen for more than twelve hours, and then seek the relaxation of the club, and the friendly circle and the cheerful conversation there."⁴

Taylor's youth and early influences

James Bayard Taylor was born in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, on January 11, 1825.⁵ The town forty miles southwest of Philadelphia was a Quaker town. Taylor's ancestors came to the New World with William Penn to establish his colony in 1684.⁶ Taylor's paternal grandmother, of South German descent, knew little if any English and spoke in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. His maternal grandmother was also a German-American.⁷

The Quaker culture of Kennett Square shaped Taylor's worldview, but his family did not allow the faith to dictate all their actions. His grandfather John Taylor had married a Mennonite whose ancestors came to America from Switzerland and was turned out of meeting for not repenting.⁸

Quakers followed a tradition of tolerance, egalitarianism, and respect for fundamental human rights.⁹ Pennsylvania's pluralism sprouted amid this tradition of

⁴ George William Curtis, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (March 1879): 622.

⁵ Richard Croom Beatty, *Bayard Taylor: Laureate of the Gilded Age* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *Bayard Taylor*, 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹ Melvin B. Endy Jr., "The Society of Friends," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 612.

tolerance.¹⁰ The religious tenets of the Society of Friends permeated life in Kennett Square, the most fundamental of them that each human being had a personal and unique connection with God and had a responsibility to discover for oneself the nature of one's relationship with the Creator.¹¹ In their Sabbath meetings, Friends would speak as the spirit moved them and did not rely on ministers to proclaim the word of God for them.

The meeting house fed Taylor's soul, but the library and the lecture hall fed his mind. As it turned out, a book he borrowed by the man who would become his publisher would guide young Taylor's career trajectory. George P. Putnam's *The Tourist in Europe* fell into his hands, and Taylor used the guidebook to plot a course of reading from which he would learn the geography, history, and customs of every significant town and city on the continent.¹² The variety of titles in Taylor's extensive collection of books suggests he had a mind for reconnaissance and verification. The catalog of books auctioned by his estate does not tell when he acquired the books, and it cannot be certain whether he disposed of others. But the list suggests he read widely. A biographer noted that Taylor read Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau in his youth.¹³ Of these, an estate auction list shows that his library contained works by all except Dickens when Taylor died. The list showed he owned 670 books by theologians, scientists, poets, and men of letters.¹⁴ Taylor's library included travelogues by Europeans who journeyed to the Arab world and

¹⁰ Ibid., 611.

¹¹ Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 16.

¹² Ibid., 34.

¹³ Ibid., 16-24.

¹⁴ *Executor's Sale Catalogue of the Library of the Late Mr. Bayard Taylor* (New York: Bangs & Co., 1879), *passim*.

Africa; literary works by Mary Shelley Wollstonecraft, William Thackeray, Walt Whitman, William Shakespeare, Algernon Swinburne, and Honoré de Balzac; titles about Spain, Mexico, and South America by Alexander von Humboldt, Frances Calderon de la Barca, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento; accounts of Anglo-American exploration of North America by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark; John Ross Browne's report *Mineral Resources of the West*; the Bible, the Pentateuch, the Qu'ran, and theological histories such as *History of the Jesuits* and *The Bible in Spain*. He took an interest in the pseudoscientific and the spiritual as well. Works on phrenology, palmistry, and spiritual manifestations graced Taylor's bookshelves, along with the ethnological *Types of Mankind*, by George Gliddon and Josiah Nott. The line between science and superstition was fine. Taylor's interest in world religions and the occult may explain why he did not judge Mexican Catholic rituals and sacramental objects.

Although Taylor aspired to be a first-rate poet, and although he made his name as a lecturer and world traveler, journalism was the axis around which his career spun. His career began as a printer's apprentice in the office of Henry Evans, a friend of the family who published the *Village Record* of West Chester.¹⁵ Eastern Pennsylvania was in the heart of lyceum territory, and young Taylor got swept up in the self-improvement movement promoted by Josiah Holbrook. By day he toiled over type boxes and by night he poured prose and poetry into his notebooks and attended lectures by the luminaries who came through town on the lecture circuit.

The words that fired Taylor's imagination and stoked his ideals came alive when their authors visited Kennett Square, which was a regular stop on the Lyceum lecture

¹⁵ Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 30.

circuit.¹⁶ Charles Dickens railed about America's lack of copyright laws and the injustice of slavery.¹⁷ James Russell Lowell and Wendell Phillips, too, condemned the evils of slavery.¹⁸ Margaret Fuller spoke out against the subjugation of women.¹⁹ And a variety of speakers explained the works of Immanuel Kant, as well as more esoteric topics such as phrenology and animal magnetism.²⁰ Taylor's twin passions of poetry and exploration got the best of him, and as it turned out the former would finance the latter, at least in part. His skill as a lyricist improved and he managed to sell some poems to the *Saturday Evening Post* and even published a volume of verse titled *Ximena, or, The Battle of Sierra Morena*. Determined to join his cousin Franklin Taylor at the University of Heidelberg, in Germany, he bought out the remainder of his time as an apprentice, journeyed to Washington for a passport, and then made the rounds at the New York and Philadelphia newspapers to sell his services as a European correspondent.²¹ Taylor visited travel writer N. P. Willis, whom he idolized, and told him of his plans. Willis wrote him a letter of introduction commending him to all the printers of the world, which Taylor then used to gain an audience with Horace Greeley at the *New York Tribune*.²² The editor listened to his pitch, promised to print anything that was worthwhile, and advised him to spend some time getting to know something about Germany before he tried to write about

¹⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁷ Ibid., 22-23.

¹⁸ Ibid, 25.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 25-26.

²¹ Russell H. Conwell, *The Life, Travels, and Literary Career of Bayard Taylor* (Boston: D. Lathrop & Co., 1881),44-45.

²² Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 30-31.

it, adding, “But no descriptive nonsense. Of that, I am damned sick.”²³ With similar promises from the *Saturday Evening Post* and other publications promising to pay him for his travel letters, he set out for Europe in 1844. He was just 19.²⁴

Greeley made good on his word to publish his letters, but not all went so smoothly.²⁵ Taylor ran out of money in London just as he tried to return home in the spring of 1846. He hoped to make some cash as a printer, but the trade unions shut him out.²⁶ Finally, Taylor found employment at the London branch of George Putnam’s publishing house, where he earned just enough to pay room and board until his family could send him enough money for a fare home to America.²⁷

On his return, Taylor co-founded *The Phoenixville Pioneer*. “A Family Newspaper Free from Political or Sectarian Prejudice,” proclaimed the slogan on its flag.²⁸ The first issue, dated December 29, 1846, listed J. Bayard Taylor and Frederic. E. Foster as its editors and proprietors. Taylor stayed on the weekly paper for a year, translating poetry from German into English and picking out items from the *Democratic*

²³ Ibid., 31.

²⁴ James E. Hanson II, “Colorado: A Summer Trip (Review),” *Journal of the West* (April 1991): 116-117.

²⁵ Cronwell, *Career of Bayard Taylor*, 79.

²⁶ Ibid., 113.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Marie Hansen-Taylor, “Chronology of Bayard Taylor’s Poems,” undated notebook, 1837-1878. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. A loose, unnumbered page in the booklet titled “Contributions to the Pioneer” notes, “The only entire file of *The Phoenixville Pioneer* is the one of Dr. I. A. Pennypacker, now in possession of his son, Samuel Pennypacker, In Phila. The first issue took place on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 1846. ... The last issue which had B’s name on it was of Dec. 28, 1847. ... Bayard’s contributions to the paper signed with his initials, or name (but often without either). Dec. 29, 1846. *The Phoenix*, poem translated from Freiligrath. Jan. 12, 1847. *Ballad of the Lonely*, from the German of Heinrich Heine. Jan. 26 *A Legend of the Hartz* (prose) From the *Democratic Review*. Febr. 16. *Song of the Sword*, from the *Democratic Review*.”

Review and other exchange papers.²⁹ But the young poet lacked the sensibility for editing a country newspaper, and subscribers lacked patience with the poems and literary reviews he prepared for them. One wanted a glossary; another wanted social gossip.³⁰ The paper folded after a year, and Taylor turned his attention to writing his first full-length travel book, *Views Afoot*.³¹

Success with this book launched him into the New York literary world. Through Willis, now a close friend, he got to know William Cullen Bryant and Parke Goodwin. Before he went to New York, Taylor wrote Greeley to ask for a job in the offices of the *Tribune*. Greeley told him to stay put since “every newspaper or other periodical establishment is crowded with assistants and weighed down with promises.”³² But once he was in the city doors began to open. Taylor took a job at the *Literary World* and augmented his salary with work as a tutor.³³ Then his luck got even better. “Yesterday Greeley came to me, of his own unsolicited accord, and offered me an assistant editorship at \$625 a year, and promised to raise it soon to \$800,” he wrote his mother in January 1848. The job put him in charge of the miscellaneous and literary department of the *Tribune*, which meant free concert, theater, and lecture tickets and free passage on the railroad to and from Philadelphia.³⁴ His \$12-a-week salary was a step up, but he was anxious to reunite with Mary Agnew, who was back in Kennett Square waiting for him to

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Cronwell, *Career of Bayard Taylor*, 116-117.

³¹ Ibid., 117.

³² Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 53.

³³ Cronwell, *Career of Bayard Taylor*, 118.

³⁴ Bayard Taylor to Rebecca Bauer Taylor, Jan. 30, 1848. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

earn enough to support both of them. At this early stage as through the rest of his career, money was a constant concern. “I have no doubt that in a few months if I should succeed in picking up some correspondence with other papers, and learn the art of telegraphing news (or rather preparing them for the telegraph) I should make \$25 or \$30 a week readily,” he wrote Mary. “This would support us at once, and enable us to terminate the pains of absence.”³⁵

Bound for California

Taylor was enough of a name that most of his dispatches to the *New York Tribune* were labeled “Bayard Taylor’s Letters.”³⁶ He set out from New York aboard the U.S. mail steamship *Falcon* on June 28, 1849.³⁷ Attention to detail and concern for authenticity marked his reports. “I speak only of what I have seen with my own eyes,” he wrote in one of his California letters to the *Tribune*.³⁸ He described the journey at sea, fellow travelers from the United States, the foreigners he met, and the state of affairs in the regions through which he sojourned.

Among his fellow passengers were “Down-Easters – men of the genuine stamp, who would be sure to fall on their feet wherever they might be thrown, quiet and sedate Spaniards, hilarious Germans; and a few others whose precise character is more difficult

³⁵ Bayard Taylor to Mary S. Agnew, Feb. 6, 1848. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

³⁶ All of Bayard Taylor’s letters to the *New York Tribune* during his 1849-1850 trip from New York through Panama, into California and down through Mexico were consulted for this section. His name frequently appeared in the headline of the story. In rare instances where this did not occur, the articles identified him as “B.T.”

³⁷ Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado, or, Adventures in the Path of Empire: Comprising a Voyage to California, via Panama; Life in San Francisco and Monterey; Pictures of the Gold Region, and Experiences of Mexican Travel* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1859), 1. This, the eighteenth edition, was the earliest available version of the book, which was first published in 1850.

³⁸ Bayard Taylor, “California. Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXXVI,” Feb. 11, 1850, 3.

to determine.”³⁹ The steamer made its way to New Orleans before continuing on July 14 to Panama, which it reached July 22.⁴⁰ Taylor then crossed to the Pacific side of the isthmus to board a ship for California. Taylor found a cosmopolitan population when he finally landed in San Francisco. “The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of as diverse and bizarre a character as to the houses,” he remarked. “Yankees of every possible variety, native Californians in *sarapes* [*sic*] and sombreros, Chillians, Sonorians, Kanakas from Hawaii, Chinese with long tails, Malays armed with their everlasting creeses, and others in whose embrowned and bearded visages it was impossible to recognize any nationality.”⁴¹

Amid this cosmopolitan bunch, a Kentuckian who set out for California from Louisiana told Taylor that the padres at the missions in Southern California treated him and his suffering party kindly and that a group of Mexicans offered him protection on the trail.⁴² But American animosity was otherwise abundant, though Taylor only alluded to it. Five days out of Mazatlan and bound for San Diego, he updated the *Tribune* as the boat churned up the western coast of Baja California. As it passed an oncoming ship loaded with passengers bound for home in Mazatlan, he noted, “The usual greetings were exchanged, and our passengers, forgetting their former contempt of the Mexicans, gave them three hearty cheers, which were as heartily returned.”⁴³ His countrymen told him

³⁹ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters, From the Falcon,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 7, 1849, 1.

⁴⁰ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. VII,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, Aug. 31, 1849, 1.

⁴¹ Bayard Taylor, “From the Gold Region, Our Letters by the Ohio, Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XIII,” *New-York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1849, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

many a tale of Mexican dishonesty. But before he believed them he had to see for himself, and the evidence just wasn't there. Although he was aware of the widely held American belief that Mexicans were thieves, he wrote, "During all my travels in the Tierra Caliente, I was never imposed upon as a stranger nor insulted as an American."⁴⁴

Taylor found out how fortunate he was to travel by steamer as soon as he reached San Diego. The alternative for American travelers was an overland journey – not an attractive option based on the condition in which he observed a group of soldiers who had marched on the Gila Route from New Mexico to San Diego. "Their clothes were in tatters, their boots, in many cases, replaced by moccasins, and, except their rifles and some small packages rolled in deerskin, they had nothing left of the abundant stores with which they left home," Taylor observed.⁴⁵ A New Yorker who went on foot took seven months to arrive in San Francisco.⁴⁶

Transportation options did more than prolong the journey for gold-seekers. The slow flow of information stoked Americans' hunger for news from the East Coast to a startling degree. "The crowd at the Post office this morning is greater than I ever saw in New-York," he wrote. "The whole mail consisting of 20,000 letters and I know not how many bushels of newspapers, is ready for delivery, Mr. Moore and his sons having worked day and night from the very hour of landing, in order that there should be no delay. This promptness is something unusual in San Francisco, letters by the former

⁴⁴ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 256.

⁴⁵ Bayard Taylor, "From the Gold Region, Our Letters by the Ohio, Bayard Taylor's Letters No. XI," *New-York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1849, 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

steamers having frequently been kept back several days by delays in assorting.”⁴⁷ News flowed the opposite direction a little faster. One of Taylor’s dispatches, sent on a mail steamer, took thirty-nine days to go from San Francisco to New Orleans. Since that letter carried urgent news that California had approved a state constitution, it reached New York instantly via telegraph the very day it arrived in New Orleans.⁴⁸

Greeley’s team of editors apparently recognized their correspondent’s credibility with readers. “The letters of our Associate, BAYARD TAYLOR – which we defy any one who has them to refrain from reading – will convince the most incredulous of the immense mineral wealth of California,” the paper gushed in a January 1850 article promoting their correspondent’s work. “The images, details and estimates given in those letters herewith published, must vanquish the most vituperate skepticism.”⁴⁹ California was golden, all right, despite the unpreparedness of most of the Yankees who had flooded into the region. To read the *Tribune* was to be encouraged by the opportunities for those who left the city to help Americanize the West Coast. “The general prevalence of peace, order and security throughout California is very remarkable,” the article continued. Americans could count on their safety, and never mind the fate of native Californians, because “apart from the conflicts and wrongs inflicted upon the hapless Aborigines by our people, life, liberty and prosperity appear to be quite as secure throughout the Gold Region as in this City.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “By Telegram Exclusively to the Tribune,” *New-York Tribune*, Jan. 10, 1850, 2. Via telegraph, Taylor’s lost much of its flourish in favor of a direct, simple style.

⁴⁹ From California,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1850, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Notions of American superiority

A traveler in San Francisco told Taylor that Mexicans in Baja California were anxious to know whether they were now Americans. “They only understand that there was a war, in which we were victors, and take it for granted that they are included in the bargain,” Taylor explained. “In the upper part, where they understand affairs better, the people insist on being included in Alta California and having the boundary-line made to embrace them also! Perhaps their wishes are only an indication of the truth, after all. Who knows? – this ‘manifest destiny’ does strange things.”⁵¹

Neutral though he was in assessing individual Californios and Mexicans, Taylor did not hide his belief in American superiority. He wrote:

As an American, I feel proud and happy – proud, that the Empire of the West, the commerce of the great Pacific, the new highway to the Indies, forming the last link in that belt of civilized enterprise which now clasps the world, has been established under my country’s flag, and happy that in all the extent of California, from the glittering snows of the Shasti to the burning deserts of the Colorado, no slave shall ever lift his arm to make the freedom of that flag a mockery. Thus, we have another splendid example of the ease and security with which people can be educated to govern themselves. From that chaos whence, under the rule of a despotism like the Austrian, would spring the most frightful excesses of anarchy and crime, a population of freemen peacefully and quietly develops the highest form of civil order — the broadest extent of liberty and security. Governments, bad and corrupt as many of them are, and imperfect as they all must necessarily be, nevertheless at times exhibit scenes of true moral sublimity.⁵²

Like Davis before him, Taylor believed that the Mexicans were inferior but educable in the ways of American democracy.

⁵¹ Bayard Taylor, “From the Gold Region, Our Letters by the Ohio, Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XIV,” *New-York Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1849, 5.

⁵² Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXV, The Closing Scenes of the Convention,” *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 11, 1849, 1.

If teaching requires a pupil who is willing or whose will has been broken, Taylor found such students in Mexico. He thought the people he encountered on the way to Mexico City bore no grudge toward Americans. “They acknowledged our greater power and intelligence as a nation, without jealousy, and with an anticipation rather than a fear, that our rule will one day be extended over them,” he wrote in March 1850.⁵³ “The same impression seems to prevail among the foreigners resident in Mexico, and from them I have learned that the demeanor of the native Mexicans toward strangers has been entirely changed since the late war. Our enthusiastic politicians are not alone in their desire of Manifest Destiny; but for America’s sake, and Mexico’s, I would hope that the fulfillment of these prophecies is still very far distant.”⁵⁴

In large part, Taylor avoided disparaging the Mexicans he had encountered, although he reported on Americans’ animosity toward them. When Mexicans and Californios showed they were successful miners, the Americans drove them off. Even wealthy Californios such as Don Andres Pico “had some difficulty with them until they could be made to understand that his right as a citizen was equal to theirs.”⁵⁵ Taylor told readers that Americans tolerated them as long as they made a profit off Mexican labor.⁵⁶ “They work steadily and faithfully,” Taylor wrote, “and are considered honest, if well watched.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Bayard Taylor, “Mexico. Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXXVIII,” March 7, 1850, 5.

⁵⁴ Taylor, “Mexico,” 5.

⁵⁵ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XVIII, The Diggings on Mokelumne River,” *New-York Tribune*, Nov. 15, 1849, 1.

⁵⁶ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XVIII, The Diggings,” 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

A condescending racism: Taylor's view of Mexicans and social class

Taylor could not ignore the class differences he found in the recently born State of California, regardless of whether he was writing about Anglos, Californios, or Mexicans. Taylor pitied Hispanic laborers but admired wealthy Californios. At California's constitutional convention in Monterey, he painted a tableau of Hispanic nobility, praising "the erect figure and quiet, dignified bearing of Gen. Vallejo," the "polished" and "deservedly popular" Don Miguel de Pedrorana and Jacinto Rodriguez, and Don Fabio de la Guerra, the convention's floor manager, who "gallantly discharged his office" and had "handsome, aristocratic features."⁵⁸ Padre Ramirez, in clerical garb, "looked on until a late hour," and Taylor remarked that "if the strongest advocate of priestly gravity and decorum had been present, he could not have found in his heart to grudge the good old padre the pleasure that beamed upon his honest countenance."⁵⁹

Taylor offered higher-class Californios a measure of respect, not because of their wealth but because they showed signs of gentility. "There is a core of families, American and native, residing here, whose genial and refined social character makes one forget his previous ideas of California life," he wrote. "Instead of the lack of cultivation, except such instruction as the priests were competent to give, the native population possess a natural refinement of manner which would grace the most polished society." Part of Taylor's praise, however, was due to their embrace of American ways. "They acknowledge their want of education, they tell you they grow as the trees, with the form and character that Nature gives them," wrote Taylor, "but even uncultured Nature in

⁵⁸ Bayard Taylor, "Bayard Taylor's Letters No. XVIII, The Diggings," 1.

⁵⁹ Bayard Taylor, "Bayard Taylor's Letters No. XXV, The Closing Scenes of the Convention," *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 11, 1849, 1.

California wears the ripeness and maturity of older lands. I have passed many agreeable hours in the houses of the native families here. The most favorite of Americans is that of Doña Augusta,⁶⁰ the sister of Don Pablo de la Guerra. This lady, whose active charity in aiding the sick and distressed has won her the enduring gratitude of many and the esteem of all, has made her house the home of every officer who visits Monterey. With a rare liberality, she has given up a great part of it to their use, when it was impossible for them to procure quarters, and they have always been welcome guests at her table, no matter how long might be the stay.”⁶¹

Taylor admired Californios only to the extent that their culture and values matched American ideals. Men of action, soldiers and capitalists, had some of these values that earned Taylor’s respect. “The houses of Señor Jaberaes and Señor Abrego are also much visited by Americans,” he wrote. “The former gentleman served as a Captain in Mexico during the war.”⁶² Even better, however, was the desire to Americanize their offspring. “Señor Abrego, who is of Mexican origin, is the most industrious Californian I have yet seen. Within a few years he has amassed a large fortune, which is in no danger of decreasing. He is about to send four of his sons to the United States to be educated.”⁶³

If Taylor believed culture and ideology made Americans better than Californios, then physiognomy made Californios superior to Mexicans. “The Californians, as a race, are vastly superior to the Mexicans,” he argued. “They have larger frames, stronger

⁶⁰ In the book Taylor authored based on his *Tribune* letters, Taylor gave her full name as Augusta Ximeno.

⁶¹ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXVIII, Monterey – Its Situation, Prospects and Society,” *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 28, 1849, 1.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXVIII, Monterey,” 1.

muscle, and a fresh, ruddy complexion entirely different from the sallow skins of the tierra caliente or the swarthy feature of the Bedouins of the West, the Sonorians.” It is unclear how Taylor accounted for this difference. He expanded on this comparison in *Eldorado*, declaring that “The families of pure Castilian blood resemble in features and build, the descendants of the Valencians in Chili and Mexico, whose original physical superiority over the natives of the other provinces of Spain, has not been obliterated by two hundred years of transplanting.”⁶⁴ It is plausible that this is a reference to the belief, promoted by Georges Pouchet, that a race degenerates when transplanted from its home region to one with a drastically different climate. “Señor Soveranez informed me that the California soldiers, on account of this physical distinction, were nicknamed ‘Americanos’ by the Mexicans,” Taylor continued in his letter to the *Tribune*. “The [*sic*] have no national feeling in common with the latter, and will never forgive the cowardly deportment of the Sonorians toward them, during the recent war. Their superior valor, as soldiers, was amply experienced by our own troops at the Battle of San Pasqual.”⁶⁵

“I do not believe, however, that the native population rejoice at the nation change which has come over their country. On the contrary, there is much jealousy and bitter feeling among the uneducated classes. The vast tides of emigration from the Atlantic States have thrice outnumbered them, and consequently placed them forever in a hopeless minority. They witness the immediate extinction of their own political importance and the introduction of a new language, new customs, and new laws. It is not strange that many of them should be opposed to us at heart, even while growing wealthy and

⁶⁴ Taylor, *Eldorado*, 144.

⁶⁵ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXVIII, Monterey,” 1.

prosperous under the marvelous change which has been wrought by the enterprise of our citizens. Nevertheless, we have many warm friends, and the United States many faithful subjects, among them. The intelligent and influential faction which aided us during the war, is still faithful, and many who were previously discontented, are not loudest in their rejoicing. Our authorities have acted towards them with constant and impartial kindness. By pursuing a similar course, the future government of the State will soon obliterate the differences of race and condition. All will then be equally Californian and American citizens.”⁶⁶ Taylor conceded that tensions existed between the Americans and everybody else in the California gold country. “Villages are springing up in every part of the mines, and gambling and trading constitute the business,” he wrote. “The Americans are becoming very jealous of the foreigners working the mines, and you will undoubtedly hear of serious difficulties between them on the return of the next steamer.

What judgments he did make of Mexicans, he based on class more than race. The majority of Mexicans, to Taylor, were just people from whom he bought goods and paid for lodging in the course of his journey.⁶⁷ He described the scenes in the gold mines with a litany that included “the pale and cadaverous clerk of our cities, toiling beside the hardy Western pioneer; the ship-captain and common sailor, army officers and common soldiers; professional Broadway bloods and professional Water St. loafer; the grey-haired man and the juvenile adventurer; the Southern slaveholder beside the swarthy African, now his equal; the scholar and law expounder beside the wild and naked savage; the

⁶⁶ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXVIII, Monterey,” 1.

⁶⁷ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XVII. California – Sights of the Inland – A Ride to Stockton,” *New-York Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1849, 5.

representatives of every South American nation on the Pacific coast; the repulsive Mexican Peon; and the demi-savage of the Sandwich Islands.”⁶⁸

A peon may have been repulsive to Taylor, but he was also pitiable. American exploitation of Mexican laborers did not escape his notice. Working on American digs, Sonoran and Indian workers toiled for half the gold they found and purchased provisions from their bosses. “Notwithstanding the enormous prices of every article of food, these people can be kept for 87½ cents a day,” Taylor wrote. “Consequently those who hire them profit handsomely.”⁶⁹ Much of what was left, the Sonorans left behind on gambling tables in the mining camps, though Taylor noted that they still took \$10 million in gold with them back to Mexico.⁷⁰ Three months later, he revealed that in the boom economy of the gold fields a pair of boots sold for \$96.⁷¹

Catholicism and civilization in California

Any racial superiority that Taylor found in Californios, he attributed to their Spanish heritage. By his account, the Catholic fathers who established the California missions were wise and thrifty benefactors of the Indian population they enslaved (in his words, “a certain number of the natives were appointed to be servants of the padres”).⁷² Those who were not European were not civilized, according to this logic. “Through the

⁶⁸ Bayard Taylor, “Gold hard to get – Mixed population – Loafer – Bad Hole,” *New-York Tribune*, Aug. 13, 1849, 1.

⁶⁹ Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XVIII, The Diggings on Mokalume River,” *New-York Tribune*, Nov. 15, 1849, 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ “By Telegram Exclusively to the Tribune,” *New-York Tribune*, Jan. 10, 1850, 2. Via telegraph, Taylor’s writing lost much of its flourish in favor of a direct, simple style.

⁷² Bayard Taylor, “Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXIX. The Missions of California,” *New-York Tribune*, Jan. 7, 1850, 1.

perseverance and self-denying labors of a few Catholic Priests alone,” Taylor wrote, “the natives . . . were taught the arts of civilized life and subjected to the dominion of Spain.”⁷³ After Mexico overthrew Spanish rule and secularized most of the mission land grants overseen by the padres, Taylor told *Tribune* readers, the liberated Indians “lost the patient guidance and encouragement they had received, and relapsed into their hereditary habits of sloth and stupidity. Many of them scattered from their homes, resuming a roving life among the mountains, and very soon several of the Missions almost ceased to have an existence.”⁷⁴

Despite this admiration for the labor of the padres, Taylor wrote that many of the mission priests had let their property fall into disrepair since the American conquest and accused the priests at the missions of Santa Clara, Santa Barbara, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo of selling off parcels to speculators in 1847, when California had been conquered and the war still raged in Mexico.⁷⁵ Taylor’s report oversimplified what happened. U.S. Army Col. R. B. Mason, military governor of occupied California, and Gen. Stephen W. Kearney ordered U.S. troops to help Padre Real remove American squatters from the mission buildings in Santa Clara and San Jose.⁷⁶ “Say to those people they have no right whatever to his consent, any more than they have to dispossess the rancheros and occupy their ranches,” Mason had written the commander of the Tenth Military Division in Monterey in July 1847, “that they must respect the rights of others before they can claim

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California, Volume 4* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1915), 584.

any for their own; that we are bound to protect, and will protect, the priests in the quiet possession of the missions of Santa Clara and San Jose, and not suffer their premises to be wrested from them even by Californians, much less by a people who have just come into the country, who have not a shadow of claim to the premises, and who, in the first place, were permitted from motives of charity to occupy them temporarily, to shield them from last winter's rains."⁷⁷ Real later agreed to let the squatters remain long enough to harvest their crops and even to let them stay on the land if they would pay rent.⁷⁸ While the priests had the right to sell mission land under Mexican law, Kearney contended that once the U.S. occupied California the priests could sell the land only with U.S. government consent.⁷⁹ Taylor wrote that Real later leased all of the mission orchards to a New Orleans planter whose competition the neighbors complained about – mainly because he was paying just \$22,000 over three years for the right to harvest \$60,000 worth of fruit.⁸⁰ Taylor claimed this was illegal, notwithstanding Kearney's conclusion that although the priests could not sell land, it was their right to lease it.

Taylor promoted the idea that Mexican mission land was simply occupied by the priests and belonged to whichever government was in power. As events had unfolded, the three million acres of land that was "cultivated, or is capable of immediate adaptation for the planting of orchards, gardens and vineyards" belonged to the United States to sell or give away as it pleased.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 584-585.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 585.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 590.

⁸⁰ Taylor, "Letters No. XXIX. Missions of California," 1.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Bemoaning the dismal state to which the padres supposedly let their Southern California holdings fall, Taylor laid the groundwork for the American narrative of Anglo-Saxon regeneration of Mexico and reclamation of wild land that had gone uncivilized under the Indians. He was awed by the changes in San Francisco in a mere three months since his arrival. “Of all the marvellous [*sic*] phases of the history of the Present, the growth of San Francisco is the one which will most tax the belief of the Future,” he gushed. “Its parallel was never known and shall never be held again. I speak only of what I have seen with my own eyes. When I landed here, not quite four months ago, I found a scattering town of tents and canvas houses, with a show of frame buildings on one or two streets, and a population of about six thousand. Now, I see around me an actual metropolis, displaying street after street of well-built edifices, filled with an active and enterprising people and exhibiting every mark of permanent commercial prosperity.”⁸² Hence, Americans would regenerate the prosperity and civilization, lost under Mexican rule, that earlier descendants of Europeans had husbanded. The intellectual cultivation of the padres gave them something in common with Taylor: gentility. That quality also existed in the Californios who had preserved their power by ingratiating themselves with the treasure-seeking Americans who flooded into the region.

Taylor in Mexico

Taylor had no trepidations about his next journey, to Mexico, but his fellow Americans did. “The Mexicans, they said, were robbers, to a man,” he wrote after reaching Mexico City. “One’s life, even, was not safe among them, and their bitter

⁸² Bayard Taylor, “California. Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXXVI,” Feb. 11, 1850.

hostility to Americans would subject me to continual insult.⁸³ A “tall, raw-boned Yankee” expressed shock and indignation that a Mexican guide abandoned his party, but on further questioning Taylor found out from him that the American had broken his contract with the guide. “I therefore determined to follow the plan I had adopted in California,” Taylor explained, “and to believe nothing that I had not seen with my own eyes.”⁸⁴

Taylor found less thievery than his Americans would have had him believe, though robbers did tie him up and shake him down. “Near Guadalajara I met with the usual good fortune of travelers, in being attacked by robbers,” he wrote his *Tribune* readers. “These gentry, henceforth, are not entirely fabulous beings with me, but I hope on all future occasions to get out of their hands as safely as the first time. Nearly all my funds were invested in a draft in Mexico, so that I only lost the sum necessary for my ride hither, with many little articles which the villains will find difficulty in using to advantage. My horse had a narrow escape, and I believe would have gone, had I not rather impudently insisted that he was unfit for their line of business. Our interview was interesting, notwithstanding its disagreeable features (the worst of which was their leaving me, fast bound, in a ravine off the road) – but I have not now space to give it in detail.”⁸⁵ These details, Taylor saved for another purpose.

Taylor’s original plan, after he finished surveying San Francisco on December 15, 1849, was to sail from there to Mazatlan, Mexico, then cross to Vera Cruz and return to New York by steamship. Of course, he also planned to describe the rest of his journey in

⁸³ Bayard Taylor, “Mexico. Bayard Taylor’s Letters No. XXXVIII,” March 7, 1850, 5.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

letters to the *Tribune*. But somewhere along the way, it occurred to Taylor that he, too, could grow rich off the Gold Rush. His gold, however, would be literary. He wrote his friend and mentor Nathaniel P. Willis, “I am storing up a rich harvest, not indeed of gold dust, but of incident and adventure. The materials here, for an author, are most marvellous and abundant. The features of such a historical phenomenon as I witness here will make a picture that cannot be forgotten.”⁸⁶ Taylor struck a deal with G. P. Putnam to publish *Eldorado, or, Adventures in the Path of Empire*. He would realize a 12½ percent royalty on all books sold, a bit better than the 10 percent after expenses that he received from Wiley for *Views A-foot*.⁸⁷

The *Tribune* gave readers a taste of Taylor’s Mexico travels May 3, 1850, publishing the story of how he was robbed on the road from Magdalena to Guadalajara. Locals warned Taylor that robbers roamed the road and that he ought to hire a bodyguard, but he continued alone anyway. When he noticed a bush moving on the roadside he drew his pistol but did not fire at two robbers who trained muskets on him. “Down with your pistols,” they yelled, ordering him down from his horse. “The weapon was held by a ferocious-looking native, dressed in a pink calico shirt and white pantaloons,” Taylor wrote. “On the other side of me stood a second, covering me with another double-barreled musket, and a little in the rear, appeared a third. I had walked like an unsuspecting mouse, into the very teeth of the trap laid for me.”⁸⁸ They shook him down for about \$20. “They spared all my letters, books, and papers,” he wrote with a note of

⁸⁶ Bayard Taylor to Nathaniel P. Willis, 31 October 1849. In Bayard Taylor, *Selected Letters of Bayard Taylor*. Ed. Paul C. Wermuth (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), 74.

⁸⁷ Ezra Greenspan, *George Palmer Putnam: Representative American Publisher* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 338.

⁸⁸ Bayard Taylor, “The Robber Region of Mexico,” *New-York Tribune*, May 3, 1850, 6.

thanks, “but took my thermometer, compass and card-case, together with a number of drawing pencils, some soap (a thing the Mexicans never use) and what few little articles of the toilette I carried with me. A bag hanging at my saddle-bow, containing ammunition, went at once, as well as a number of oranges and cigars in my pockets, the robbers leaving me one of the latter as a sort of consolation for my loss.”⁸⁹ Perhaps feeling a little guilty, the robbers left him one of his oranges and a half-dozen tortillas to eat once he freed himself from the ropes with which they had bound him.⁹⁰ Taylor told of other robberies that had occurred on the road to Guadalajara. In one incident, he wrote, a gang had attacked a camp of soldiers and traders eighteen months before, killing eleven of the merchants. Black crosses marked their roadside graves, “while directly above them stands a rough gibbet, on which three of the robbers, who were afterwards taken, swing in chains. I confess to a decided feeling of satisfaction, when I saw that three, at least, had obtained their deserts. Their long black hair hung over their faces, their clothes were dropping in tatters, and their skeleton-bones protruded through the dry and shrunken flesh. The thin, pure air of the tableland had prevented decomposition, and the vultures and buzzards had been kept off by the nearness of the bodies to the road. It is said, however, that neither wolves nor vultures will touch a dead Mexican, his flesh being always too highly seasoned by the red pepper he has eaten.”⁹¹ When he reached Guadalajara, a kindly priest warned him the town was full of robbers and sent him to a hotel where he could be assured of his safety.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

The robbery episode was followed May 16 by a review accompanied by two full columns of excerpts from *Eldorado* that were mostly embellished versions of letters Taylor recycled from the California trip.⁹² Readers would have to pay \$1.25 a copy if they wanted to find out what happened next.⁹³

Taylor's place in print culture: Books and lectures

Taylor had some doubts about the prospect of a book on California when Greeley sent him off to cover the Gold Rush in the summer of 1849. "I left the question unsettled in my mind until I should see something of the country, but before the close of my second day in San Francisco, my determination was taken," he wrote publisher George P. Putnam. "In my letters to the Tribune I have given an outline of my experiences, reserving the more personal portions for my book. You will probably see the letters and may judge therefrom, something of the character of the work. There is the richest material in the world to work upon, and I feel quite certain of doing something with it which may be of lasting credit."⁹⁴

Concluding his Mexico observations in the *Tribune*, Taylor blamed himself for allowing himself to be robbed while assuring readers that such incidents were rare. "So much for Mexican travel, under its two most different aspects," he wrote. "Its difficulties and dangers have been greatly overrated. A prudent and cautious man, (I confess I was not sufficiently cautious.) armed with a pair of good revolvers, may travel the length and breadth of the country with little danger of being plundered. A company of

⁹² "Reviews of New Books," *New-York Daily Tribune*, May 16, 1850, 2.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Bayard Taylor to George P. Putnam, 30 Sept. 1849. In *The Unpublished Letters of Bayard Taylor in the Huntington Library*, ed. John Richie Schultz (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1937), 22-23.

five is perfectly safe anywhere” To Taylor, Mexicans were harmless people who went about their own business and blamed boorish American newcomers for stirring up trouble. “The rancheros are for the most part an inoffensive race, who would sooner do one a kindness than an injury,” he proclaimed. “To the imprudence of our own countrymen, I am convinced, is to be attributed the greater part of the quarrels that have occurred.”⁹⁵

Taylor’s lectures on race and national progress

Taylor was no slouch as a businessman, and if he had possessed moderate tastes he might not have lectured and written so much about his travels. But his first love, poetry, could not finance construction of his lavish country house, Cedarcroft, which he had custom-built and caused him to go into debt.⁹⁶ Ownership of a regal estate was the cost of membership in the genteel literary circle of the Northeast, and Cedarcroft symbolized the success of a literary lion who had grown up a poor farmboy.⁹⁷ His experiences on the road constituted the basis of a profitable cycle. First, they provided raw material from which to write travel letters to the *Tribune*, which paid him a salary that he used to buy stock in the company once Greeley and McElrath offered it in 1849. Taylor expanded these letters into books published by George Putnam. His status as an author opened the way for his strongest stream of income, though he came to despise it: lecturing. The celebrity generated by the publication of *Eldorado* in 1850 set him up to hit the lyceum circuit that had so benefited him as a youth. In the winter 1850-51 season,

⁹⁵ Taylor, “Mexico,” 5.

⁹⁶ Paul Wermuth, *Bayard Taylor* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1973), 24. Taylor paid \$15,000 for the house, but insisting on perfection in every detail the cost of construction overran that by \$5,000. More than anything, this is why he kept up such a busy lecture schedule.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

he delivered fifteen lectures. But in the next 14 years he spoke another 784 times on his travels around the world and on related geographic and anthropological topics, earning \$37,500.⁹⁸ Taylor parlayed the California assignment, from which he produced the book *Eldorado* in 1850, into a career of travel writing for the *Tribune*, ultimately becoming a shareholder.⁹⁹ *Eldorado* went through ten printings in thirty years. It appeared in England in 1851, and it was translated into German in 1852.¹⁰⁰ Subsequent books that he developed from his *Tribune* letters proved popular, and he supplemented his writing income by giving lectures about what he had seen. His journeys included trips through the Middle East, Russia, Germany, and across the Pacific with Commodore Matthew Perry to Japan.¹⁰¹ Sales figures are notoriously difficult to obtain from publishers, but Taylor revealed in a letter to his mother, Rebecca Bauer Taylor, that G. P. Putnam paid him a royalty of \$2,650 on 14,434 copies of his travel books for the year 1854.¹⁰²

The collective intellect of his lecture audiences varied from venue to venue, Taylor observed, but the audience's experience was the same regardless of the locale. "At first, there was the usual amount of curiosity, followed by an uncertain silence and impassiveness," he wrote with the benefit of eight years' experience as a lyceum speaker. "Judgment was held in abeyance; each depended a little on the verdict pronounced by others, but all at last silently coalesced into a mutual understanding, and were thenceforth

⁹⁸ Bayard Taylor, private account book. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁹⁹ Wermuth, *Bayard Taylor*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰² Bayard Taylor to Rebecca Bauer Taylor, 21 March 1855. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

steadily attentive, critical, and appreciative. These phases of the mind of an audience are not betrayed by any open demonstration. They communicate themselves to the mind of the lecturer by a subtle magnetism which he cannot explain, yet the truth of which is positive to his mind. I am sometimes inclined to think that there is as distinct an individuality in audiences as there is in single persons. The speaker, after a little practice, is able to guess the average capacity as well as the average cultivation of those whom he addresses. Thus, notwithstanding the heterogeneous character of the population of California, the companies to whom I lectured made no divided impression upon me; each community, new as it was, had already its *collective* character.”¹⁰³

Taylor revealed his thinking about the differences among the races and religions in his earliest lecture, “The Animal Man.” He singled out Catholics for incorporating fasts into the liturgical calendar because he believed the toll they took on the body influenced the behavior of the faithful. “Who can tell how much political oppression,” he asked the hundreds who gathered to hear him at each stop on the circuit, “how much harsh and bitter theology, how much individual cynicism and mistrust, may have their origin in the scrofula of the monarch, the dyspepsia of the priest, or the disordered liver or lung of the layman?”¹⁰⁴ In an extension of the phrenology he learned through the lyceum and in his own library, Taylor told his audiences that the physical appearance of a race revealed its moral and mental traits. African blacks were tall but lacked grace or beauty, Taylor told them. Therefore, Taylor pronounced, they had created no significant

¹⁰³ Bayard Taylor, “New Pictures from California,” in *At Home and Abroad: A Sketch-Book of Life, Scenery and Men* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1862), 49-50.

¹⁰⁴ Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 150.

art.¹⁰⁵ Then again, Americans demonstrated their own degeneracy through the “morbid emotion” of their popular literature, he complained.¹⁰⁶ “What – in the name of physiology – what sort of a race shall spring from the loins of those tallow-faced, narrow chested, knockneed, spindle shanked simpering sons of rich fathers whom we see every day?” Taylor asked, declaring that in just three generations Americans would degenerate into simians.¹⁰⁷

Given these views, it is easy to understand why Taylor admired the vigorous vaqueros and rancheros he encountered in California and Mexico. But he still thought Anglo-Saxons were superior to them on account of the climate in which their race developed. “Climate is beyond all doubt the most powerful of these external influences which give shape to the plastic nature of man,” Taylor proclaimed in the lecture “Man and Climate.” Because each race had always inhabited its own particular climate zone, he argued, each race’s possibilities were limited by the nature of its existence within the climate. Africans, he said, were “careless of the future because his existence is certain, the Esquimaux because it is a matter of chance. The former does not advance because he has not the stimulus of necessity, and the latter because he has too much of it. The African has nothing to do but live, while if the Esquimaux is living, he is accomplishing all that can be expected of him.” Taylor naturally extended the logic of the African in the tropics of the Eastern Hemisphere to the Mexican in the tropics of the Western Hemisphere. This was not original thinking on his part; Georges Pouchet expressed similar sentiments in *The Plurality of the Human Race*, which Taylor owned in the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 150.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 152.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

original French.¹⁰⁸ But there was novelty in the way Taylor applied it to American expansionist ideology. Because “every important triumph which man has achieved since his creation belongs to the Caucasian race. Our mental and moral superiority is self evident,” he told audiences. But he added, “Permanent, self-supporting colonization in another climate is impossible. This knowledge should restrain our national ambition.”¹⁰⁹ For intellectual and ideological reasons, it made sense that Taylor took it easy on Mexicans because he believed an American takeover of Latin America would hasten the demise of the Anglo-Saxon, whose offspring’s future was precarious enough as it was.

Nonetheless, Taylor came to believe in America’s Manifest Destiny because he thought it was part of the machinery of progress. “It was characteristic of B. that he would not agree with the opinions of people deploring a new invention or a victory of science, like locomotion by steam etc., as destroying more and more the romance and poetry of life,” his widow, Marie Hansen-Taylor, recalled in her personal papers. “He expressed this in his article ‘The Erie R.R.’ by saying: Let the changes that must come, come: and be sure they will bring us more than they take away.’ He believed in the progress of the world and that everything truly in its path was good, whether we were able to see it at once or not.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ “Climate, we have said, has a decisive influence upon a man taken to another country; it must only be understood in the sense of this influence, and we have seen that it is generally a pernicious one,” Georges Pouchet wrote in *The Plurality of the Human Race* (London: Anthropological Society of London, 1864), 91. “It makes itself felt in the physical and moral nature of man, both deeply and superficially.” The book, in the original French, is listed as “G. Pouchet, *De la Pluralite des Races Humaines, Essai Anthropologique*, 1858,” in *Executor’s Sale Catalogue of the Library of the Late Mr. Bayard Taylor*.

¹⁰⁹ Beatty, *Bayard Taylor*, 153.

¹¹⁰ Marie Hansen-Taylor, “A Reminiscence of Bayard Taylor,” 1880s. Bayard Taylor Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The logic of Taylor's narratives about Californios and Mexicans

Taylor was cosmopolitan, a bicultural American-German who saw American and foreign cultures with the same eyes. He did not believe American ideas made all Americans superior. Throughout his career, Taylor disdained mob justice and detested boorish behavior. His *Tribune* article about a trip to Colorado dripped with contempt for settlers' mob justice after a gang of Americans in Golden City lynched a Mexican. The man had been accused of assaulting two women, and the crowd seized the Mexican from the sheriff in June 1866.¹¹¹ The "citizens" who committed the murder, whom one can assume were white, ordered all Mexicans out of the town even though they had nothing to do with the crime and were unrelated to the accused. "Affairs of this kind make an unpleasant impression," Taylor wrote. "The improvised code of a new settlement is no longer necessary here, and it seems to exist by virtue of a lingering taste for rude and violent justice."¹¹² In the Pike's Peak gold mining district, he observed that settlers were for the most part civilized because Montana had drawn away the low-lives who might otherwise have made homes in Colorado.¹¹³ Of the mountain town of Buckskin Joe, he wrote:

These remote, outlying mining communities have made a most agreeable impression upon every member of our party. The horde of more or less ignorant adventurers having drifted away to Montana and Idaho, those who remain are for the most part men of education and natural refinement, and this hospitality is a favor in a double sense.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Taylor, "A Trip to Colorado," *New York Daily Tribune* (Sept. 7, 1866): 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Taylor noted Montana's tendency to draw away pioneer riff-raff who might otherwise have moved to Colorado in both the November 9 and November 10 installments of his series.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, "A Trip to Colorado," *New York Daily Tribune* (Nov. 9, 1866): 2.

When he went abroad, Taylor was ashamed of the reputation that vulgar American travelers gave him and his countrymen. Taylor's widow, Marie Hansen-Taylor, recalled his reaction to some ugly Americans in Gotha, Germany:

A wealthy family from Brooklyn had made the town their abode during a time and brought disgrace upon their country by their pretensions and their vulgarities. It was of no avail to say that they were not fair specimens of the people that very few (at that time) of the well-educated class traveled abroad, etc. etc. Our friends had this obnoxious phase of American society before their eyes, and notwithstanding our standing among them, we had to bear the brunt of it. ... B. saw distinctly all the shortcomings of his country-men and of the country itself. But he would never acknowledge them abroad. There he defended it.¹¹⁵

That Taylor sided with American property claims in California is unsurprising, given his own belief in Manifest Destiny. Articles 8 and 9 of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provided that Mexican claims to "property of every kind ... shall be inviolably respected," but Congress struck the Article 10 provision that "all grants of land made by the Mexican government ... shall be respected as valid."¹¹⁶ Californio land grants, thus, were all thrown into question. Subsequently, the federal Land Act of 1851 opened Californio land to litigation in American courts, and a combination of fraud, indebtedness, and manipulation resulted in the transfer of 40 percent of Californio-owned land to U.S. ownership.¹¹⁷

Taylor had little ill to say about people of any nationality, but he was not shy about promoting America as the world's guiding light. Americans were where they

¹¹⁵ Marie Hansen-Taylor, "A Reminiscence of Bayard Taylor."

¹¹⁶ The sociopolitical context for the American land grab in California is detailed in Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, "'We Feel the Want of Protection': The Politics of Law and Race in California, 1848-1878," *California History* 81, no. 3/4(2003): 96-125.

¹¹⁷ Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, "'We Feel the Want of Protection': The Politics of Law and Race in California, 1848-1878," *California History* 81, no. 3/4(2003): 102.

belonged – his understanding of the climate theory of the distribution of races in the world told him this – and Mexicans were where they belonged, as well. Mexican Catholics were not evil, as his Late Southern counterpart G. Douglas Brewerton had it; they were merely misguided. Harmless though Mexicans were, they were not the ones to bring progress in the world. And though he credited the Spanish with taming the wilderness, the padres had let the land relapse and were little more than stewards waiting to turn over their land to a more energetic people. No longer were they capable of bringing progress. That fate, Taylor believed, fell to the Caucasian race who would team up with the economically and politically elite, physically superior, Spanish-descended Californios whose ways most closely matched those of Americans.

Writing about the people of the world, and proclaiming Americans' superiority to them all in the lecture hall, made Taylor a wealthy man with money to invest. When owners Greeley and McElrath decided to turn the *Tribune* into a joint-stock company in 1849, Taylor bought three of its hundred shares, which sold for \$1,000 apiece.¹¹⁸ As royalties for his books rolled in, he bought three more, increasing not just his stake in the paper but his motivation to make it more profitable. Some years he received a dividend of \$1,500; other years he received nothing. Occasionally Taylor mortgaged or sold a share or two when he needed the money. In 1862, after accepting a \$6,000-a-year diplomatic post as U.S. charge d'affaires to Russia, Taylor did just that. "I have offered a share for sale – its value being the sum I must stake," he wrote to *Tribune* managing editor Sydney Howard Gay. "If you know, or can hear of a purchaser, it would remove every difficulty

¹¹⁸ "Fifty Years Old To-day; The Tribune — Something of Its History," *New York Tribune*, April 10, 1891, 1.

in the way of my leaving at once.”¹¹⁹ Gay remained with the *Tribune* for another four years before he was forced out by senior shareholders. When he left for a similar job at the *Chicago Tribune*, he sold his two shares in the paper to a man who followed Taylor’s path by parlaying newspaper correspondence into books and a spot on the lecture circuit: the *Tribune*’s chief war correspondent during the Civil War, Albert Deane Richardson.¹²⁰ Like Taylor, his wanderings carried him into western lands heavily populated by Mexicans. But Richardson’s descriptions were far less charitable.

Albert Deane Richardson: Abolitionism meets anti-Mexicanism

Albert Deane Richardson was born Oct. 6, 1833, in Franklin, Mass., an area where his family had lived and farmed for nearly 200 years.¹²¹ He led the typical life of a New England farmer’s son, pitching in with chores on the family farm along the Charles River.¹²² The family was not well off, but his parents valued education and saw to it that he got one. He attended the public schools of Franklin and, like his brother Charles,

¹¹⁹ Bayard Taylor to Sydney Howard Gay, 1 April 1862. Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

¹²⁰ Albert Deane Richardson to Sydney Howard Gay, 15 August 1867, Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

¹²¹ Junius Browne, “Albert D. Richardson,” *The Phrenological Journal and Packard’s Monthly* 50, no. 1 (July 1870), 45. Richardson’s correspondence for the *Boston Journal*, *Western Mountaineer*, and *New York Tribune* and two books that resulted from that work constitute the bulk of the evidence available about his journalistic work. These books are *Beyond the Mississippi* and *The Secret Service, The Field, The Dungeon, and The Escape*. In addition, his widow, Abby Sage Richardson, and colleague Junius Browne wrote biographical sketches that reveal something of his career trajectory. But these texts were written after his death in 1869 and represent idealized versions of his life. What brings the logic of his career into the sharpest focus is his private correspondence with his brother Charles Addison Richardson and his managing editor at the *Tribune*, Sydney Howard Gay.

¹²² Mary J. Richardson, *Memorial Letters to My Grandchildren* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1893), 2.

studied the college preparatory curriculum at the Holliston Academy, which offered Latin, Greek, natural sciences, music, painting, and drawing.¹²³

The education of the soul, however, was paramount in the Richardson household. Although he did not follow Charles into the Congregational ministry, Albert remained curious about religion throughout his life, embracing Puritanism early on but questioning religious orthodoxy in his thirties. Young Albert preferred writing and school to the drudgery of farming. He served as editor of a school newspaper, the *Wreath Offering*, a role that prepared him for his career as a journalist.¹²⁴ He devoured novels, poetry, and books about travel and adventure throughout his life.¹²⁵ Life on the family farm would not fulfill him as it had his ancestors. “I want to do something for myself,” he declared many times. “I want to be independent. I want to see something of the world.”¹²⁶

Following this impulse, he left home at the age of 17, stopping off in Pittsburgh for a little less than a year. There, he took a job as a teacher and sent stories and poems to *Waverley Magazine*. He penned several plays for local theater companies and wrote a number of freelance pieces for the local press, which led to a job as a reporter on the *Pittsburgh Journal*, where he wrote up lectures, theater performances, and other local happenings.¹²⁷ When wanderlust took hold once more, he headed farther west to Cincinnati, where he joined the staff of the *Sun* and later the *Unionist*, the *Columbian*,

¹²³ “Holliston Academy,” advertisement in *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal*, Sept. 4, 1844, 143.,

¹²⁴ Browne, “Albert D. Richardson,” 45.

¹²⁵ Browne, “Albert D. Richardson,” 45.

¹²⁶ Browne, “Albert D. Richardson,” 45-46.

¹²⁷ Abby Sage Richardson, “Life of Albert D. Richardson,” in *Garnered Sheaves from the Writings of Albert D. Richardson* (Hartford, CT: Columbian Book Co., 1871), 25.

and the *Gazette*.¹²⁸ In Cincinnati he developed a quick hand as a stenographer and skirted a court order barring reporters from taking notes in court by reporting the proceedings from memory.¹²⁹ When Matt Ward, the scion of a wealthy Louisville family went on trial for shooting a schoolteacher, his friends wanted an exact statement of testimony. They hired Richardson, whose report sold more than twenty thousand copies.¹³⁰ Richardson married Mary Louise Pease and raised six children with her. In 1856, he pulled up stakes once more to write about the struggle over slavery in Kansas Territory for the *Boston Journal* and join the Free State movement.¹³¹

Formative influences

Christian faith, Congregationalist teachings about the perils of slavery and Catholicism, and participation in print culture shaped Albert D. Richardson's way of seeing the world. Richardson was brought up a strict Orthodox Congregationalist in a stronghold of Calvinist belief.¹³² The Rev. Nathaniel Emmons held particular sway over the people of Franklin.¹³³ Congregationalism in both branches emphasized the notion that the governed choose who will govern them, with Christian congregations controlling themselves without reference to any wider church authority or hierarchy.¹³⁴ Catholics were painted by the most dominant Congregationalist thinkers as a horde

¹²⁸ Browne, "Albert D. Richardson," 46.

¹²⁹ Abby Sage Richardson, "Life of Albert D. Richardson," 28.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³¹ Browne, "Albert D. Richardson," 46.

¹³² "Albert D. Richardson. Obituary," *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 2, 1869.

¹³³ Abby Sage Richardson, "Life of Albert D. Richardson," 19.

¹³⁴ Mary K. Cayton, "Congregationalism," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 357-373.

beholden to the papal throne of Rome and not to American democracy. Because of this, the Rev. Lyman Beecher proclaimed that Catholics put the entire nation's future in jeopardy. Beecher's *A Plea for the West* declared that Protestants must establish their faith in the frontier before Catholics could prevent them from building a truly Christian nation that would instigate a thousand-year reign by Christ on earth.¹³⁵ The town retained the Puritan belief that a good Christian read the Bible, meditated, and prayed from the heart through inspiration from the Holy Spirit and not from formulas prescribed by pastors.¹³⁶ The Congregationalist structure of governance and tenets of worship were thus fundamentally at odds with those of the Roman Catholic Church. At the end of his life, Richardson belonged to no church but held religious sentiments that his obituary writer said "very nearly coincided with advanced Unitarianism."¹³⁷ In the 1860s, to be Unitarian was to believe in the innate good of mankind while striving to preserve the social order and promote the perfection of society. As theology scholar Peter Williams put it, "Their ultimate vision was of a properly ordered and stable society permeated by a genteel culture shaped by a benevolent elite."¹³⁸

Richardson was not shy about corresponding with writers and lecturers he admired. Sumner, Kan., where Richardson and his young family put down roots in 1857, was settled by New Englanders bent on preventing slavery from spreading into Kansas

¹³⁵ "Lyman Beecher," in *Encyclopedia of American Religious History Vol. 1*, eds. Edward L. Queen II, Stephen R. Prothero, and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 299.

¹³⁶ Baird Tipson, "New England Puritanism," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 467-480.

¹³⁷ "Albert D. Richardson. Obituary," *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 2, 1869.

¹³⁸ Peter W. Williams, "Unitarianism and Universalism," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 584.

Territory. The mails brought them publications from Boston, including an Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. broadside railing against religious orthodoxy. “The doctrines which you assail with simple Common Sense, & with invincible logic, were taught me from the cradle,” Richardson wrote Holmes in May 1859, “but observation & experience have convinced [*sic*] me that they find more than all other causes combined to make hypocrites & practical atheists. The beauty of Religion has been concealed long enough under the blasphemies of ‘Orthodoxy;’ & all good men must rejoice [*sic*] that you commence so delicately & faithfully the task of showing how widely the sweet life & pure teachings of Christ differ from the wild legends & outrageous fictions with which theologians have invested & entertained them.”¹³⁹

Richardson’s career trajectory: Journalist, abolitionist, capitalist

Adventurism proved profitable for Richardson. He stepped off a Missouri River steamboat in Quindaro, site of present-day Kansas City, Kan., on June 1, 1857, and became involved in abolitionist politics almost immediately. When he served as secretary of the Free-State Convention on July 15-16, 1857, in Topeka, Free Soil Republicans denied the validity of a pro-slavery territorial legislature that had convened in the nearby town of Lecompton, declared that faction a minority, and declared that because of this the admission of Kansas to the Union under a pro-slavery constitution would be “an act of injustice and despotism.”¹⁴⁰ While working as correspondent for the *Boston Journal*, Richardson then turned to the task of promoting the Free Soil Kansas Constitution,

¹³⁹ Albert Deane Richardson to Oliver Wendell Holmes. Letters from Various Correspondents, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Webster Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas* (Topeka: G.W. Martin, 1876), 129.

speaking in its favor at ratification meetings in Kansas towns.¹⁴¹ He was nominated to be reporter of the Kansas Supreme Court under the Free Soil Constitution in April 1858, and he served as journal clerk of the Kansas House in 1859.¹⁴² It seems almost certain that Richardson made an ideological choice when he selected Sumner as his new home in late 1857. He lived there for two years while he covered Bleeding Kansas for the *Journal* and joined in the Free State cause.¹⁴³ The radical abolitionist John P. Wheeler of Massachusetts founded the town and named it after George Sumner, one of the town's original shareholders and brother of the abolitionist Sen. Charles Sumner.¹⁴⁴ Sumner rose up in opposition to the pro-slavery Kansas town of Atchison, whose residents refused to allow abolitionists to live there.¹⁴⁵ The Free Staters coveted the land because of its strategic location on the Missouri River.¹⁴⁶

Commercial and political interests were closely intertwined in Richardson's reports, reflecting the machinery and ideology of Manifest Destiny. This also reflected Richardson's multiple roles: Free State political operative, paramilitary figure, would-be land agent, explorer, and journalist. He owned shares in several town companies in both eastern Kansas and present-day Colorado, including the towns of Colorado City, Auraria

¹⁴¹ William G. Cutler, "Albert S. Corey," in *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), accessed October 30, 2008, at http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/shawnee/shawnee-co-p47.html#BIOGRAPHICAL_SKETCHES_ALDRICH-KEMBLE.

¹⁴² Daniel Webster Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas* (Topeka: G. W. Martin, 1875), 129, 168, 196.

¹⁴³ George Remsburg, "Leavenworth showed great promise from 1857 to 1867," *Leavenworth* (Kan.) *Times* (undated). From the collections of the Leavenworth County Historical Society and Museum, accessed online October 23, 2008, at <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/leavenwo/library/1857GOOD.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ George W. Martin, ed., "Old Sumner," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1911-1912, Vol. XII* (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1912), 437-438.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

(which became west Denver), and Golden City, home of the *Western Mountaineer*. So although there was a jarring shift in tone when he changed from his usual subjects of westward expansion, Indians, territorial politics, and the wild state of life on the frontier, it is easy to understand his possible motivations for assuming the blatantly boosterish tone in the following excerpt:

GOLDEN CITY — You perceive that I hail no more from the mountain or the desert, but from a city – for aught you know some embryotic London or nascent New York. Golden City? Does it not fall smooth and unctuous from the lips? Is it not suggestive of palatial mansions, merchant princes, and pockets full of rocks? ... As Denver is fourteen miles from the point where the road to the Gregory diggings enters the spurs, a party of gentlemen have commenced this enterprise on Clear Creek, at the very foot of the mountains, believing that the miners will purchase their supplies in the nearest town.¹⁴⁷

As ardent as he was about the politics of abolition, he was equally ardent about journalism. Richardson was so protective of his writing and byline that he threatened to quit the *Tribune* after managing editor Sydney Howard Gay cut his letters and omitted the initials that identified him as the author. “For the last year your rules have precluded it altogether, + I find that it makes me very stupid,” Richardson complained, “that I cannot write with any life + spirit. Impersonality is no doubt good for the journal, but in my case it is death to the correspondent.”¹⁴⁸ Richardson complained that Gay’s staff cut one of his letters in half “one paragraph here + another there, throughout. The pruning knife too I know, is good for the paper but,” he reiterated, “it also is death to the correspondent.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Richardson, “Letter from Pike’s Peak,” *Boston Daily Journal*, July 18, 1859, p. 4.

¹⁴⁸ Albert Deane Richardson to Sydney Howard Gay, 27 April 1862. Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Richardson would stay if those two abuses ceased, for “I had rather be attached to The Tribune for 2/3 of a salary, than to any other paper in the world for a double sum.”¹⁵⁰

Richardson amassed modest wealth through land speculation, book advances, and dividends from his *Tribune* stock. Land speculation provided another income stream for Richardson. He wrote that “a friend” who paid \$300 for two shares in the town of Quindaro, on the site of present-day Kansas City, Kan., sold them for \$1,500, though shares in another settlement up the river plummeted from \$400 in 1857 to \$20 in 1860. Speculation about the course of the railroad drove this real estate game.¹⁵¹

Richardson was well aware of newspapers’ profit potential. As co-owner of the *Western Mountaineer* from 1859 to 1860, he used the proceeds to buy Colorado real estate and finance his wanderings to the Mexican border and back. Seven years later, he informed Sydney Howard Gay about the money the leading California papers raked in. “The *Sacramento Union*, *Alta*, and *Bulletin* clear each from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year,” he wrote. “... Mac Cullish, of *Alta*, lives in the best house in San Francisco ... and the *Union* people here have magnificent homes. Worrell, one of the proprietors, I think used to be a compositor on the *Tribune*.” When he died, he left his widow, Abby Sage Richardson, a share of the *Tribune* that she hoped to sell back to the Tribune Association

¹⁵⁰ Richardson to Gay, 27 April 1862.

¹⁵¹ Albert Deane Richardson, “Letter from Kansas,” *Boston Journal*,

for \$10,000 to \$12,000.¹⁵² Charles Addison Richardson, handling negotiations, finally settled for \$9,000.¹⁵³

As he revised *Beyond the Mississippi* in 1869 for a second edition, Richardson assumed a degree of management duty at the *Tribune*.¹⁵⁴ Between *Tribune* dividends, proceeds from his books, and earnings from real estate speculation, Richardson carved out a place for himself among elites who could choose not to work for a wage if he wished. On Dec. , at the age of 36, he was shot dead by his wife's ex-husband, who had lain in wait in the business office of the *Tribune*.

Participation in print culture

Albert and his brother Charles Addison Richardson were avid lyceum-goers and compared notes on the speakers they had seen. To Albert, none was more striking than Bayard Taylor. "I enjoy the courses of lectures this winter very much," he wrote from Cincinnati in January 1855. "Bayard Taylor has spoken twice. I am always interested in him, & sometimes think it wouldn't be at all strange if I were someday to adopt his vocation – that of a professional traveler."¹⁵⁵ Once Albert Richardson had something unique to say, and once his letters from the West had given him something of a name

¹⁵² Abby Sage Richardson to Whitelaw Reid, Jan. 19, 1872. Whitelaw Reid Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress. Abby wrote, "I hear that some shares of the Times were recently sold at \$12,000 and several of my friends are sanguine that on the completion of the Tribune building its shares may increase to 16,000 or even \$20,000.

¹⁵³ Charles Addison Richardson to Whitelaw Reid, 15 Feb. 1871. Whitelaw Reid Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁵⁴ Institutional biographies of the *Tribune* say little about the mundane operations of the paper, so evidence of the actions of any editors other than Horace Greeley and Charles A. Dana are scant and fragmentary. A letter from Richardson in the Houghton Library manuscripts collection shows that he took care of some of the paper's business arrangements, including setting up *Tribune* correspondents' passage across the country and writing letters of introduction for them. Albert Deane Richardson to Mr. Winslow, William Warland Clapp Correspondence, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁵⁵ Albert Deane Richardson to Charles Addison Richardson, 25 Jan. 1855. Richardson Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

among readers in the East, he set about following in Taylor's footsteps. The *Western Mountaineer*, for which Richardson was co-editor, broke the news that he had left Colorado to reunite with his family in Massachusetts and embark on a speaking tour on Pike's Peak and the West.¹⁵⁶

A large audience gathered at the First Congregational Church in Franklin to hear Richardson give a lyceum lecture in January 1860. His theme: "Out West." A one-paragraph review in the *Boston Journal* praised the talk, which was "interspersed throughout with practical information, and many mirth-provoking anecdotes, and elicited enthusiastic applause." He discussed "some of the great climatic laws which govern the emigrant on his way; the general tendency of the whole human race toward the setting sun; the difference between a journey from Boston to Kansas now and forty years ago; the vast resources of the West, its marvelous development, and many amusing features in its society." A railroad to the Pacific, he declared, was necessary for the development of the West.¹⁵⁷

Richardson also followed Taylor's formula of turning newspaper travel correspondence into books. First, he spun his *Tribune* reports on the Southern secession movement and tales of his confinement in and escape from Confederate prison camps into *The Secret Service, The Field, The Dungeon, and the Escape*. No circulation figures could be located, but his obituary stated that it was ordered more rapidly than the publishers could print it.¹⁵⁸ Next, he built on his 1859-1860 letters from New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas, by embarking on a rail trip to the Pacific Ocean with Rep. Schuyler

¹⁵⁶ "Left us," *Western Mountaineer*, Nov. 8, 1860, 2.

¹⁵⁷ "Out West," *Boston Daily Journal*, Jan. 7, 1860, 4.

¹⁵⁸ "Albert Deane Richardson. Obituary," *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 3, 1869, 1.

Colfax, the Republican Speaker of the House, writing letters to the *Tribune* along the way.¹⁵⁹ The book that resulted from his Southwest and Far West letters, *Beyond the Mississippi*, sold 30,000 in the first six months after publication. The title sold a total of 96,000 to 100,000 copies.¹⁶⁰ Playing it safe, he took a lump payment from American Publishing Co. rather than royalty payments. Royalties would have paid four or five times as much.¹⁶¹

Richardson's representation of Mexicans

Richardson's sarcastic and often mean-spirited observations of life on the border reflected a belief in Anglo superiority — if not racial superiority, then certainly cultural. Allusions to Anglo-Saxon superiority are frequent in Richardson's journalism. Race played a peripheral role in the articles Richardson wrote from eastern Kansas through summer 1859, but he found the differences between Anglos, Indians, and Mexicans impossible to ignore when he journeyed through Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. He cast Anglo settlers as heroic figures pushing the edges of civilization into the frontier, while Indians were portrayed as generally an obstacle but still redeemable through the civilizing influence of "the Anglo Saxon race." Although he wrote little about blacks, Richardson's loathing for the institution of slavery was clear, and in the hierarchy of race on the frontier, blacks clearly fit above Indians. Mexicans, in Richardson's eyes, were beyond redemption not only because of their mixed blood but also because of their Iberian Catholic heritage. Their legacy, he believed, had to be washed away by a tide of Americans bearing democratic government

¹⁵⁹ "Albert Deane Richardson. Obituary," *New-York Tribune*, Dec. 3, 1869, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

and progress. An excerpt from one of the letters he sent from Kansas to the *Boston Journal* illustrates his view of Anglo superiority and the inevitability of Manifest

Destiny:

It is one of those uncontrollable movements which occur periodically among the American people – a great wave of human life, sweeping along the track of empire. There is a prophecy in it. The immediate purpose of the individuals composing it may not be successful, but the movement itself seems destined to accomplish something important and specific to our national development. Whether it is to found a new empire at the base of the Rocky Mountains, revealing vast stores of mineral wealth, and permanently locating the Pacific Railroad – to Americanize one of the rich provinces of Mexico, or to accomplish some other grand result, a few months will determine.¹⁶²

Richardson made it clear that he believed the Indian and the Mexican must get out of the way of American progress. Richardson's editorial on October 11, 1860, expressed frustration that U.S. negotiators with the Indians had not forced the tribes to give up their rights to the Pike's Peak gold region from the headwaters of the South Platte and Arkansas rivers down, agree to be removed from those lands to reservations out of the way of white emigration, and give up their nomadic hunting way of life, instead "to till the soil, practice the mechanic arts and adopt as far as possible the manners of the white man."¹⁶³ Richardson's description of white settlers' westward advance evoked what he apparently saw as the inevitable march of human progress:

There is something very impressive about this uncontrollable movement westward, which from remotest antiquity has impelled the human race toward the setting sun, and which now, on a great wave of human life, is bearing commerce and American civilization to our farthest frontier, and founding a new empire at the base of the Rocky Mountains.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Richardson, "Letter from Kansas," *Boston Daily Journal*, May 7, 1859, 2.

¹⁶³ Richardson, "Indian matters," *Western Mountaineer*, Oct. 11, 1860, 4. Richardson did not sign the editorial, but the writing style is his, the writer makes reference to Knox in the second person, and West was for the most part a silent partner unless both Richardson and Knox were traveling.

¹⁶⁴ Richardson report to the *Lawrence Republican*, June 5, 1860.

Reflecting on his arrival in Denver, Richardson wrote, “Two years ago, these ‘mother mountains’ ... were the abode of almost primeval silence; now they are teeming with the busy life of fifty thousand people.”¹⁶⁵ His report implied that the place was completely uninhabited, an empty quarter, although the area had been the site of territorial feuds for centuries, the most recent having been among the Southern Cheyenne-Southern Arapaho alliance and the Comanches.¹⁶⁶

Richardson’s conflation of racial, religious, and moral impurity

Richardson introduced Mexicans to his Boston readers in April 1859, when mule train drivers arrived at the Missouri River landings near present-day Kansas City to pick up goods for transport to Santa Fe and Arizona. He described them as “dusky” and “thievish looking” and referred to them as “Greasers,” an epithet he picked up from Anglo plainsmen.¹⁶⁷ Richardson owed his second-hand knowledge of Mexicans to the Southerners he encountered on the trail from Kansas into the Southwest. Richardson made numerous references to things he had overheard from Texans who still had an ax to grind with Mexicans. His first extended contact with Mexicans only came in the fall of 1859, when he journeyed to El Paso and then north through New Mexico to Colorado. He only found more Anglo animosity toward Mexican men when he crossed the Rio Grande into New Mexico. A pioneer Richardson met on the Jornada del Muerto told him that Mexican women were the kindest in the world. When Richardson asked whether the men were treacherous the stranger responded, “I never had any trouble with them; but

¹⁶⁵ Richardson report to the *Lawrence Republican*, June 16, 1860.

¹⁶⁶ Barry Pritzker, *A Native American Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 297.

¹⁶⁷ Richardson, “Letter from Kansas,” *Boston Daily Journal*, May 18, 1859, 3.

stranger, I always watch a Greaser, and at night I never let one travel behind me. It's the safe way, if you don't want to get stabbed or shot in the back."¹⁶⁸ Despite his characterizations of backwardness and dishonesty, Richardson found reason to praise some of the people he stayed with on the trail: "The hospitable Mexican entertains all travelers, but never demands payment, leaving that question wholly to his guest."¹⁶⁹

Richardson got his information wherever it made itself available. He recommended that his readers pick up W. W. H. Davis' *El Gringo* and the Pacific Railroad surveys to learn more about New Mexico.¹⁷⁰ But if a book was not at hand, a passing stranger would do. A Texan in Fort Smith, Arkansas, who was "thoroughly familiar with travel in the (Choctaw) nation" told Richardson, "I never permit one of them to ride behind me, and if I meet one I always watch him from a safe distance; it may be an over-caution; but they are too much like the Mexicans to be trusted."¹⁷¹

So Richardson carried at least a modicum of prejudice with him when he first came into extended contact with Mexicans near Fort Chadbourne, after he had entered Texas. The men were hauling produce in a crude cart. When he reached El Paso in October 1859, he learned the etymology of "Greaser." The term, he told his readers, originated in "the filthy, greasy appearance of the natives, both in clothing and person." Building on the slur of the filthy Mexican, he described a plant that "was in general use by the Mexicans in cleaning clothes and person ... but the Mexicans as a class deserved

¹⁶⁸ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 247.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁷⁰ Richardson, "Jottings from the Far West No. XXXIV," *Boston Daily Journal*, April 17, 1860, 3.

¹⁷¹ Richardson, "Jottings from the Far West – No. X," *Boston Daily Journal*, Oct. 8, 1859, 5.

to be known as ‘the great unwashed’” and wrote, “I have yet to see a male among them who would not be improved by half an hour under a pump-spout, with a vigorous man at the handle.”¹⁷² Richardson seemed surprised that the group to which he perceived himself as belonging, “the Americans,” was referred to in the Borderlands as “the white men,” as if he was not conscious of being white – just normal.¹⁷³

Racial mixing attracted Richardson’s continual notice in *Beyond the Mississippi*. Intermarriage was such a foreign concept to Richardson that he felt compelled to explain it to his readers. “Where the father is of pure white blood and the mother an Indian or half-breed, or vice versa, five of the children may be entirely white, with Saxon features, and a sixth will have unmixed Indian lineaments, with a skin dusky as the darkest Comanche or Pueblo,” he wrote.¹⁷⁴ The effect was not particularly pleasing to Richardson – or at least he thought it was not supposed to be. When he journeyed from Leavenworth in Kansas Territory to Denver in 1859, he described his hostess at a hotel in Louisville, Kan., as “a half-breed” with “two daughters with oval faces, olive complexions and bright black eyes the only pretty Indian girls I have ever seen.”¹⁷⁵ On describing the Cherokees as being the most civilized of Indian tribes, he explained, “They are largely tintured with white blood.” His Anglo-centric concept of beauty came up again when describing his hostess in a home on the Camino Real in Peralta, New Mexico Territory:

¹⁷² Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West – No. XIX,” *Boston Daily Journal*, Nov. 26, 1859, p. 5.

¹⁷³ In his explanation of frontier parlance for ethnic groups, Richardson explained that “Greaser is a term applied to the Mexicans through Texas, New Mexico and California by the Americans, or, to adopt another local phrase, ‘the white men.’” He wrote that Mexicans retaliated for the term “Greaser” by calling whites “Gringos,” which he thought meant “worthless fellows.” This seems to indicate that he was aware that “Greaser” was derogatory but chose to continue using it.

¹⁷⁴ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 221.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

“Our swarthy landlord was busy with his peons gathering corn, for November was close at hand. His young wife, pretty, intelligent and vivacious, went soberly about the rooms with a huge bunch of keys dangling by her side. She was the only comely Mexican woman I ever saw; and her little girl of two years had a face and figure which would have driven a sculptor mad with despair.”¹⁷⁶ He continued:

This youthful matron, to enlarge my vocabulary of Spanish, patiently repeated the names of objects about her house and court. Any dullard would acquire Castilian under such a teacher. She spoke no English. Some idea of New Mexico socially may be gathered from the statement made to me before leaving El Paso, that this lady was the only woman reputed chaste on the entire route to Santa Fe, three hundred and fifty miles through the most populous portion of the Territory.¹⁷⁷

Images of Mexicans as racially impure, physically filthy, and morally tainted went hand in hand in Richardson’s writing. He characterized Mexicans as unclean and untrustworthy. In describing a variety of cactus known as the soap plant, he noted:

[T]he Mexicans are reputed to use it in washing their persons and clothing; but generally they cherish strong antipathy to *all* soap. Most of them would be improved by spending half an hour under a pumpspout, with a vigorous man at the handle.¹⁷⁸

In *Beyond the Mississippi*, Richardson constructed a racial hierarchy that placed whites at the top, followed by “civilized” Indians, pure-blooded Indians unspoiled by miscegenation, blacks, and finally Mexicans. The Pueblo Indians are among those he characterized as “half-civilized: “They never intermarry with whites, and their women

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 249.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 249.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 231.

(almost the solitary exception to Indian tribes in general) are reputed inflexibly chaste. Each of their twenty villages is independent, with a democratic government.”¹⁷⁹

Aboard a mail stagecoach from El Paso to Santa Fe, Richardson scribbled a letter to the *Boston Journal* about the cultural collision between Southerners and Mexicans in West Texas. “The inalienable right of the Saxon to rule and sometimes to bully the inferior race, is rigidly maintained on this frontier,” he wrote in a dispatch datelined “Jornada del Muerto, New Mexico.” Though El Paso County, Texas, had 1,000 Mexican voters, he observed that Anglos controlled all elections even though they were outnumbered four-to-one. He characterized the alcalde of Mesilla, N.M., as “a ‘Greaser,’ wearing sandals instead of shoes, and adorned by a head of hair which had not recently, if ever, enjoyed the acquaintance of combs or brushes. He appeared on the bench without a coat; and a very dirty shirt represented the judicial ermine.” He spoke no English, and when he ordered a Kentuckian defendant who spoke no Spanish to get an interpreter, the Kentuckian replied, “Tell him that I understand the language of the United States, and if *he* don’t, he may bet an interpreter; I certainly shall not hire one for him!” Fined \$25 for contempt, the Kentuckian “soon became disgusted, and with several irreverent remarks in regard to ‘Greasers administering the law to white men,’ went about his business.”¹⁸⁰

When slavery was established in New Mexico Territory, he wrote:

[T]he slaves within her borders numbered less than twenty. Peon labor was cheaper, and the Mexican *would* [italics are in original text] treat the African as an equal. A disgusted Southron [sic] complained to me: “Before a nigger has been here a month he knows more than his master.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 265.

¹⁸⁰ Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West – No. XXV,” *Boston Journal*, Jan. 7, 1860, 5.

¹⁸¹ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 264.

Richardson explained that peon labor was cheaper than slave labor in West Texas and was common because “the Mexican, with the thriftlessness of his race, is always ready to contract a debt, and afterwards to bind himself in writing to work it out. ... This arrangement once made, he is wholly dependent upon his master, constantly keeping up or increasing the indebtedness, by purchasing necessities of him at exorbitant prices.”¹⁸² He saw Mexicans as a particular danger to civilized life because he believed they could not be trusted. “The ‘Greasers’ are the most treacherous people on earth,” he wrote. “They will treat you with courtesy and hospitality; but the peons can be induced by one to whom they are attached to waylay and kill anybody.”¹⁸³

When Richardson crossed into northern New Mexico, he did not expect that his host on a ranch with 1,500 head of cattle and 10,000 sheep would be a Mexican. “I anticipated pleasant company and a cordial reception,” he wrote. Instead, he found “a lank, villainous-looking Mexican” who wore an old straw hat, a woolen shirt, buckskin pants and moccasins. “His long, black locks shaded a most sinister countenance,” Richardson recounted. “In spite of his unprepossessing look, he was the very pink of courtesy, receiving me with many assurances of welcome, and manipulating the while as if ‘washing his hands with invisible soap in perceptible water.’ They were apparently, however, the only kinds of soap and water with which his person had come in contact for a long time.”¹⁸⁴ Richardson never wrote of having been personally threatened by a Mexican; in all his writing, he only told readers what he had heard from Texans and

¹⁸² Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West – No. XXII,” *Boston Daily Journal*, Nov. 26, 1859, 4.

¹⁸³ Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West – No. XXIII,” *Boston Daily Journal*, Dec. 21, 1859, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West XXXVI,” *Boston Journal*, April 21, 1860, supplement, 1.

Kentuckians. Nonetheless, when he bedded down for the night he directed his host to sleep in a far corner of his room in the ranch house and slept with his pistol beneath his head, “for notwithstanding his almost obtrusive politeness, whenever I looked upon his face I felt that he could cut a throat without any qualms of conscience, or that physiognomy was a grand delusion. While endeavoring to solve this knotty problem, I fell asleep.”¹⁸⁵

A tainted faith: Mexican Catholicism through Richardson’s eyes

Richardson believed Mexicans subscribed to a faith just as tainted as their blood. The Catholic Church, with its hierarchical system of governance, was bad enough in the eyes of a Puritan used to strictly local control. And reliance on priests to lead worship rather than praying from the heart would have been bad enough. But Mexican Catholics’ blend of folk belief with Catholic ritual appalled Richardson beyond belief.

Catholicism permeated New Mexican culture when Anglos entered the territory, and Richardson could not help but notice that religion constituted a centerpiece for local celebrations. When he was co-editor, the *Western Mountaineer* detailed St. John’s Day observances in the New Mexico town of Tubac. Mexican men and women paraded on horseback, a “grand bailie [*sic*], or dance,” was held in the evening, people drank all day and played at carnival games, including a contest in which a live rooster was buried in the sand and horsemen took turns trying to snatch the fowl from the ground while galloping at full speed. “This sport is said to constitute throughout Mexico one of the ceremonies

¹⁸⁵ Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West XXXVI,”

peculiar to St. John's Day," the *Mountaineer* reported, "but what connection it can have with scenes in the life of the Saint, sacred history does not reveal."¹⁸⁶

Richardson approved of Hispanos' piety and devotion to Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁷ But he had only scorn for the Holy Week ceremonies of the *Penitentes*, a lay Catholic secret society that came to be vilified and driven underground by rumor and prejudice sown by Anglos in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Richardson saw their observances as a barbaric throwback to the pagan days that predated the Conquest. An unsigned letter to the editors of the *Western Mountaineer*, sent from Taos, New Mexico, voiced "disgust and astonishment" at Spanish Catholic observances of Lent and Holy Week.¹⁸⁸ The account came from a person who claimed to have witnessed the ceremonies of the Penitentes. The writer described himself as "born and raised in the United States" and displayed both confidence in Yankee superiority and suspicion of "ignorant and superstitious" Mexicans, "the Romish Church" and "Romanism," references to Roman Catholic faith. The descriptions of ritual self-flagellation matched a description that Richardson later used in *Beyond the Mississippi*:

The Aztec priests fasted and did cruel penance, scourging and piercing themselves with thorns until blood streamed from their wounds. The *Penitentes*, a secret society of the most ignorant Catholics including many criminals, still reproduce these horrors. They spend Easter week in a secluded lodge or ranch, dragging stones, crucifixes, and other heavy burdens, cutting their flesh with swords, and tearing it with cactus thorns. On Thursday and Friday, wearing only drawers, they are led blindfolded through the streets, lashing themselves with a tough weed until blood

¹⁸⁶ "St. John's day in New Mexico. Novel ceremonies," *Western Mountaineer*, Aug. 9, 1860.

¹⁸⁷ "Hispano" is a term commonly used in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado to refer to Latinos who descended from the region's original Spanish colonists. This ethnic subgroup and its roots are discussed by Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

¹⁸⁸ "Religious ceremonies in New Mexico," letter to the editor, *Western Mountaineer*, August 16, 1860, 1.

flows freely, sometimes to the infliction of fatal injuries. These tortures end in the cathedral, where they represent the darkness and chaos which they believe followed the crucifixion. After again lashing their bodies pitilessly, they remain in total darkness for an hour, groaning, shrieking, and hurling sticks and stones. This week of penance they deem ample atonement for all their sins of the year.¹⁸⁹

Richardson usually sourced his information, but he provided no attribution for this tale in the book. Nor did he write whether he had seen these practices with his own eyes. It seems unlikely that he did because he customarily inserted himself into scenes that he observed directly or took part in. Because of the *Penitentes'* secretive nature, it also seems unlikely that they consented to his presence at their rituals. Richardson's description is thus likely to have been hearsay. Although recent scholars of Hispanic culture in the Southwest have confirmed that flagellation was part of the penitential rituals of Holy Week, the practice was not conducted in public.¹⁹⁰ Defenders of the Penitentes point out that Anglos vilified them by fixating on exotic rituals but not mentioning their charitable works and the political leadership they provided in the Hispano communities of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.¹⁹¹

Of the region's Catholic priests, who he said were mostly Irish and French, Richardson wrote that they were "often very ignorant" and that "nearly all live openly with mistresses, whose children bear the mother's name, though their paternity is neither concealed nor denied."¹⁹² The clerics, Richardson wrote, grew fat off their flock by

¹⁸⁹ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 263.

¹⁹⁰ Maclovio C. Martinez, *The Penitente in Fantasy and Fact* (San Luis, CO: San Luis Museum and Cultural Center, 1984).

¹⁹¹ Ruben A. Archuleta, *Land of the Penitentes, Land of Tradition* (Pueblo West, CO: 2003): xvi.

¹⁹² Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 263. Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy replaced New Mexico's Spanish and Mexican priests with Western European clerics in an attempt to fend off nativist attacks on the Roman Catholic Church.

charging outrageous sums for weddings and burials, with rates determined according to the parishioner's wealth and the distance of cemetery plots from the altar.¹⁹³ The picture Richardson provided of Catholics in New Mexico, then, was of a crazed Mexican laity and a corrupt priesthood. The church's implication in the territory's government under Mexican and Spanish rule, according to Richardson, kept Mexicans from knowing how to govern themselves. He was aware that by treaty Mexican Americans were entitled to U.S. citizenship, but Richardson deemed them "almost universally ignorant and priest governed, and have no just ideas of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship." He argued that black slaves were better qualified to become voters than Mexicans.¹⁹⁴

Treacherous men and willing women

Richardson saw few virtues in Mexicans. The only one he seems to have perceived in Mexican men was that they knew how to fight Indians, an observation that contrasted with G. Douglas Brewerton's claim that they were cowards. In that respect he put them on an equal footing with mountain men and plainsmen because "they understand the habits and haunts of the Indians, endure hardships cheerfully, and twenty or so of them would do more good service toward the protection of the frontiers, than five hundred regular troops."¹⁹⁵ As for Mexican women, a "chance acquaintance" let him in on the common practice of intermarriage with white men in El Paso. In comparing the sexes, Richardson wrote, "The women are far more faithful, and many make excellent

¹⁹³ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 263.

¹⁹⁴ Richardson, "Jottings from the Far West – No. XXIII," *Boston Daily Journal*, Dec. 21, 1859, 2.

¹⁹⁵ Richardson, "Late and Important from the Frontiers," *Boston Daily Journal*, Nov. 16, 1859, 2. Richardson showed an eye for military strategy and tactics in this letter, criticizing the federal troops as "raw foreigners, many of whom seem never to have seen a horse before" and required more rations and rest than the Kiowa and Apaches they were fighting.

wives.”¹⁹⁶ In addition, his source said many Anglos who had families back east kept Mexican mistresses, a practice that Richardson said was “of course indefensible.”¹⁹⁷ Marital impropriety aside, Richardson portrayed Mexican women as willing and ready to pair with Anglo men. If Anglo women married Mexican men, Richardson never wrote about it. Upon entering Santa Fe, he only offered one word in describing the women he saw selling tortillas, bread, mutton, onions, tomatoes, red peppers and candy on the plaza: hideous.¹⁹⁸ Richardson’s later writings contradicted his disdain for the appearance of Mexican women, but he also implied a redeeming Anglo influence when he described the congregants at St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe: “Unlike the worshipers at El Paso many had adopted the European fashions, and appeared in shawls and bonnets. Many too had pleasing features, and all displayed the sparkling eyes of their race.”¹⁹⁹

Rusticity as a form of othering

Mexican technology and agriculture provided another point from which Richardson proclaimed American superiority. His writing emphasized the backwardness of Mexican transportation technology and agricultural techniques. On the trail to Santa Fe, Richardson ran across a team hauling a Mexican cart loaded with feed corn for delivery to stagecoach stations:

A rude, primitive invention is this vehicular ox-killer, which must have come in vogue soon after the flood. The enormous wheels are of huge logs, clumsily framed together and loosely revolving upon a rude axle. The frame, of slats covered with hide or canvas, resembles a gigantic hen-coop. ... (T)he lumbering cart creaks and rattles and sways along the road,

¹⁹⁶ Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West – No. XXII,” *Boston Daily Journal*, Nov. 26, 1859, 3.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 251.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 253.

apparently just about tumbling to pieces. ... The poor animals are driven with long sharp poles, by dirty Mexicans, blanketed and bare-headed.²⁰⁰

In contrast to this lumbering wreck, he wrote of the stage that carried him, “All night our coach rolled noiseless over the soft road, while the wind trembling through the mesquite leaves swept after us a ceaseless lullaby.”²⁰¹ Richardson also offered this description of Mexican agriculture:

The ruder and older the implements the better they suit the Mexicans. His farming tools show no improvement upon those of his Aztec forefathers. His plow is only a crooked stick. Merchants endeavored to introduce iron plows but could not persuade the natives to adopt them. Threshing machines also were brought from the Missouri, but the ignorant farmers who hire ground, paying the rent with a portion of the crop, believed them a diabolical invention for cheating them out of their share of wheat!²⁰²

Although Richardson could not have known the extent to which whites preyed on Mexicans’ lack of knowledge of both the English language and U.S. law, several historians have documented Latinos’ dispossession of property by Anglos.²⁰³ Thus, the Mexicans probably had every reason to doubt farming innovations from the East would work in their favor. A New Mexican gristmill, Richardson wrote, “like all the implements of industry among this slow people, is extremely rude and primitive.” Consisting of just a

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 228.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 228.

²⁰² Ibid, 249. The *Oneida Circular* (August 7, 1871, p. 255) clipped this article to support a lecturer’s assertion that Mexicans “still plow or scratch the ground with a crotched stick plated with iron.”

²⁰³ See, e.g., Laura E. Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Manuel G. Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Arnoldo De Leon, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); and Dale L. Walker, *Bear Flag Rising: The Conquest of California, 1846* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1999).

horizontal waterwheel connected to shaft attached to the grind stone, its speed was slow and its product coarse by Yankee standards.²⁰⁴

Richardson as frontier editor: Profit motive and the othering of Mexicans

Interpreting how Richardson told the story of the West to potential land-buyers back East is complicated by the conflicting values entailed by his roles as journalist and land speculator.²⁰⁵ He was uniquely situated to deliver his message to the readers of the *New York Tribune*, *Boston Journal*, and *Lawrence Republican*, and his letters to each were adjusted to include information about people of interest to each respective market. As senior editor of the *Western Mountaineer*, Richardson had a headquarters from which to write his dispatches for cities in the East, greater editorial control over his own work, and a listening post for information from exchange newspapers. George West became the first newspaper publisher in Jefferson County, Colorado Territory, when he launched the *Western Mountaineer* of Golden City on Dec. 7, 1859. West, among the founders of the Boston Town Co., printed the *Mountaineer* on a press bought from Thomas Gibson, publisher of the *Rocky Mountain Gold Reporter* of Central City. Gibson explained in an editorial April 18, 1860, that the paper would go on hiatus while he headed to Boston for new equipment.²⁰⁶ Just over a month later, he returned from Boston with a new press and brought the *Mountaineer* back to life, appointing Richardson senior editor and Thomas

²⁰⁴ Albert Deane Richardson, "Jottings from the Far West XXXVI," April 21, 1860, *Boston Journal*, supplement, 1.

²⁰⁵ Richardson's reports to the *New York Tribune*, which ran with his "A. D. R." tagline and the byline "From Our Own Correspondent" under the headline "From the Pike's Peak Gold Country," were nearly identical to the letters that ran in the *Republican*, with local content of interest to readers in Lawrence, Kan., omitted from the *Tribune*.

²⁰⁶ George West, "To our subscribers," *Western Mountaineer*, April 25, 1860, p. 2.

W. Knox junior editor. It is unclear precisely when Richardson began writing for the *Mountaineer*. One historical account states he helped restart the paper on its new press, which arrived in June 1860.²⁰⁷ But it was not until the revived paper's sixth issue on August 2, 1860, with summer nearly gone and just five months remaining in the newspaper's run that West acknowledged "the permanent accession of Messrs. Richardson & Knox to the editorial corps of the *Mountaineer*." West wrote that their "piquant and ready pens have imparted fresh interest to each number of our journal from the commencement of the current volume."²⁰⁸ The announcement may have been an exaggeration, given that Richardson's initials appeared nowhere in the first five issues. With the next issue, Richardson and Knox joined West on the front-page masthead, identified as "editors."

The *Boston Journal* recapped the most practical information that Richardson had provided for would-be Colorado settlers. A special supplement crowed about the abundance of gold, silver, and other valuable metals from the Great Salt Lake to Mexico, an area that the paper predicted "will ultimately prove the richest and most extensive mineral region in the world."²⁰⁹ Civilization was already blooming, the *Journal* proclaimed in May 1860, giving special mention to Denver, Auraria, Highland, Colorado City, Golden City, and St. Vrain. Plots there "boast spacious brick and frame buildings, heavy trading houses, capacious hotels, schools, a printing office, and good roads and

²⁰⁷ Wilbur Fiske Stone (ed.), *History of Colorado Vol. I* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918), 797

²⁰⁸ George West, editorial, *Western Mountaineer*, August 2, 1860, page 2.

²⁰⁹ "Pike's Peak Gold Region," *Boston Journal*, supplement, 1

bridges.”²¹⁰ The *Journal* predicted heavy demand for agricultural products, “and emigrants who take out farming implements this season, and commence tilling the soil, will reap a rich reward.”²¹¹ Just as when he was a land agent in Kansas, Richardson stood to gain from painting an attractive and exciting picture of Colorado. In 1859, Golden City offered several plots of land to Richardson, Horace Greeley, and Henry Villard, the trio whose report confirming the discovery of gold triggered the Pike’s Peak Gold Rush. It is unclear whether Greeley and Villard accepted, but Richardson did. In appreciation for his having kept a procession of prospectors flowing to Golden City with his coverage, the town gave Richardson at least four lots on Nov. 5, 1859; Highland City Town Co. donated “many shares of stock, as did also Colorado City Co,” and the St. Vrain Town Co. gave him 10 shares.²¹² In addition, Richardson bought 10 more shares from Corydon P. Hall, who went on to become St. Vrain County judge and a member of the Colorado Territorial Legislature.²¹³

Richardson seems to have believed in 1860 that New Mexicans could redeem themselves through improvement – that is, by adopting American ways. On the prospect of statehood for their territory, he wrote in the *Boston Journal*, “It certainly *ought* not to be admitted until its inhabitants have advanced far beyond their present standards in

²¹⁰ “Pike’s Peak Gold Region,” *Boston Journal*, supplement, 1

²¹¹ “Pike’s Peak Gold Region,” *Boston Journal*, supplement, 1

²¹² Henrietta E. Bromwell, *Fiftyniners’ Directory: Colorado Argonauts, 1858-1859, Pike’s Peak Region* (Denver, unpublished, 1926). Accessed Oct. 8, 2008, at <http://history.denverlibrary.org/research/fiftyniners/R.htm>. Bromwell cited Arapaho County land records.

²¹³ *Ibid.* In both transactions, it is unclear how many acres Richardson held.

intelligence and civilization.”²¹⁴ By the time he revised his newspaper correspondence into book form, his position hardened. In *Beyond the Mississippi*, he proclaimed:

Of the inhabitants, eighty thousand are Mexicans, two thousand Americans, ten thousand civilized Indians, and about fifty thousand fierce savages who roam the mountain ranges. Twice or thrice New Mexico has suffered from the frontier epidemic of constitution-making; but until new gold discoveries bring in thousands of immigrants to develop its rich and varied mineral resources, and revolutionize its industries and social life, it will not and should not be admitted to the Union as a sovereign state.²¹⁵

Congress denied repeated attempts at statehood until 1912, when New Mexico was admitted as the forty-seventh state; its neighbor to the north, Colorado, was admitted in 1876. Although partisan rivalry, antagonism over reconstruction, and Eastern fear of Western domination in the Senate played roles in this delay, anti-Catholic bigotry, racial discrimination, Eastern Anglos’ distrust of the Spanish and Mexican population, and ignorance about the Southwest were more to blame.²¹⁶

It should be noted that Richardson did not confine his disdain to Mexicans and Indians. Anglos who settled in Taos claimed they were oppressed by the “natives, who formed a majority upon all juries” and “rendered it impossible to punish any Mexican through the courts, for the grossest outrages upon ‘white men.’ This was their excuse for wearing revolvers and knives and wreaking revenge for every real or fancied injury. Homicides even among themselves were common.”²¹⁷ Gentility somewhat explains the overall pattern in Richardson’s writing. He condemned what he found uncouth. But the

²¹⁴ Albert Deane Richardson, “Jottings from the Far West XXXIV,” April 20, 1860, *Boston Journal*, 4.

²¹⁵ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 268.

²¹⁶ Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico’s Quest for Statehood, 1846-1912* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968).

²¹⁷ Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi*, 262.

free-labor foundation of his anti-slavery beliefs explains why he would condemn both Southerners who profited off human chattel and Mexicans who profited off an equivalent to slavery, the peon labor system.

The Quaker and the Puritan: Explaining the Late Northern Correspondents

Richardson's bias against Mexicans started with rumors and second-hand stories gleaned from Texans and other Southerners on the trail. Within a couple of weeks in El Paso, the stereotypical image of Mexicans coalesced in his mind. Historian Raymund A. Paredes asserted that American writers felt compelled to justify destruction of Mexican life in the West by portraying Mexicans as "villainous and decadent."²¹⁸ Anglos created strategic advantages for themselves by promoting themselves as racially superior to Mexican Americans. So the image of Mexicans as beholden to the Catholic Church, thriftless, wanton, lustful, and murderous fit Anglos' need to dehumanize a competitor for land, gold, and other resources particularly scarce in the desert regions of the Southwest. Such attributes also conflicted with Richardson's Puritan ethic. Richardson was clearly selective in the traits he emphasized. Instead of stressing that Mexicans were hard workers, he focused on their willing indentured servitude under the peon system. Richardson did not portray Mexicans as lazy – about the only context in which he saw them was hard, peon labor. But he did see them as thriftless, which combined with the gambling he witnessed in El Paso would have jarred his Puritan morality as much as their more-or-less indentured-for-life status would have jarred his Republican, "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men" ideology. Free white workers could no more compete with underpaid

²¹⁸ Raymund A. Paredes, "The Mexican Image in American Travel Literature, 1831-1869" *New Mexico Historical Review* (January 1977): 25.

Mexican peons than with enslaved Africans. The ideological and religious values of Richardson and others from the East had a profound effect on the way they perceived the customs, religious and public rituals, and labor standards of the strange, new people they encountered in the West. The resulting judgment that non-whites were inferior and even subhuman provided a convenient rationale for the nationalist and capitalist aims of whites displacing Mexicans and Indians in the Borderlands during the late nineteenth century.

Racial difference does not entirely explain Richardson's animosity toward Mexicans. He showed sympathy for freedmen and Chinese laborers who were contracted to fill the labor needs of the West Coast. Both groups were educable in American ways and should be granted the right to vote, he declared in articles for *The Atlantic*.²¹⁹ The main influences were Mexicans' Catholic faith, rusticity that a New Englander would equate with wastefulness, and labor-capital relations. Because Richardson detested slavery, he detested the peon labor system that so closely resembled slavery.

These differences were cultural as well as racial. Richardson, like Davis and Kendall, bought into the notion that Mexicans were priest-governed and therefore hostile to American democracy. Like Kendall, Richardson saw them as barbarous half-breeds, but he added the twist that their faith as well as their blood was impure. Richardson's depiction of Mexicans represented a blending of culturally grounded attitudes from both the North and the South. Years of reporting in regions of where the sections' cultures overlapped cultivated a hybrid sensibility about American superiority that blended Northern and Southern motivations for asserting Mexican inferiority.

²¹⁹ Albert Deane Richardson, "Our Four Servants," *The Atlantic Monthly* 23, no. 136 (February 1869): 251-256 and Albert Deane Richardson, "John," *The Atlantic Monthly* 24, no. 146 (December 1869), 740-752.

Richardson backed free labor, a key tenet of Republican ideology, naturally believing paid labor was superior to both Southern slavery and the Mexican peon labor system. The normal cycle of the Northern man's working life was to hire himself out early for wages, save enough of the proceeds to establish a business, and then hire other men who would then perpetuate the cycle. This self-perpetuating cycle, the logic went, would create a prosperous free society in which all men were capable of being their own masters, and to live forever dependent on wages was to be little more than a slave.²²⁰ Richardson's life exemplified this cycle. He began as a free lance reporter, earned his way onto a newspaper staff, saved money and invested it in land, sold the land to amass more capital, started his own newspaper in Colorado to use as a base from which to support his travel writing career, turned the letters into books that paid him royalties, and became a shareholder in the *New York Tribune* – all by the age of 36.

That Taylor subscribed to a more tolerant faith and appreciated rather than hated the exotic explains much of the difference in his way of seeing Mexicans. But his curiosity and lack of judgment of Catholics requires explanation in light of the Quaker faith he shared with Early Southern correspondent Josiah Gregg, who criticized Catholic priests for levying exorbitant fees for the sacraments and imposing tithes on impoverished New Mexicans who could ill afford to pay. In the California of Taylor's time, the power of the padres had subsided in the face of Yankee incursions. Because they lacked the power of the priests of Gregg's time, and because the California padres shared European ancestry with Taylor, it was easy for him to accept them, even if he did hold them in low regard for allowing the missions to deteriorate. This appreciation, rather

²²⁰ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 15-17.

than hatred, of difference reflects Taylor's struggle to attain the status of genteel society, his cosmopolitan nature as a traveler of the world.

Taylor's understanding of the science of racial difference, grounded in a belief that climatic zones determined the characteristics of their inhabitants, also led him to believe that Mexicans were harmless, while the descendants of the Spaniards in California had been improved by generations of development in a balmy Mediterranean climate well suited for the growth of civilization. It was clear to Taylor that these Spanish grandees had done well for themselves. With land and the know-how for making the most of it, with money, and with political power, they were fit to stand side by side with the Yankees who teamed with them to create the state of California, a bastion of anti-slave liberty in an ever-expanding American empire. Together, they would subdue the wilderness and pursue the nation's destiny.

Both Taylor's way and Richardson's still asserted Mexican inferiority. And the way Texan hatred of Mexicans primed Richardson to do the same also explains why he saw Mexicans so differently from Taylor. But Taylor had also been exposed to Southerners with motives for depriving Mexicans of their rightful land. Despite this, he saw gradations while Richardson saw only brown and white. But the prejudice of Albert Deane Richardson and Bayard Taylor could scarcely compare to that of their Southern counterparts of the same period.

CHAPTER 6

EARLY SOUTHERN OBSERVERS: JOSIAH GREGG, GEORGE WILKINS KENDALL, AND J. D. B. DEBOW'S *COMMERCIAL REVIEW*

By virtue of timing and circulation, Josiah Gregg and George Wilkins Kendall's books and newspaper correspondence constituted the foundation for most Americans' understanding of Mexican life and culture in the 1840s. These adventurer-correspondents made sense of the Southwest in light of their political and religious beliefs, the things they learned in their formative years, and what they read in adulthood about Mexico by adventurers, traders, and diplomats such as Zebulon Pike and John Poinsett. Once Gregg and Kendall hit the trail west, they gleaned wisdom by word of mouth. Ultimately, they interpreted Mexico for their readers through experience.

Gregg and Kendall each wrote best-selling books about their time in Mexico. Each was published in 1844. Gregg, a Santa Fe trader from Missouri, based his *Commerce of the Prairies* on four round-trip trading expeditions between the United States and Mexico. Kendall, the roving editor-correspondent of the *New Orleans Picayune*, based his *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* on a series of stories that he printed in the *Picayune* about his journey with a botched Texas attempt to take over eastern New Mexico in 1841.

Kendall co-founded the *New Orleans Picayune* after a six-year period as a journeyman printer, providing himself with a base of operations from which to explore the burgeoning Republic of Texas. Texas, in turn, provided a jumping-off point for him to join the ill-fated Texan Santa Fe Expedition.¹ Their ostensible purpose was to chart the most direct route from Santa Fe to Galveston, which would bring Texas a share of commerce that already ran up to Independence, Mo. But the expedition was actually a poorly disguised invasion by which Texas intended to claim New Mexican land east of the Rio Grande and north to its headwaters in present-day southern Colorado. Kendall tagged along to chronicle the journey for the *Picayune*. Instead, he was captured with the blundering Texans and marched down to Mexico. On his return, he set about the task of writing up the story for the *Picayune*. So many newspapers reprinted his installments that he gave “thanks to the many journals throughout the country which have copied these sketches and kindly commended them to notice.”²

The resulting book, *Personal Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition*, made Kendall a household name. Kendall’s *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* was first published in 1844 by Harper & Brothers in New York and by Wiley & Putnam in London. It ran through six more Harper editions through 1856 and four additional printings in England through 1847.³ Kendall’s *The War Between the United States and Mexico Illustrated* was published in 1851 in New York by D. Appleton & Company. While Kendall spread notions of Mexican treachery and inferiority to the nation through

¹ Fayette Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), 12-20.

² *Ibid.*, 113.

³ *National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints, Vol. 293* (London: Mansell Information/Publishing Ltd., 1973), 127-128.

his books and newspaper, the Southern regional press diffused information and pressed a debate over what should be done with Mexico. Writers in the most prominent regional journal, *DeBow's Review*, agreed that Mexico was broken and that Mexicans were in no position economically, culturally, or intellectually to repair itself after generations of racial intermarriage had “degenerated” its formerly pure Spanish and indigenous blood. Regeneration would require untainted blood from the outside: pure Anglo-Saxon blood.

Laying the baseline of American correspondents' knowledge about Mexico

This chapter begins with Gregg's experience of Mexican culture, customs, and people because he was the first writer to spend an extended period in New Mexico and the rest of Mexico's northern provinces. Gregg laid a baseline of knowledge for the observers who followed him into Mexico. The foremost of these, Kendall, is addressed in the second section.

While Gregg and Kendall gathered thousands of pages of observations about Mexican life, they left it to others to steer a path into a future that saw half of Mexico become part of the United States. *DeBow's Review* aggregated and analyzed intelligence from newspapers, magazines, books, and government reports on every topic related to commerce, including farming, mining, manufacturing, shipping, and foreign relations. It is the subject of the third and final section. The American expansionist narrative about Mexico followed an arc that depicted Mexicans from the mid-1830s to early 1840s as benign if superstitious; then cowardly but treacherous to Anglos, the bitter legacy of Texas Independence, in the 1840s; and finally, in the early 1850s after the U.S.-Mexico War, as ignorant, degenerate, and helpless to fix their broken and bankrupt nation – and

therefore in need of vital, pure-blooded, enlightened Protestant Anglo-Saxons to take charge of their land and resources.

Josiah Gregg: Roving observer of the Santa Fe Trail

Josiah Gregg's examination of Mexican ways indicates that he recognized some of the things his subjects did would be foreign to his readers. Although he recognized difference, in most cases he did not make explicit judgments about the inferiority or superiority of Mexicans in relation to Americans. But implicit in his statements throughout *Commerce of the Prairies* is the sense that Gregg saw himself as a surveyor of an abnormal culture.

It was no accident that contemporary journals took notice of *Commerce of the Prairies*. When he finished writing it, Gregg trekked east with his manuscript and a letter of introduction. After showing his work around, William Cullen Bryant referred him to journalist John Bigelow, whom Gregg hoped would help him find a publisher. "He had conceived a notion that these observations, if put into proper form, might prove interesting and possibly useful."⁴ With Bigelow's help, Gregg signed a contract with J. and H. G. Langley, who were also the publishers of *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*.⁵ Predictably, the magazine crowed about the book. Unfortunately for Gregg, the Langleys went out of business, and Bigelow guessed that he never made a cent off the book.⁶

⁴ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *Dr. Josiah Gregg: Historian of the Santa Fe Trail* (Santa Fe: Santa Fe New Mexican Publishing Co., 1924), 12

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13

Publisher Henry G. Langley provided early proof sheets to a number of magazines, among them the *Democratic Review*, naturally, and *The Literary World*. The magazines greeted Gregg's two-volume description of a trader's life on the Southwestern trails with glowing reviews. The former proclaimed *Commerce of the Prairies* "by far the most complete and reliable account of the origin and progress of our overland commerce with Mexico and the kind of life led by those who engage in it."⁷ This reliability came from Gregg's "indisposition to exaggerate or overstate, which at once commands our utmost confidence in the author's fidelity." A measured tone and years of experience in Mexico gave Gregg credibility with his reviewers. *The Literary World* found *Commerce of the Prairies* to be "altogether free from that tendency to romance which makes us receive, with so many grains of allowance, the statements of so many intelligent travelers" and declared it "the most truthfully [*sic*] account that has yet been given to the public of our overland commerce with Mexico, and of the vast and interesting regions through which it is carried on."⁸ The *American Whig Review* added to the praise in a January 1845 review. The book's "peculiarly rambling" style gave it odd variety, resulting in a readable book "and one to which we should recur in writing about that region of the continent."⁹ *Littell's Living Age* observed that Gregg had "less dogmatism

⁷ "Commerce of the Prairies," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, New York, June 1844, 639.

⁸ "The Literary World," *The New World: A Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art, and News*, New York, June 1, 1844, 688. While praising Gregg's moderate descriptions of what he had seen, *The New World* took liberties in condensing Gregg's assessment of the Mexicans of Santa Fe. Though the author of *Commerce of the Prairies* described both the well-heeled and the impoverished, his reviewer at *The New World* overstated by telling readers, "Santa Fe appears, in Mr. Gregg's description, as a collection of unburnt brick huts [true enough, he used that exact phrase] filled by an idle and ruthless population [clearly an overstatement of what Gregg wrote]" p. 669. An analysis of book reviews' selective excerpts and interpretation of the works of Gregg and other American writers in the Southwest alone could fill a chapter.

⁹ "Critical Notices," *The American Whig Review*, New York, January 1845, 111.

in his tone, less onesidedness in his views, and more of that tolerant spirit which distinguishes persons who by large experience or extensive reading have shaken off the prejudices of the vulgar.” This evenhandedness came at the price of style, and Gregg’s work did not compare with George Wilkins Kendall’s *Texan Santa Expedition*. But the *Living Age* concluded that though *Commerce of the Prairies* was less colorful, Gregg was “a more trustworthy describer.”¹⁰

Approval by these opinion leaders translated into mentions of their reviews in the daily and weekly press. The *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* called its readers’ attention to the *Democratic Review*’s write-up.¹¹ Soon, newspapers began running excerpts from the book itself. The *Macon Weekly Telegraph* ran Gregg’s description of Santa Fe, as did the *Carolina Watchman*.¹² Historian Max L. Moorhead, in his introduction to the annotated 1954 edition of the book, confirmed what early reviewers wrote about *Commerce of the Prairies* and its author. “The panorama of his interests has sent me to specialized references in many fields,” Moorhead wrote. “But the results of my checking have almost always been the same: *Gregg knew what he was talking about* [emphasis in original].”¹³ Papers ran second- and third-generation excerpts as well. *The Jeffersonian*, of New Orleans, republished a passage from the book describing trail conditions that was originally excerpted in the *Courier and Inquirer* of New York.¹⁴ A

¹⁰ “Josiah Gregg’s *Commerce of the Prairies*,” *Littell’s Living Age*, Boston, Sept. 14, 1844, 2.

¹¹ “Democratic Review,” *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, Concord, N.H., June 13, 1844, 2.

¹² “Santa Fe,” *Macon, Ga., Weekly Telegraph*, Oct. 27, 1846, 3.

¹³ Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, ed. Max L. Moorhead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954 [1844]), ix.

¹⁴ “Road to Santa Fe,” *The Jeffersonian*, New Orleans, July 18, 1846, 2.

year after Gregg's book came off the press, *The New York Herald* excerpted an item in the *Santa Fe Letter*, a St. Louis paper, which cited *Commerce of the Prairies* to back up its claims that Mexico discriminated against American traders and gave preferential treatment to British merchants. At the same time, the *Letter* complained that the review in the *U.S. Democratic Review* had glossed over Mexico's shoddy treatment of American businessmen.¹⁵

Once the book put him on the literary map, editors began publishing excerpts of his book and letters to the *Boonslick Times*, of Fayette, Mo., and other newspapers that they had gleaned through exchange newspapers.¹⁶ Gregg was socially awkward, shy, and loath to speak in public throughout his life, but his letters and book indicated a need to share the useful knowledge he gathered through his experience on the Plains, the desert, and Mexico.¹⁷ So did his decision to donate plant specimens, gathered in Mexico, to the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁸ By the time the U.S.-Mexico War erupted in 1846, *Commerce of the Prairies* had become common-enough knowledge that at least one newspaper used Gregg's description of Santa Fe to help them envision the place that Gen. Stephen W. Kearny had just occupied.¹⁹ Arkansas-to-Santa Fe route as a point of reference to tell

¹⁵ "News from New Mexico and Oregon," *New York Herald*, May 22, 1845, 2.

¹⁶ Josiah Gregg, "Trade to Santa Fe, California and Oregon," *Boston Daily Atlas*, July 30, 1846, 1. During the U.S.-Mexico War, a few American papers received Gregg's letters from Mexico, where he accompanied Gen. J. W. Wool as a noncommissioned, unofficial freelance scout. His irregular status left him free, like George Wilkins Kendall, to send war news to the press back home without restriction. Gregg wrote letters to the *Arkansas Intelligencer* dated Dec. 12, 1846 and the *Louisville Journal* dated Nov. 9 and Dec. 29, 1846, and Jan. 18 and Feb. 2, 1847). The dates that they ran in these papers are uncertain. Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg*, ed. Maurice Garland Fulton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954).

¹⁷ Paul Horgan, "Josiah Gregg Himself," in *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg, Southwestern Enterprises, 1840-1847* ed. Maurice Garland Fulton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 36-37.

¹⁸ "Smithsonian Institution Report," *The Farmers' Cabinet*, Amherst, N.H., Jan. 1, 1853, 2.

¹⁹ "Santa Fe," *Carolina Watchman*, Salisbury, N.C., Oct. 9, 1846, 3.

readers which way an American dragoon company would take across Indian Territory.²⁰ And in 1857, a review of W. W. H. Davis' *El Gringo* claimed that Gregg's work remained the best of American books about New Mexico.²¹

Even before he considered writing up his experiences, Gregg shared his knowledge of the Southern Plains with readers in the States. Gregg noted the dangers of Indian Territory in a thank-you letter to one Captain C. Wharton published in the *Nashville Banner and Nashville Whig* 1834.²² *Commerce of the Prairies* originated as a series of letters Gregg wrote under the signatures "J.G." and "G." to the *Galveston Daily Advertiser* and the *Arkansas Intelligencer*.²³

Though a native of the Trans-Mississippi frontier, Gregg came of age under circumstances similar to those of Massachusetts native Richard Henry Dana Jr., the author of *Two Years Before the Mast*. Like Dana, Gregg was a bookish boy who struggled with health problems.. Born July 19, 1806, in Overton County, Tenn., Josiah was the fourth son of Harmon and Susannah Gregg.²⁴ The family left Tennessee in 1809, living briefly in Illinois before settling in Howard County, Missouri. Young Josiah simply did not seem cut out for life on his father's farm, just east of Independence. His father desperately wanted an education for his children, but early Missouri frontier

²⁰ "Company H, of the 1st Dragoons," *Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, Houston, Aug. 10, 1848, 2.

²¹ *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, Nashville, Tenn., April 1857, 331.

²² Josiah Gregg, "Camp of the Santa Fe Caravan on the South of Arkansas River," *Nashville Banner and Nashville Whig*, Sept. 3, 1834, 3.

²³ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 6.

²⁴ John Gregg to George Englemann (Dec. 24, 1850), in *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg*, 379.

settlers avoided spending time or money on schooling.²⁵ What Josiah Gregg could not get from teachers, he taught himself.

Soon Gregg found himself mastering the science of surveying – using a quadrant he crafted out of wood – and tutoring his classmates in mathematics.²⁶ In his late teens, he applied for a medical apprenticeship with the inventor of a popular malaria remedy, Dr. John Sappington, but Sappington declined to take him on as a student. He then turned his attention to the law, but it did not suit him. His health declined just as his vocational prospects did. Weak with consumption and dyspepsia, Gregg looked like he was on his last legs.

Like Dana, Gregg found the cure for his youthful ailments on the sea, although his was the inland ocean of grass that was the Southern Great Plains.²⁷ A doctor suggested that the fresh air and sun of the Santa Fe Trail would pull him through. He was right. Two weeks into his first overland journey in 1831, with a merchant caravan that took him from Independence to Santa Fe, his illnesses cleared up.²⁸ With his health restored, Gregg found a new home in the saddle and a new calling as a Santa Fe trader. From 1831 to 1840, he journeyed across the grasslands and back, swapping loads of American dry goods and hardware for Mexican silver and mules in Santa Fe.²⁹ Gregg made four back-and-forth trips from the United States to Mexico. On his first journey, Gregg worked as a bookkeeper for merchant Jesse Sutton on his first journey to Santa Fe, returning in the

²⁵ Gregg to Englemann (Dec. 24, 1850).

²⁶ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, xviii.

²⁷ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, xix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xix.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

fall of 1833.³⁰ No longer a greenhorn, Gregg partnered with Sutton on another expedition in spring 1834 and served as captain of the wagon train. That trip carried the caravan to cities deep in Mexico, and it took until fall 1836 for them to return.³¹ His next journey, lasting a year and half, began in spring 1837 and ended in fall 1838. On his final trip to Santa Fe, Gregg organized a caravan that embarked from Van Buren, Arkansas, in spring 1839 and returned in spring 1840.³²

On these four trading expeditions, Gregg filled nine notebooks with maps of the trail, notes on plants and wildlife, details about the terrain and water sources, speculation on the region's potential mineral wealth, and observations about Indian and Mexican life and culture. The result was *Commerce of the Prairies*, a two-volume set that contained what historian Max L. Moorhead called "the most complete and accurate map of the prairies" available at the time it was published in 1844.³³ Though Gregg had little formal education, his book made his scholarly bent plain to see. Throughout *Commerce of the Prairies*, Gregg put observation first, commentary second, and judgments last. He carefully noted which writers had already written about the West: Washington Irving's *Tour on the Prairies*; Charles Augustus Murray's *Travels in North America*; Charles Fenno Hoffman's *A Winter in the West and Wild Scenes in Forest and Prairie*; and George Wilkins Kendall's *Narrative of the Texas Santa Fe Expedition* (1844).³⁴ Gregg claimed *Commerce of the Prairies* was superior to these by virtue of its originality and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., xix.

³² Ibid., xxi.

³³ Ibid., xx.

³⁴ Ibid., 3.

factualness.³⁵ Because of his nine years of experience trading in Northern Mexico, he argued that he “had opportunities for observation, upon the subjects of which I have ventured to treat superior to those enjoyed by any writers who have preceded me. But not even an attempt has before been made to present any full account of the origin of the Santa Fe Trade and modes of conducting it; nor of the early history and present condition of the people of New Mexico, nor of the Indian tribes by which the wild and unreclaimed regions of that department are inhabited.”³⁶ He assured readers that “most of the facts presented in my sketch of the natural history of the Prairies, and of the Indian tribes who inhabit them, are now published for the first time.”³⁷

Throughout the book, Gregg stated where he gathered his information. Most came from his own observations, which he recorded in his diary.³⁸ But he pointed to scholarly works as well. Among them were German naturalist Friedrich von Humboldt’s *Essai Politique Sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne (Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain, 1811)*;³⁹ Spanish historical works by Francisco Javier Clavijero,⁴⁰ Juan de Mariana,⁴¹ and Antonio de Herrera y Tordesilla;⁴² popular American writer Frances

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 5.

³⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁰ Gregg Ibid., 109. The work cited was Francisco Javier Clavijero, *Storia Antica del Messico* (Cessena: G. Biasini, 1780-81).

⁴¹ Ibid., 82. Gregg cited Juan de Mariana, *Historiae de Rebus Hispaniae* (Toledo: P. Roderici, 1592), published in Italian and subsequently translated into Spanish in 1601 and into English in 1699. Gregg did not state which translation he consulted.

⁴² Ibid.. Gregg did not state which translation of these works, originally published in Italian, French, or Spanish. He did not know Italian, but he read and spoke French and Spanish fluently. He would have had access to these works in Philadelphia, where he pieced together *Commerce of the Prairies* from

Erskine Calderon de la Barca's *Life in Mexico, During a Residence of Two Years in That Country* (1843);⁴³ and Capt. Zebulon Pike's *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and Through the Western Parts of Louisiana* (1810).⁴⁴ Gregg's linguistic skill opened doors to him that were closed to the less-educated. Throughout *Commerce of the Prairies*, Gregg made careful notes on the origin of place names and explained New Mexican customs, dress, cuisine, and other facets of life. That he could explain, in a footnote, that the name of the Mora River, "Rio de lo de Mora," derived not from the Spanish word for mulberry but from the fact that a person named Mora had settled on it⁴⁵ suggests he possessed more than a beginner's mastery of the language.

Sickly though he was when his party left Independence on May 15, 1831, Gregg soon tired of seeing the range from a carriage. He switched into a saddle on a pony before he had been on the trail even a week.⁴⁶ Two weeks into the journey, he forsook his invalid's ration of crackers, rice, fruit, and tea to feast with the teamsters on bison, freshly killed on the prairie. Gregg did not say how many wagons were in his "little party" when they left Independence for the 800-mile trek to Santa Fe. Traders commonly banded together for security and mutual aid, and the rendezvous point for this trip was Council

his notes in 1844 or in the archives of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, where he examined Spanish and Mexican government documents to piece together the history of European settlement in Latin America.

⁴³ Ibid.. Gregg cited Frances Erskine de Calderon, *Life in Mexico* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9. Gregg cited Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and Through the Western Parts of Louisiana* (Philadelphia: C. & A. Conrad, 1810).

⁴⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 24-26.

Grove, about 150 miles west of Independence in modern-day Kansas.⁴⁷ There, Gregg and company formed up into a caravan of thirty wagons.

Weeks passed before the traders saw anyone besides Indians. Some 200 miles from their destination, Gregg and his party were thrilled by the approach of a Mexican buffalo-hunter who brought them the news from Santa Fe and sold them dried buffalo beef and bread.⁴⁸ Gregg's sense of discovery and wonder are evident in his description of the hunter, known in Spanish as a *cibolero*:

These hardy devotees of the chase usually wear leathern trousers and jackets, and flat straw hats; while, swung upon the shoulder of each hangs his *cargage* or quiver of bows and arrows. The long handle of their lance being set in a case and suspended by the side with a strap from the pommel of the saddle, leaves the point waving high over the head, with a tassel of gay parti-colored stuffs dangling at the tip of the scabbard. Their fusil, if they happen to have one, is suspended in like manner at the other side a stopper in the muzzle fantastically tasseled.⁴⁹

Gregg claimed that no periodicals circulated in New Mexico while he was there. The one weekly paper in the province, *El Crepúsculo de la Libertad*, was printed for just a month in 1834 on a press that Gregg brought to Taos.⁵⁰ It ceased publication after its editor achieved his goal of election to Mexico's Congress.⁵¹ Afterward, Gregg wrote, it was used to print Catholic catechisms, primers, and military orders, though he did not say who used it, or even who its original owner was. With few exceptions, Gregg left

⁴⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The meaning of the newspaper's title is *The Dawn of Liberty*. The article provides a comprehensive list of textbooks, broadsides, and public notices printed by Abreu and Martinez. Martinez's career is evidence that not all Catholic clergymen favored tithing the steep sums that priests charged for performing weddings and other sacraments. He argued that such fees were unjust to the poor. Henry R. Wagner, "New Mexico Spanish Press," *New Mexico Historical Review* 12, no. 1 (January 1937): 1-40..

⁵¹ Ibid., 142.

Mexicans nameless. Antonio Barreiro owned that press. Father Antonio Jose Martinez, the parish priest in Taos, used it to publish a speller titled *Cuaderno de Ortografia* and prenuptial investigation forms.⁵² Gregg argued that restraints on political and religious liberty were to blame for the absence of periodicals, pointing to the chilling effect of censorship in the neighboring state of Chihuahua as an example, and concluding, “No wonder then that the people of Northern Mexico are so much behind their neighbors in the United States in intelligence, and that the pulse of national industry and liberty beats so low!”⁵³

Gregg bitterly complained about New Mexico’s lack of a postal service connecting it to the States.⁵⁴ In this environment, then, newspaper delivery was limited to whatever trade caravans brought, and news spread by word of mouth instead. A description of the encounter with the cibolero, 200 miles from Santa Fe demonstrated the value of news by word of mouth, as well as the sense of discovery Gregg felt on his first journey into Northern Mexico:

The Cibolero saluted us with demonstrations of joy; nor were we less delighted at meeting with him; for we were now able to obtain information from Santa Fe, whence no news had been received since the return of the caravan the preceding fall. Traders and idlers, with equal curiosity, clustered around the new visitor; every one who could speak a word of Spanish having some question to ask: -- “What prospects?” -- “How are the goods?” -- “What news from the South?” -- while the more experienced traders interested themselves chiefly to ascertain the conditions of the custom-house, and who were the present revenue officers; for unpropitious changes sometimes occur during the absence of the caravans.⁵⁵

⁵² Angelico Chavez, *But Time and Chance: The Story of Padre Martinez of Taos, 1793-1867* (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 1981), 50.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 266-267.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

This first encounter with a Mexican, tinged with mutual respect and curiosity, belied Gregg's perception of difference but not inferiority. Clothing, customs, character, and behavior were described first as mere points of difference. Later, Gregg interpreted these differences as deficiencies of a people whose character was tainted by the impulses they inherited from their Spanish forbears, corrupted by their Roman Catholic faith, and eroded by the laws of their central government.

Mud-wall huts and lack of fences: Gregg's view of the Mexican landscape

Gregg reserved judgment about the people of New Mexico until he had spent an extended period there. He let the landscape unfold for his readers as it had on his first journey there in 1831. He observed that the road was "unimproved" but did not complain about it or compare it to roads back home in Missouri, probably because they were equally rough. Gregg's temperance, in the few instances when Gregg made uncritical observations about New Mexican advancement, could be due to his upbringing on the frontier, where it was considered an accomplishment to impose any sense of civilization at all on the wilderness. On the farm of his boyhood, everyone worked for survival and a small measure of comfort.⁵⁶

On the village of San Miguel, a village northeast of Santa Fe, Gregg wrote, "This consisted of irregular clusters of mud-wall huts, and is situated in the fertile valley of Rio Pecos, a silvery little river which ripples from the snowy mountains of Santa Fe – from which city this frontier village is nearly fifty miles to the southeast. The road makes this great southern bend, to find a passway through the broken extremity of the spur of

⁵⁶ Paul Horgan, *Josiah Gregg and His Vision of the Early West* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979), 17-21.

mountains before alluded to, which this point south is cut up into detached ridges and table plains. This mountain section of the road, even in its present unimproved condition, presents but few difficult passes, and might, with little labor, be put into good order.”⁵⁷

Gregg’s first sighting of Santa Fe obviously made him giddy. “A few miles before reaching the [capital] city, the road again emerges into an open plain,” he wrote of the townscape unfolding before him. “Ascending a table ridge, we spied in an extended valley to the northwest, occasional groups of trees, skirted with verdant corn and wheat fields, with here and there a square block-like protuberance reared in the midst. A little further, and just ahead of us to the north, irregular clusters of the same opened to our view. “Oh, we are approaching the suburbs!’ thought I, on perceiving the cornfields, and what I supposed to be brick-kilns scattered in every direction. These and other observations of the same nature becoming audible, a friend at my elbow said, ‘It is true those are heaps of unburnt bricks, nevertheless they are *houses* – this is the city of Santa Fe.’”⁵⁸

The approach to Santa Fe gave Gregg his first glimpse of town layout and construction. He interpreted the lack of city planning as evidence of cultural disorder. “The town is very irregularly laid out,” he wrote, “and most of the streets are little better than common highways traversing scattered settlements which are interspersed with cornfields nearly sufficient to supply the inhabitants with grain. The only attempt at anything like architectural compactness and precision, consists in four tiers of buildings, whose fronts are shaded with a fringe of *portales* or *corredores* of the rudest possible

⁵⁷ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 77.

description. They stand around the public square, and comprise the Palacio, or Governor's house, the Custom-house, the Barracks (with which is connected the fearful *Calabozo*), the *Casa Consistorial of the Alcaldes*, the *Carpilla de los Soldados* or Military Chapel, besides several private residences, as well as most of the shops of the American traders."⁵⁹

Gregg devoted so much space to assertions of Mexican inferiority that he lost sight of many of the reasons for the use of natural, low-cost materials in New Mexican architecture. The difference between Gregg's tendency to judge and W. W. H. Davis' tendency to explain was the nature of their experience in the Southwest. Gregg saw through the eyes of a trader, identifying problems with the Mexican ways that could be solved by adopting American merchandise, ways of governance, and culture. Using indigenous materials and techniques meant a lack of change, which meant Mexicans saw less need for Yankee manufactured goods. Because of this, Gregg had no incentive to recommend functional and durable indigenous materials and techniques. Davis, in contrast, traveled throughout New Mexico Territory trying legal cases as its U.S. attorney, observing legislative deliberations as territorial secretary, and negotiating solutions to the people's problems as lieutenant governor. In these official capacities, Davis was in a position to understand the need to use mud and straw in the absence of wood and coal to fire kilns necessary to manufacture bricks. That Gregg noted the sparse stands of trees and lack of navigable rivers to transport bricks made in the States indicates a failure to connect the characteristics of the terrain to the ways people made do with

⁵⁹ Ibid., 103.

what they had — characteristics of thrift that a Northerner, like Davis, would have cherished but that a Southerner may have been less predisposed to perceive.

To do things the Mexican way was to do things the inferior way, Gregg implied. *Commerce of the Prairies* tells the story of Gregg's experience of Northern Mexico chronologically. A close reading of the book reveals how his attitudes about Mexico developed over time. Initially, detailed description of the landscape, buildings, town layouts, and farms dominate the narrative. Gregg displayed a sense of wonder and discovery, characterizing Mexicans at first in terms of their difference from Americans. As his experience of their culture deepened, recognition of difference turned to declarations of Mexican inferiority. "In architecture, the people do not seem to have arrived at any great perfection, but rather to have conformed themselves to the clumsy style which prevailed among the aborigines, than to waste their time in studying modern masonry and the use of lime," he wrote of Santa Fe's adobe buildings. "The materials generally used for building are of the crudest possible description; consisting of unburnt bricks ... laid in mortar of mere clay and sand."⁶⁰ He did, however, concede that adobe homes were quite comfortable, staying warm in winter and cool in the summer because the walls were so thick.⁶¹

Faith: Superstitious followers and religious con men

Mexican Catholic rituals drew Gregg's fiercest criticism. "In the variety and grossness of popular superstitions, Northern Mexico can probably compete with any civilized country in the world," he wrote. "Others may have their extravagant traditions,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 144.

⁶¹ Ibid., 145.

their fanatical prejudices, their priestly impostures, but here the popular creed seems to be the embodiment of as much that is fantastic and improbable in idolatrous worship, as it is possible to clothe in the garb of a religious faith.”⁶² Gregg scoffed at Mexican reverence for the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico’s patron saint, and he ridiculed the faithful’s practice of praying to saints for intercession in times of sickness and distress.⁶³ Gregg called the practice of kneeling and genuflecting in the presence of the Communion Host “abject idolatry”⁶⁴ and thought Catholic Masses were so filled with ritual that they left no room for real faith, declaring that “these religious exercises, however, partake but seldom of the character of true devotion; for people may be seen chattering or tittering while in the act of crossing themselves, or muttering some formal prayer.”⁶⁵

Viewed through the lens of his Quaker upbringing, it is apparent why Gregg reserved his greatest criticism for Mexican Catholics’ use of rituals and sacramental objects. Quakers in the early nineteenth century believed that Christ’s power of salvation should not be tied too closely to physical or “outward” forms, such as the Bible, ordained ministry, liturgies, or sacraments.⁶⁶ The leader of the rural Quakers, Elias Hicks (1748-1830), taught that divine light was revealed to every person, not just religious ministers.⁶⁷ In this light, it was only natural that Gregg viewed priests with suspicion. To him, the padres were drawing people away from the light.

⁶² Ibid., 173.

⁶³ Ibid., 173-177.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 178.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 179.

⁶⁶ Melvin B. Endy Jr., “The Society of Friends,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 596.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 604.

Gregg's idea that Mexican Catholics' worship displayed a dependence on pageantry but a lack of deep spiritual connection to the divine translated into disbelief that their acts of charity were inspired by faith. Rather, he believed that they were merely doing what they were told:

But taking the Northern Mexicans without distinction of class or degree, there is scarcely a race of people on the face of the earth more alive to the dictates of charity – that is, almsgiving; which is more owing perhaps to the force of religious instruction than to real sympathy for the sufferings of the indigent and the helpless.⁶⁸

Gregg detested the Catholic hierarchy for its alignment with the Mexican government, which he saw as a parasite that thrived by overtaxing American traders like himself, and for mirroring the government's corruption by overcharging the faithful for weddings and other sacraments.⁶⁹ A priest, to Gregg, was not a holy man, but a con man who preyed on his superstitious flock by promising to relieve drought by praying for rain only when he could be reasonably sure the season for rain had come.⁷⁰ And because he thought they were already prone to fleecing the faithful, Gregg could not have expected the priests to care for anyone but themselves. Since the government could not be counted on to do this, it fell to the laity to provide for the needy. "The law making no provisions for paupers, there is no country perhaps more infested with beggars, especially from Chihuahua south," Gregg observed. "In the large cities, Saturday is the alms-giving day

⁶⁸ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 154-155.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 182-183.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 177. This is what Gregg wrote about priests who deceived his followers in time of drought: "There is but little rain throughout the year, except from July to October – known as the rainy season; and as the Missouri traders usually arrive about its commencement, the coincidence has given rise to a superstition, quite prevalent among the vulgar, that the Americans bring the rain with them. During seasons of drought, especially, they look for the arrival of the annual caravans as the harbinger of speedy relief." One has to wonder whether Gregg did not understand that it was a figure of speech and not belief in a cause-and-effect relationship.

by custom; and on such occasions the *limnosneros* (as the mendicant race is called), may be seen promenading the streets in gangs of thirty or forty, or in smaller numbers, performing genuflections at every nook and corner of the town, each croaking aloud his favorite set of orisons and inviting the blessings of heaven upon every man, woman or child, who may have been so fortunate as to propitiate the benison by casting a few *clacos*.⁷¹ Clacos were copper coins worth one-eighth of a real, or about one and a half cents. Many of these beggars, Gregg claimed, were fakes.⁷²

The passage in Gregg's chapter on Catholic faith that would prove the most shocking, and therefore was excerpted by American periodicals as an example of Mexican Catholic perversity, was his description of the Holy Week rituals of *La Hermandad de Nuestro Padre Jesus, or Los Hermanos Penitentes*.⁷³ This male lay order originated as a society of flagellants who came to the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It took root in the villages of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado because visits by priests were rare due to their isolation. In the absence of the church, the Penitentes looked after orphans, widows, and other needy people. Because the church was so implicated in government, the absence of priests in the far north left a void of both charity and power. The Penitentes handled both. Gregg described a ritual that he

⁷¹ Ibid., 154-155.

⁷² Ibid., 155.

⁷³ *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* ran the entire description. "Commerce of the Prairies," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, June 1845, 642. In addition, *The Western Mountaineer* newspaper ran a letter to the editor years later that was titled "Religious ceremonies in New Mexico" on August 16, 1860, with details similar to those in Gregg's description. Richardson repeated the description in his best-selling book *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1867). Chapter Five of this dissertation contains an extended analysis of *Western Mountaineer* editor Albert Deane Richardson's representation of Mexicans.

said he witnessed one Good Friday in the town of Tomé, a town on the east bank of the Rio Grande 26 miles downstream from Albuquerque:

“[M]y attention was arrested by a man almost naked, bearing, in imitation of Simon, a huge cross upon his shoulders, which, though constructed of the lightest wood, must have weighed over a hundred pounds. The long end dragged upon the ground, as we have seen it represented in sacred pictures, and about the middle swung a stone of immense dimensions, appended there for the purpose of making the task more laborious. Not far behind followed another equally destitute of clothing, with his whole body wrapped in chains and cords, which seemed buried in the muscles, and which so cramped and confined him that he was scarcely able to keep pace with the procession. The person who brought up the rear presented a still more disgusting aspect. He walked along with a patient and composed step, while another followed close behind belaboring him lustily with a whip, which he flourished with all the satisfaction of an amateur; but as the lash was pointed only with a tuft of untwisted sea-grass, its application merely served to keep open the wounds upon the penitent’s back, which had been scarified, as I was informed, with the keen edge of a flint, and was bleeding most profusely. The blood was kept in perpetual flow by the stimulating juice of certain herbs, carried by a third person, into which the scourger frequently dipped his lash. Although the actors in this tragical farce were completely muffled, yet they were well known to many of the by-standers, one of whom assured me that they were three of the most notorious rascals in the country. By submitting to this species of penance, they annually received complete absolution of their past year’s sins, and thus ‘purified,’ entered afresh on the old career of wickedness and crime.”⁷⁴

Gregg’s scientific bent made him prone to question any reliance at all on religion.

This was not only the time of the Second Great Awakening, but a time of accelerating attainment in the sciences. What could not be measured or tested may not have been worthwhile to someone with a hyper-rational way of seeing the world, a mathematical mind, and a constant eye on changing conditions. In Gregg’s way of seeing things, what could not be explained through observation and reason – that is, what could only be explained by faith – amounted to hocus-pocus.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 181.

Physical appearance as a basis of othering

Skin color provided another basis for othering, but it did not give Gregg reason to declare any non-whites inferior. Nor did race dissuade Gregg from admiring Mexican women. “The females, although many of them are about as broad-featured as the veriest Indian, not unfrequently possess striking traits of beauty,” he wrote. “They are remarkable for small feet and handsome figures, notwithstanding their profound ignorance of the ‘refined art’ of lacing.”⁷⁵ To him, inferiority came from what people did and not from who they were.

Gregg implicated race in many of his descriptions of the social processes of New Mexico. “Swarthy” was the only word Gregg used to describe a ranchero he met in northern New Mexico.⁷⁶ He used a broader range of terms for the rest of the population. “Their complexion is generally dark,” he wrote, “but every variety of shade is found among them, from the lightest European tint to the swarthiest hue.”⁷⁷ Race-mixing was the reason for this: “Their darkness has resulted partly from their original Moorish blood, but more from intermarriages with the aborigines. An occasional Indian, and sometimes an entire village, have abandoned their wonted seclusion, and become identified with their [Spanish] conquerors.”⁷⁸

Gregg made a point of noting the role of slavery in intermarriage, explaining that the Indians in the North “buy the captive children of both sexes of the wild tribes, taken prisoners among each other, or by the Pueblos in their petty wars with the former – and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 154.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 76-77.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 153.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 153.

indeed by the Mexicans themselves – who are generally held in bondage to the age of twenty-one years, and some, from ignorance, their whole lives.”⁷⁹ Most who were freed identified with the race of their Indian owners and married into their race.⁸⁰ As a result of all of these social processes, Gregg concluded, “The present race of New Mexicans has thus become an amalgam, averaging about equal parts of the European and aboriginal blood. The peasantry, as well from a more general intermixture with the Indian, as from exposure, are the darkest; yet the tawny complexion pervades all classes – the rich as well as the poor.”⁸¹

To the extent that Mexicans mimicked American ways, Gregg praised or condemned them. “The best society in the interior of New Mexico is fast conforming to European fashion,” he wrote, noting that upper-class caballeros retained a distinctive style that featured sombreros, gaudily embroidered jackets, pantaloons, and embossed leather boots.⁸² Among the poorer classes, whom Gregg characterized as “peasants,” men wore a low-budget version of caballero attire. Women wore homemade flannel or coarse cotton dresses and covered their necks, arms, and fingers with jewelry.⁸³

Mexican character: Cowardice, cruelty, and a bit of hospitality

Gregg did not believe everything he read about Mexicans, though he did accept most of it. This made him somewhat less predisposed to foment others’ generalizations about Mexicans’ character. Although he thought Mexican military officers deserved their

⁷⁹ Ibid., 153.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 153.

⁸¹ Ibid., 153.

⁸² Ibid., 149.

⁸³ Ibid., 152.

reputation as cowards, Gregg thought farmers and shepherds were unfairly maligned. “The Northern Mexicans have often been branded with cowardice: a stigma which may well be allowed to rest upon the wealthier classes, and the city-bred caballeros, from whose ranks are selected the military leaders who decide the fate of battles,” he wrote. “But the rancheros, or as they might be still more appropriately styled, the yeomanry of the country, inured as they are from their peculiar mode of life to every kind of fatigue and danger, possess a much higher caliber of moral courage.”⁸⁴ If they shrank from battle, Gregg thought they did so out of lack of confidence in their commanders and their rickety weaponry. “It is true that most of the regular troops are provided with English muskets, which, by the way, they are generally too ignorant to keep in order,” he observed. But most militiamen were left to fight with unreliable sixteenth-century flintlocks, lances, and bows and arrows.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, he volunteered, “I have seen persons of the lower class do things, however, which would really seem to indicate a superlative degree of courage. Some of them will often perform journeys alone through wildernesses teeming with murderous savages; but as they not unfrequently embark upon these perilous jaunts unarmed, it is evident they depend greatly upon good luck and swiftness of limbs, and still more upon the protection of their favorite saint, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*.”⁸⁶

One stereotype that Gregg did believe was the *Leyenda Negra*, an Anglo-European notion that the Spanish were unusually cruel, wicked, and fanatical. “The New Mexicans appear to have inherited much of the cruelty and intolerance of their ancestors,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 155-156.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 155-156.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 155-156.

and no small portion of their bigotry and fanaticism,” he wrote. “Being of a highly imaginative temperament, and of rather accommodating moral principles – cunning, loquacious, quick of perception and sycophantic, their conversation frequently exhibits a degree of tact – a false glare of talent, eminently calculated to mislead and impose. ... Systematically cringing and subservient while out of power, as soon as the august mantle of authority falls upon their shoulders, there are but little bounds to their arrogance and vindictiveness of spirit.”⁸⁷ He did allow for exceptions, however, explaining, “While such are the general features of the character of the Northern Mexicans, however, I am fain to believe and acknowledge, that there are to be found among them numerous instances of uncompromising virtue, good faith and religious forbearance.”⁸⁸

What good he found in Mexicans had been noted by previous observers. Although he approved of their social graces, Gregg implied their hospitality was insincere. “The Mexicans, like the French, are remarkable for their politeness and suavity of manners,” he wrote. “You cannot visit a friend but he assures you that, ‘*Esta V. en su casa, y puede mandar,*’ etc. (You are in your own house, and can command, etc.), or “*Estoy enteramente a su disposicion*” (I am wholly at your disposal), without, however, meaning more than an expression of ordinary courtesy. Nor can you speak in commendation of any article, let its value be what is may, but the polite owner immediately replies, “*Tomelo, V. Senior; es suyo* (Take it, sir; it is yours), without the slightest intention or expectation that you should take him at his word.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 156.

Technological and scientific backwardness in industry and agriculture

Gregg described at length the state of New Mexican arts and sciences, industry, ranching, and farming. In most instances he judged New Mexican ways deficient. It was not their racial makeup that made them backwards, in Gregg's eyes. Lack of education, greedy Roman Catholic priests, and corrupt government explained most of the deficiencies he saw.

“There is no part of the civilized globe, perhaps, where the Arts have been so much neglected, and the progress of Science so successfully impeded as in New Mexico,” Gregg declared.⁹⁰ The most a New Mexico student could expect to learn was to read and write, and a few might gain a shaky grasp of basic mathematics. Those lucky enough to be tutored by Catholic clergymen, “who, from their vocation, are necessarily obliged to possess a smattering of Latin,” attained something resembling a liberal education.⁹¹ Even so, Gregg doubted New Mexicans would even be allowed to be exposed to Protestant thought or liberal theories of government. “From the earliest time down to the secession of the colonies, it was always the policy of the Spanish Government as well as of the papal hierarchy, to keep every avenue of knowledge closed against their subjects of the New World; lest the lights of civil and religious liberty should reach them from their neighbors of the North.”⁹² Historian Max L. Moorhead pointed out Gregg's exaggeration in the 1954, annotated reprint of *Commerce of the Prairies*. Spain's colonies had more than twenty universities, port inspectors allowed most controversial literature

⁹⁰ Ibid., 140.

⁹¹ Ibid., 140.

⁹² Ibid., 141.

into Spain's holdings, and its indigenous people received far more education than Native Americans received from Americans.⁹³

Gregg claimed "at least three-fourths of the present population can neither read nor write," though he did not specify whether he meant literacy in any language or merely literacy in English.⁹⁴ When upper-class New Mexicans showed any inkling of education, Gregg wrote it off as "that superficial refinement which is the bane of fashionable society everywhere, and which consists, not in superiority of understanding, not in acquired knowledge, but in that peculiar species of assumption, which has happily been styled 'the flowing garment with which Ignorance decks herself.'"⁹⁵ Nor was higher education heard of in New Mexico. It had no physicians and no lawyers because no one could afford to pay them. As a result, the people relied on herbal remedies from native plants.⁹⁶

Gregg found the state of agriculture deplorable. Metal hand tools and the steel plows were unknown; Mexicans farmed with implements hewn from wood. "Agriculture, like almost everything else in New Mexico, is in a very primitive and unimproved state," he wrote. "A great portion of the peasantry cultivate with the hoe alone – their ploughs (when they have any) being only used for mellow grounds, as they are too rudely constructed to be fit for any other service."⁹⁷ Gregg did, however, see genius in New Mexican irrigation. Because a farmer relied on irrigation ditches and dams and not on

⁹³ Ibid., 141.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 141.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 141.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 107.

rain, he could control the amount of water his crops received and thus never lost any crop due to overwatering.⁹⁸ Ranching, too, suffered from backwardness, in Gregg's eyes. He claimed that New Mexicans had done nothing to improve their livestock through breeding, which surprised him since they were such able horsemen.⁹⁹ The quality of their sheep suffered, Gregg charged, because "in conformity with their characteristic tardiness in improvement, however, the natives have retained their original stocks, which are wretchedly degenerate."¹⁰⁰

As for industrial arts, Gregg observed, "The mechanical arts have scarcely risen above the condition they were found in among the aborigines."¹⁰¹ Gregg described the accomplishments of New Mexican gold and silversmiths with no small measure of condescension, declaring that "some mechanics of this class have produced such singular specimens of ingenious workmanship, that on examining them, we are almost unwilling to believe that rude art could accomplish so much."¹⁰²

If New Mexico's development lagged that of the United States, Gregg did not entirely blame its Spanish settlers. "New Mexico possesses but a few of those natural advantages which are necessary to anything like a rapid progress in civilization," he commented. "Though bounded north and east by the territory of the United States, south by that of Texas and Chihuahua, and west by Upper California, it is surrounded by chains of mountains and prairie wilds, extending to a distance of 500 miles or more, except in

⁹⁸ Ibid., 107.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 126-127.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 135.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰² Ibid., 144.

the direction of Chihuahua, from which its settlements are separated by an unpeopled desert of nearly two hundred miles —and without a single means of communication by water with any part of the world.”¹⁰³ New Mexico lacked a single navigable stream, Gregg wrote.¹⁰⁴

Government: Corruption and overtaxation of American traders

Gregg devoted a chapter to describing the government of New Mexico, spending much of it complaining about taxes and fees collected from American traders and naturalized citizens.¹⁰⁵ He seemed to think that when the government was not busy picking the pockets of Americans, it looked the other way when common thieves did so literally. Any tool left unguarded was apt to be stolen, Gregg warned.¹⁰⁶ And an American trader could count on no one to mete out justice in the event of theft, as when a couple of boys in Chihuahua snatched some of his wares off a counter and ran off into the crowded street. “In vain I cried, ‘A garren a los ladrones!’ (catch the thieves!) not a single individual moved to apprehend them,” Gregg recounted. “I then proffered the goods stolen, to any person who might succeed in bringing the rogues to me, but to no purpose.”¹⁰⁷

Other pursuits considered shady by American standards were perfectly legal in New Mexico. Gregg called gambling the mother of every petty crime in Mexican territory, and yet this source of moral damage was embraced by men, women, and

¹⁰³ Ibid., 98.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 99.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 158-166.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 166.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 166-167.

children alike.¹⁰⁸ Far from illegal, gambling was cherished by everyone in New Mexico. Betting on monte, cock fighting and bull baiting was common and shameless, according to Gregg.¹⁰⁹ Other amusements, such as dancing at fandangos (a term for common parties) and bailes (which Gregg translated as “balls” and characterized as grander affairs attended by the upper classes) were constantly held in towns of any size. Though he approved of the music, Gregg explained that “what most oddly greets, and really outrages most Protestant ears, is the accompaniment of divine service with the very same instruments, and often with the same tunes” as were heard at a fandango.¹¹⁰

According to Gregg, the Mexican government levied a tariff of about 100 percent on U.S. goods, but most of the time they could bargain with customs officers, who would take a third of the amount, kick back a third to the merchants, and pay a third to the government. And when Manuel Armijo was governor of New Mexico in 1827-1829, 1837-1844, and 1845-1846, he imposed his own tariff of \$500 per wagonload, regardless of the value of the goods or the size of the wagon.¹¹¹

Gregg complained about a tax called the *derecho de consume*, essentially a sales tax, that supported the state government. He called it “decidedly the most troublesome if not the most oppressive revenue system that ever was devised for internal purposes” because he said it hindered “commercial prosperity of the country” and served “as a potential incentive to fraudulent practices” to avoid the tax.¹¹² While he may have

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 167-168.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 168-170.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 168-170.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 79.

¹¹² Ibid., 267.

honestly opposed the tax in principle – after all, as a merchant he could see that money taken by the government was money lost to him – Gregg overstated the amount of the tax. Whereas he put it at an average of nearly twenty percent, Moorhead pointed out that that rate was in force for just one week in late 1839. At other times, it fluctuated between three percent and six percent from 1824 to 1842 before spiking to fifteen percent in 1843.¹¹³

Gregg explained that if George Wilkins Kendall's story was read without knowing the already violent history of Texan-Mexican relations, an American would no doubt see the Mexican treatment of Kendall's party as an outrage. But the capture of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition was part of a series of attacks and retaliatory strikes that Gregg traced to the murder of Antonio José Chávez in February 1843. Chávez, a Mexican trader, had set out from Santa Fe to Independence with five servants, two wagons, and 55 mules laden with \$10,000 to \$20,000 in gold and currency, plus furs to trade.¹¹⁴ Weak with frostbite, he left one of his wagons behind in Indian Territory and forged ahead to seek help.¹¹⁵ A band of men who claimed to be Texans stopped him 100 miles inside the U.S. boundary, where they robbed him and murdered him execution-style by firing squad.¹¹⁶ The Texans who killed him, led by John McDaniel, were captured by Americans and taken to St. Louis, where they were tried, convicted, and executed.¹¹⁷ This and the ensuing reprisals and counter-reprisals led Mexico to impose an embargo on U.S.

¹¹³ Ibid., 267.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 337.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 338.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 339.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 338.

traders. Ultimately, Gregg called for peace between the United States and Mexico because “with the continuation of peace between us, the Mexicans will certainly be compelled to open their northern frontier ports, to avoid a revolution in New Mexico, with which they are continually threatened while this embargo continues. Should the obnoxious decree be repealed, the Santa Fe Trade will doubtless be prosecuted again with renewed vigor and enterprise.”¹¹⁸

Peace did not lie ahead for the United States and Mexico. In March 1846, President James K. Polk ordered Gen. Zachary Taylor to occupy the disputed strip of land between the Nueces River, which Mexico claimed was its border with Texas, and the Rio Grande, which the United States declared to be the international border. After a skirmish between Mexican and U.S. forces, Tyler did not move for a declaration of war. Rather, he declared that a state of war simply existed because Mexico had “invaded our territory, and shed American blood on the American soil.”¹¹⁹

The U.S. Army strictly enforced a policy of buying provisions from Mexicans rather than foraging for them as they moved across Mexico to the capital. Theft did occur, however, and Gregg witnessed some of it while attached to the Army of

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 345.

¹¹⁹ Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922), 414. For extensive treatment of the context, causes, and conduct of the U.S.-Mexico War, see K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War: 1846-1848* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); . For a telling of the war from the Mexican perspective, see *The View from Chapultepec: Mexican Writers on the Mexican-American War*, ed. and trans. Cecil Robinson (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989) and *The Other Side; Or, Notes for the History of the War Between Mexico and the United States. Written in Mexico* eds. Ramon Alcaraz and others, trans. Albert C. Ramsey (New York: B. Franklin, 1970). For a critique of American soldiers’ conduct in the war, see Paul W. Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Conflict During the Mexican American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Chihuahua as a translator and confidential agent.¹²⁰ Army General Butler had a number of volunteers arrested after they tore down houses for firewood in the village of Los Muertos, Mexico, though Gregg said other volunteers continued their pillaging despite that punishment.¹²¹ Gregg detested the volunteers' thievery and malice toward the Mexicans,¹²² but he kept it to himself until he could stand the injustice no longer. In a letter to the *Louisville Journal*, he laid out the reasons that the people of Matamoros abandoned town before American volunteers marched into it. "It is painful to feel compelled to confess that the volunteers from here to Monterey – and I am assured it has been the same thence to Matamoros – have given much cause for dread in which they are held by the Mexican citizens," Gregg reported. "... I was wholly unprepared to believe the astounding reports I had heard among the Mexicans of outrages upon the persons as well as property from Monterey to Matamoros; and I suppose I never should have believed a syllable had it not been for what I myself recently witnessed."¹²³

The character flaws of Mexicans were many, Gregg claimed, and most of them flowed from the Spanish blood in their veins. New Mexicans, in particular, had inherited the traits of cruelty, intolerance, and fanaticism from their Spanish forbears. He distinguished cowardly city-born rancheros, mainly Spanish-descended men with money,

¹²⁰ Gregg received \$218 for service to the government from July 11 to Aug. 24, 1846, according to *Report of the Secretary of War, With a Statement of Expenditures for the Contingent Expenses of the Military Establishment, in 1848, January 8, 1849*, Serial Set Vol. No. 529, Session Vol. No. 1, Sen. Exec. Doc. 8, 30th Cong., 2d Sess: 2.

¹²¹ Josiah Gregg, diary (December 18, 1846), *Diary and Letters of Josiah Gregg: 1847-1850* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 316.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 317. Gregg described several incidents of theft by volunteers who went unpunished near Monterey.

¹²³ Josiah Gregg, "Saltillo, Mexico, Jan. 18, 1847, To the Editors of the Louisville Journal," in Josiah Gregg, *Diary & Letters of Josiah Gregg, 1840-1847* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 332.

from hardy Mexican peasant farmers who bravely defended their livestock from Indian marauders. But these poor farmers were hopelessly backward, in Gregg's estimation. A corrupt Mexican government picked foreign merchants' pockets while a Roman Catholic hierarchy that promoted superstition and ignorance shook down the innocent faithful, as Gregg saw things. The largely Spanish elite was to blame for the resulting poverty and illiteracy among the lower classes. Unable to buy improved farm implements and incapable of making such tools themselves, poor farmers were doomed to a backward existence. But if Gregg simply wanted peace with Mexico, however, Kendall and his Texan comrades wanted only war.

George Wilkins Kendall: Writer-warrior of the Borderlands

1844 marked a turning point in the spread of information about Mexico. That year, Josiah Gregg and George Wilkins Kendall published extensive nonfiction accounts of their personal experiences in Mexican territory. Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies* and Kendall's *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* provided a window into the differences between Americans and New Mexicans, though Gregg seemed more sympathetic to the people of Santa Fe and Northern Mexico because, as a trader, his prosperity was intertwined with theirs. Kendall, however, had long before cast his allegiance with Texas and brought an accordingly skewed, pro-Anglo-Saxon view of Mexicans as treacherous, cruel, and cowardly.

Kendall's family, boyhood, and early career

George Wilkins Kendall was born to Abigail Wilkins Kendall and Thaddeus Kendall, the first of five children, on Aug. 22, 1809, in Mont Vernon, N.H.¹²⁴ George's father, Thaddeus, kept a store and was a captain in the Mont Vernon Company of the Fifth New Hampshire Regiment.¹²⁵ The family struggled financially, and at age seven George left home to live with his maternal grandparents.¹²⁶ The struggle continued, and George stayed in Amherst for the next ten years. His grandfather Samuel Wilkins was well-versed in politics and religion. Samuel had been chosen as an Amherst selectman in 1768, and he held that office fifteen times in the next twenty-one years. He also served as a Presbyterian deacon for forty-two years.¹²⁷

George was a quick learner, but he did not pay much attention to subjects he disliked, instead favoring geography, music, and art.¹²⁸ When George's first cousin Nathan Kendall Seaton and Thomas G. Wells founded the *Amherst Herald* to support the Universalist movement, George took a job in their shop as a printer's devil. George then horrified his grandfather by announcing he planned to become a printer. Desperate to dissuade him, Samuel Wilkins wrote Abigail and Thaddeus Wilkins for advice. George's

¹²⁴ Georgina Kendall Fellowes, typewritten obituary, in Kendall Family Papers, Special Collections Library, University of Texas-Arlington.

¹²⁵ Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune*, 5.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

parents encouraged him to take up something else but did not forbid him from continuing as an apprentice.¹²⁹

Kendall had plenty of reasons to believe he would prosper as a printer. His youngest uncle, John Hubbard Wilkins, authored the standard astronomy textbook in New England and became a junior partner in the Boston publishing firm of Hilliard, Gray, Little & Wilkins. Another cousin, Amos Kendall, was beginning to make a name as a journalist in Louisville, Ky. When the *Amherst Herald* failed, George went to join John Wilkins in Boston, where he resumed his duties as a printer's devil at the *Statesman* newspaper. Before he had learned much more than how to clean presses and put type back into its case, he hopped a mail schooner to New York.¹³⁰ A series of odd jobs took him to western New York, Sandusky, Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, and to Detroit, where he finally settled down and learned his craft.¹³¹ Having attained journeyman status, George W. Kendall wended his way west to Illinois, up to Wisconsin, then south through Ohio, Iowa, Missouri, and Tennessee, then up to New York City. His wanderings exposed him to the nation's sectional differences and partisan politicking. It all left him with a distrust of politics and politicians.¹³² Soon he set his sights southward.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 10. Copeland's source was a letter from George W. Kendall's brother-in-law William Rix to Mrs. G. W. Kendall, which he found in the Copeland papers. The tale is noted in Copeland's manuscripts in the Fayette Copeland Papers at the University of Oklahoma. But they are absent from the Kendall Family Papers. The box containing most of the Kendall family letters went missing from the Special Collections Library at the University of Texas-Arlington sometime in 2009.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 10-11.

¹³¹ Ibid., 12-14.

¹³² Ibid., 14.

Kendall worked for the *Mobile Register* in Alabama and papers in Augusta, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. He briefly ran a stage line in North Carolina.¹³³ But in 1830, he moved to New Orleans.

Although Kendall's work was published just a month before *Commerce of the Prairies*, Gregg was in position to influence what Kendall knew, if not what he felt, about Mexicans. Kendall had spoken at length with Gregg in preparation for the Santa Fe expedition. While writing Volume 2 of his narrative, Kendall again got information from Gregg about Indian tribes in the Southwest and recommended his readers to buy *Commerce of the Prairies*, which was to be published shortly after *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition*. In addition to Gregg, Kendall had learned about Mexico from Zebulon Pike's expedition narrative.¹³⁴ Gregg, in turn, alluded to the troubles Kendall had during his imprisonment and told readers he would let them get the story from their author.¹³⁵ So the two adventure correspondents clearly told their stories to one another.

All Kendall said that he had in mind was "to visit regions inhabited only by the roaming Indian," find new subjects to write about, and do some buffalo hunting.¹³⁶ Maj. George T. Howard told him about his expedition, commissioned by Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar, to open a trade route connecting Santa Fe with Texas' ports on the Gulf of Mexico.¹³⁷ Kendall claimed he did not know about Lamar's ulterior motive of fomenting a revolution that would bring New Mexico east of the Rio Grande into the

¹³³ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁴ Kendall, "Narrative," 382. Kendall included a lengthy quote about the beauty of Albuquerque's women in a footnote.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 14.

Republic of Texas.¹³⁸ But he periodically reminded readers that the Texans thought that by entering New Mexico, they were merely asserting the republic's rightful claim and were not, as Mexicans called them, a "horde of land pirates" or a "gang of marauders."¹³⁹

Kendall set out from Austin with a party of 320 Texans hauling merchandise in late May or early June 1841.¹⁴⁰ He noted that a military force of about 300 men escorted them but took pains to justify their presence to defend them from Indian attack.¹⁴¹ Intending to leave the party before it reached Santa Fe so he could head south to Mexico City to explore and write about the journey for the *Picayune*, Kendall obtained a passport allowing him to enter Mexico.¹⁴² Armed with a Kentucky rifle, two pistols, a bowie knife and other blades, and provisioned with blankets, powder and lead, and all the other goods needed to sustain himself on the prairies, Kendall carried all the equipment of a frontiersman.¹⁴³ Though he bought a horse to carry him on his adventure, early in the trek he shattered his ankle in an accident and endured the journey in a wagon.¹⁴⁴

On reaching the outskirts of San Antonio, Kendall noted that "from every house some half dozen Mexican curs would jump forth and greet us with a chorus of yelps and barks." He foreshadowed his belief in Mexican cowardice, observing, "Those who have for the first time entered a Mexican town or city must have been struck with the unusual

¹³⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 15, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴² Ibid., 19.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 22.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 114. Kendall noted on p. 234 that he carried a Harper's Ferry dragoon pistol and a bell-muzzled pistol that fired shot.

number of dogs, and annoyed by their incessant barking; but the stranger soon learns that they vent all their courage in barks – they seldom bite.”¹⁴⁵

Gender: Cruel men and comforting women

In the New Mexico that Kendall saw, Mexican women continually threw themselves at the manly Anglo-Saxons, bringing them gifts of food, water, and liquor. In contrast, Mexican men were “brutal, piratical-visaged” scoundrels.¹⁴⁶ “The almost universal brutality and cold-heartedness of the men of New Mexico are in strange contrast with the kind of dispositions and tender sympathies exhibited by all classes of the women,” Kendall wrote.¹⁴⁷ The women Kendall found playing monte and drinking whiskey at a dance hall in San Antonio were “slovenly” and “badly dressed,” but he added a disclaimer: “This was but a fandango of the lowest order. The reader must not suppose that there is no better society among the Mexicans of San Antonio than I found at this place.”¹⁴⁸

When Kendall’s advance party made its way to rendezvous with the Texas military force that had followed the trade expedition, they passed through a small settlement where they were given warm tortillas, a corn-based molasses called *miel*, and goat cheese. “These, to us delicacies, they brought without money and without price – an earnest of the universal kindness and hospitality of the *women* of New Mexico,” Kendall wrote. “We threw some silver into their hands, wheeled our horses amid a shower of

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 45.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 293.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 293. He embellished this statement, writing that “We had not traveled more than a couple of miles before a tolerably well-dressed woman came running towards us from a small house, bringing a bottle of the country whiskey, and saying that it was for our use. This we drank upon the spot, and as we thanked the good-hearted creature for her kindness she appeared to feel deeply for us in our misfortunes.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 46.

muchas gracias and *adios, caballeros*, and left them.”¹⁴⁹ Shortly after their arrival in a New Mexican village, the party was questioned and ordered to give up its weapons and march to Santa Fe for questioning.¹⁵⁰

Kendall praised the mercy and generosity that he and the party were shown on their march to Santa Fe. “That the women all pitied us was evident; for the commiserating exclamation of *pobrecito!* As they gave us bread, cheese, and such food as they had at hand, fell from their tongues in softest and most feeling tones. They knew their husbands and brothers, and knowing them, felt that little of mercy or kindness could we expect at their hands.”¹⁵¹ Explaining that *pobrecitos* meant “poor fellows,” Kendall wrote that “nothing can be more touchingly sweet than the pronunciation of this word by a Spanish or Mexican woman. The tones come fresh and warm from the heart when an object worthy of compassion presents itself.”¹⁵² The men, however, Kendall regarded as “a semi-civilized enemy – cruel, relentless, and treacherous – who looked upon us as heretics and the common enemies of their religion and race.”¹⁵³ Seeing the Mexicans as cowardly, Kendall declared that “a determined rush, accompanied by a true Anglo-Saxon shout of defiance, would have brought every one of the cowardly wretches to his knees begging for mercy,” but then he backtracked, saying the Texans could not defeat them

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 273.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 288-289.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 289.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 292.

because there were too many of them and they could not outrun the mounted Mexicans on foot.¹⁵⁴

Mexican women's beauty also drew Kendall's admiration. As the prisoners marched through Albuquerque, he noted an impoverished girl who he thought was the "perfect specimen of female loveliness," with "dark, full, and lustrous eyes, overarched with brows of penciled regularity, and fringed with lashes of long and silken tecture," "beautifully-curved lips, half opened as if in pity and astonishment," and "ankles of such pure and classic elegance" that they could not be reproduced by "the chisel of Praxiteles himself."¹⁵⁵ Of course, she gave one of the Texan prisoners a pumpkin.¹⁵⁶

Backwardness: Technology, agriculture, and architecture

Everywhere Kendall looked in Mexico, from beanfields to cityscapes, he saw a semi-civilization that lagged American progress. Kendall explained that the homes in Anton Chico were made of adobes, "a species of large, sun-dried bricks," lacked windows and floors, and were "only one degree removed from the rudest wigwam of the Indian."¹⁵⁷ The largest house in the village had two rooms and "scanty furniture of which gave them a prison-like and desolate appearance." There was no chair, table, or cutlery.¹⁵⁸ Kendall complained that all they could get to eat there was boiled eggs, tortillas, and miel.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 383-384.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 385.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 275.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 275.

Like Gregg and Davis, Kendall commented on the primitive carts used by the Mexicans. “If in this country of locomotives, railroad cars, and well-built stage-coaches, the searcher after antiquarian relics and curiosities should, by any chance, meet with a Meexican cart,” Kendall declared, “he would look upon it as the first, the original attempt of man to construct a kind of wheel-carriage.”¹⁵⁹ As for Mexican plows, Kendall called them long, heavy, and clumsy.¹⁶⁰ Just as Richard Henry Dana Jr. complained that the Californios were thriftless because they would trade hides for shoes rather than using the raw material to manufacture their own, Kendall complained that Mexicans refused to advance by adopting American transportation technology. “Strange, that with a country as fair as any upon the face of the earth abounding in every species of soil, climate, fruit, and mineral, the Mexicans will not profit by the lessons, and adopt the systems of their Saxon neighbors,” he wondered. “They pertinaciously cling to the customs of their forefathers, and are becoming every year more and more impoverished – in short, they are morally, physically, and intellectually distanced in the great race of improvement which is run in almost every other quarter of the earth. Give them but tortillas, frijoles, and chile Colorado to supply their animal wants for the day, and seven tenths of the Mexicans are satisfied; and so they will continue to be until the race becomes extinct or amalgamated with Anglo-Saxon stock; for no political change, no revolution, can uproot that inherent indolence and apathy to change which in this age of improvement and advancement must sooner or later work their ruin and downfall.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Kendall, “Narrative Vol. 2,” 44.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

Outward characteristics: Race and appearance

Based on the signs he read on the trail as the party approached the mountains of eastern New Mexico in early September, a backwoodsman predicted that the Texans “should find Indians, white people, or an end to the prairie, the next day.”¹⁶² Given that they were crossing into New Mexico and Mexicans were not among these racial categories, Kendall implied that he saw Mexicans as people of a different nation, but not of a different race. He described Mexicans as “swarthy.”¹⁶³ To Kendall, they were white, only not quite. As the narrative proceeded, Kendall vacillated on their racial status, though he consistently recognized Mexicans as somehow different in skin color. After the people of San Miguel were alerted to the Texans’ ulterior motive, many reacted to the Texans with fear. “The colour entirely left the swarthy face of one of these fellows, who, for once, certainly had the appearance of a white man,” Kendall observed.¹⁶⁴ Their fear, Kendall said, was due to New Mexico Gov. Armijo’s declaration that the Texans had come “to burn, slay, and destroy as we went.”¹⁶⁵

The first Mexicans the party encountered were traders who gave them accurate information about the directions and distance to reach the village of San Miguel, some seventy-five miles distant and shared some barley meal with the half-starved Texans¹⁶⁶ On the way, the Mexicans told them they would pass the village of Anton Chico, where

¹⁶² Kendall, “Narrative Vol. 1,” 244.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 263-264.

they could buy tortillas and atole.¹⁶⁷ Of more immediate concern, the Mexicans told them they would come across an immense herd of sheep. The party bought twenty sheep from their shepherds and feasted on mutton before continuing to San Miguel.¹⁶⁸

Military mistreatment

Their relations with the New Mexicans went well until the Texan traders sent an advance party, accompanied by Kendall, to San Miguel to distribute broadsides proclaiming that they were traders who would do business with the New Mexicans only if they agreed to accept Texas' claim to their land. "If the inhabitants of New Mexico were not disposed to join, peacefully, the Texan standard, the expedition was to retire immediately," Kendall wrote. "These proclamations were printed in both Spanish and English, and not a doubt existed that the liberal terms offered would be at once acceded to by a population living within the limits of Texas, and who had long been groaning under a misrule the most tyrannical."¹⁶⁹ Things got worse from there.

When Kendall returned to where the advance party left the expedition, the Mexican shepherds told them "the country was in arms against us."¹⁷⁰ The traders were imprisoned in Santa Fe and New Mexico's governor ordered an American merchant in San Miguel into custody and had his merchandise confiscated.¹⁷¹ Within days, New Mexican soldiers intercepted Kendall's party, seized their weapons, and would have shot them on the spot if the alcalde of San Miguel did not intervene. Instead, they were

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 264.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 265.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 270.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 271.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 271.

marched off to prison in Santa Fe.¹⁷² Brought before Gov. Armijo, one of Kendall's companions declared that they were all merchants from the United States – a ruse that failed because Armijo saw that he was wearing a Texas-issue dragoon jacket.¹⁷³ While declaring Kendall's U.S. passport to be valid, Armijo still ordered him held until he could determine why he was with the Texans. Selecting one of the Texans who was fluent enough in Spanish to serve as interpreter, Armijo gave him a mule to ride and made the rest walk all the way to Mexico City for questioning, pronouncing, "The Texans are active and unretiring people – I know them. If one of them *pretends* to be sick or tired on the road, *shoot him down and bring me his ears!* Go!"¹⁷⁴

Kendall hobbled along on his mending ankle but paid one of the men to let him ride his mule when he could no longer stand the walk. Those who tried to escape, Armijo had executed.¹⁷⁵ The same fate befell those whose injuries would not let them keep marching; Kendall reported that they were shot dead and had their ears cut off for Armijo to use as evidence that they did not escape.¹⁷⁶

Kendall's descriptions of the caprice and viciousness of the New Mexicans on the march from San Miguel to El Paso on the way to Mexico City echoed long-held Anglo-American notions of Spanish cruelty, but he also assumed that because the New Mexican men overseeing the prisoners was cruel that all New Mexican men must be. When a Texan merchant was ordered shot dead because he was too sick and weak to keep up,

¹⁷² Ibid., 280-283.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 296.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 298.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 303.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 392.

Kendall remarked, “It may be difficult, for many of my readers to believe that such an act of wanton barbarity could be perpetrated by a people pretending to be civilized – to be Christians!”¹⁷⁷ After another Texan tried unsuccessfully to get on his feet, a soldier “knocked his brains out with a musket! His blanket was then stripped from him, as the reward of his murderer, his ears were cut off, and he was thrown by the roadside, another feast for the buzzards and prairie wolves!”¹⁷⁸

Civilian mercy and compassion

Kendall claimed mercy was a rare trait among Mexican soldiers, but he described several times when he and his party benefited from the kindness of strangers. “In some few instances men were found among the Mexicans who had humanity enough to take up some unfortunate Texan and carry him a few miles,” he wrote, “but those instances were extremely rare.”¹⁷⁹ In contrast with the cruel Mexican military officers, civilians were seen as kindly and sympathetic to the abused Texans. Indians looked on them with pity, while city dwellers appeared “rather to be actuated by commiseration than triumph or hatred, Jews and heretics though they thought and termed us.”¹⁸⁰ Kindness and benevolence marked their actions toward the Texans. Stopping to rest in El Paso, the Texans enjoyed the generosity of the town’s residents, who put them up in their homes and fed them “well-cooked meats, eggs, the finest bread, and in many cases even the wines of the place.”¹⁸¹ In custody of Gen. J. M. Elias, Salazar’s commander, Kendall and

¹⁷⁷ Kendall, “Narrative, Vol. 2,” 14-15.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

his comrades revealed the soldiers' murder of three Texans and the deaths of two others, and Salazar was put under arrest.¹⁸² Afterward, though still under arrest, they were treated well by El Paso's civilians and soldiers alike.

Though he regarded New Mexicans as treacherous and lawless, Kendall found the people of El Paso to be "most honest, industrious, cleanly, and better disposed towards foreigners than those of any town of equal size I passed through in my long journey."¹⁸³ Among them he found a great benefactor in the local curate, Ramon Ortiz, who loaned Kendall a horse and tack to use for the journey to Chihuahua, about 300 miles from El Paso, and provided enough bread to feed the Texan prisoners en route, and many of his parishioners were similarly generous.¹⁸⁴ Kendall, who found this generosity uncharacteristic of what he had heard from others about Mexicans, wrote, "Professing a different religion from mine, and one, too, that I had been taught to believe, at least in Mexico, inculcated a jealous intolerance towards those of any other faith, I could expect from him neither favour nor regard. How surprised was I, then, to find him liberal to a fault, constant in his attentions, and striving to make my situation as agreeable as the circumstances would admit. I can never hope for an opportunity to repay all his kindness to me, and must content myself with this simple tribute."¹⁸⁵ But Kendall still could not resist taking a backhanded slap at Mexico, proclaiming, "Almost the only place in Mexico I turned my back upon with anything like regret was the lovely town or city of El

¹⁸² Ibid., 33. Kendall misspelled Salazar's last name throughout both volumes, only correcting himself on page 423 of Volume 2 and adding, "He shall not say I have robbed him of any fame by spelling his name wrong.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 41.

Paso.”¹⁸⁶ Beginning there and continuing down to the capital, Kendall wrote, “In almost every instance where we were invited to the houses of the Mexicans of the highest order, we found them gentlemanly in their deportment and extremely good livers.”¹⁸⁷

Mistreatment of the Texans drew Kendall’s ire, but so did the military’s abuse of Mexican civilians. When a Mexican captain ordered an alcalde to provide him a hundred mules to ride, Kendall called it “another instance of the supremacy the military power exerts over the civil in Mexico.”¹⁸⁸ Kendall attributed the pity he saw in the eyes of Mexican civilians to commiseration. He did not note any connection between charity, mercy, and Catholic piety, as Gregg had.

Religion: Protestant faith vs. Catholic “superstition”

Experience with the priests of Mexico complicated Kendall’s understanding of them. Before he went to Mexico, he said they preached with “intolerant zeal” against Protestants, saying they were all condemned to purgatory. Nonetheless, when he was finally released with the aid of the government of Britain, Kendall found that “the Protestant stranger will seldom find other than a hospitality the most munificent within the gates of the padres,” whom he termed to be “men of liberal and enlightened views, well-educated and entertaining companions, tolerant and charitable, extremely good livers, and disposed to an indulgence in many of the luxuries and vanities of this lower world.”¹⁸⁹ Mexican priests, in their daily living, contradicted the reputation for asceticism

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 41.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 97.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 121.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 341.

ascribed to Irish and other European Catholic clergy.¹⁹⁰ Kendall wrote that they dined well and carried on sexual liaisons with women, raised families, gambled, and indulged in more than the occasional glass of wine.¹⁹¹

These matters of earthly indulgence bothered Kendall not at all; his real concern with the church was its political power over the “ignorant and superstitious population.”¹⁹² To maintain this power, Kendall deduced that “they must persevere in their impostures and continue to gull their simple flocks – to hold the down-trodden mass in the same ignorance in which they have so long been kept – and hence their open intolerance towards all other sects, and their zealous care that no other religion than their own shall be preached or inculcated in the land.”¹⁹³

Presbyterians ranged from lukewarm to favorable support for the war.¹⁹⁴ But Anti-Catholicism does not entirely explain Kendall’s vicious portrayal of Mexicans. Kendall married a Catholic, though he kept the marriage secret because he knew his grandmother would disapprove.¹⁹⁵ Kendall’s unpublished war history emphasized the religious difference between Mexicans and Americans, and though he characterized Mexico as “priest-ridden” he wrote that those who moved into Texas were more

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 342.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 343.

¹⁹² Ibid., 343.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 343-344.

¹⁹⁴ Ted C. Hinckley, “American Anti-Catholicism During the Mexican War,” *Pacific Historical Review* 31, no. 2 (May 1962): 132.

¹⁹⁵ Georgina Kendall Fellowes to Fayette Copeland, 11 July 1941. Fayette Copeland Papers, Western Historical Collection, University of Oklahoma.

religiously tolerant than the priests.¹⁹⁶ Kendall also noted that priests made his imprisonment in a Mexican jail more bearable.¹⁹⁷ But suspicion of hybridity could explain Kendall's suspicion of Mexicans and their religion since he knew that both were a mixed strains of the indigenous and the colonist. And even given the mercy and generosity that Kendall associated with Mexico's Catholic priests, Kendall found members of the church irrational and saw an unhealthy anti-democratic tendency in the power of the priesthood.

Reverence for religious statuary, in Kendall's eyes, made Mexican Catholics superstitious and ignorant.¹⁹⁸ He described Mexican worship as "the strange mingling" of Indian customs with the rites of the established Catholic Church" that occurred because early Spanish missionaries "were never able to entirely eradicate the superstitious ceremonies of the original inhabitants, but by allowing them to ingraft [sic] some of their own rites upon Catholicism, they partially brought them over to their faith."¹⁹⁹ The result was "a blending of whimsical and grotesque ceremonies with the solemn and imposing observances which appertain to the religion of the Romish Church."²⁰⁰

Mexican religious tradition drew similar condemnation from Kendall. Describing the Basilica of Guadalupe, the shrine founded where the first apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe legendarily occurred, Kendall assured readers he did not enter it but declared

¹⁹⁶ George Wilkins Kendall, "War Between the United States and Mexico," 17. Fayette Copeland Papers, Western Historical Collection, University of Oklahoma.

¹⁹⁷ George Wilkins Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850) II, 341-345.

¹⁹⁸ Kendall, "Narrative Vol.2," 119.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 182.

its history showed “by what nonsensical superstitions and barefaced impostures the poor Indians were originally gulled by a crafty priesthood.”²⁰¹

“[I]t is not in the nature of men holding power, whether Protestant or Catholic, political or religious, to resign it willingly, or give up any office of influence,” Kendall argued, so any reform of church power must come from the people.²⁰²

Kendall goes to war: Representations of Mexicans during the U.S.-Mexico War

After hostilities between the United States and Mexico commenced in May 1846, Kendall played a pivotal role in newspaper coverage of the war. New Orleans’ status as the largest American port near the battle lines made it the crossroads of wartime communication. Kendall’s access to high-ranking officers, freelance status as a reporter, sometime status as an uncommissioned volunteer, and innovation in organizing his staff of war correspondents made his *New Orleans Picayune* the nation’s most prolific transmitter of war information. A pony express that the *Picayune*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and other Eastern papers established to rush the news across the country in 1838 regularly beat the U.S. Mail by one to three days.²⁰³ Kendall put to use his earlier experience running a North Carolina stagecoach line by setting up a courier system to hasten the news from the front lines to the *Picayune*.²⁰⁴ The speed and quality of the *Picayune*’s reporting led newspapers across the country to reprint Kendall’s work.²⁰⁵ As a result of

²⁰¹ Ibid., 214.

²⁰² Ibid., 344.

²⁰³ Thomas Reilly, “American Reporters and the Mexican War, 1846-1848.” Diss. U of Minnesota, 1975, 55.

²⁰⁴ Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune*, 163.

²⁰⁵ Reilly, “American Reporters,” 128.

all these factors, Kendall was recognized as the leading correspondent of the war.²⁰⁶ This reputation and the diffusion of his reporting made him crucial in shaping attitudes about the war and the Mexicans to whom America brought the fight.

The *Picayune* editor was not just a war correspondent. He was also, at times, a soldier, albeit an irregular one. Kendall had unsurpassed access to front-line intelligence because he attached himself to military units as a freelance. His irregular status meant that he did not have to abide by military regulations that forbade soldiers from covering the war for newspapers.²⁰⁷ Despite his irregular status, Gen. William J. Worth recognized the service he did for the Army by maintaining communication lines between the front and New Orleans. Because of this, Worth named Kendall an aide on his general staff.²⁰⁸ Though ostensibly in the combat zone as a journalist, Kendall did throw himself in harm's way for the American cause. At the Battle of Monterey, he rode through a hail of bullets and shells "so thick it seemed impossible for a man to live amidst the flying missiles" and delivered an order from Worth, then turned and rode again through the firefight and back to Worth's headquarters.²⁰⁹ Playing the role of both writer and warrior, his correspondence could not help but be colored by the aggression of the battlefield.

Kendall made his move toward the border in May 1846 and gave his readers a glimpse of life in Texas just months after the United States annexed it in 1845. Annexation brought changes that Kendall heartily approved. "The establishment of the

²⁰⁶ Reilly, "American Reporters," 128.

²⁰⁷ Clipping from *Boston Standard*, February 1857, in Kendall Family Papers, Special Collections Library, University of Texas-Arlington.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ H. C. King to Georgina Kendall Fellowes, November 1903, in Kendall Papers.

seat of Government here has completely resurrected the place,” he wrote the *Picayune* from Austin. “Last year this time the only denizens of the houses were hogs and fleas – now every one is filled and they are even building more.”²¹⁰ Kendall looked forward to the day when American capital would guide the destiny of Mexican resources. “I find this place, San Antonio, much improved since last year. Everything – business, fandangos, etc. – appears lively & stirring, & there has been a great influx of strangers & a rise in real estate,” he wrote. “Let but a line of military posts be established from here to the Rio Grande – it must be done – & this portion of Western Texas will flourish to a degree unknown ever in the annals of America,” he wrote the *Picayune* from San Antonio. “For richness of soil, salubrity of climate, I hardly know of any part of the United States that can compare with it.”²¹¹

The Mexican characteristics that Kendall presented were thieving, disorderly, effeminate, lazy, and timid. But Americans – particularly Texans – were guilty of no wrong in Kendall’s reports. When several Mexicans were killed in the Texas volunteers camp near Matamoros, Mexico, in July 1846, he blamed not the Texans but “drunken brawlers who hang about the camp of the Texans.” Not only did Kendall play down the number of deaths, writing, “There were several disgraceful scenes enacted during the night, but I do not believe so many were killed as is stated,” but he even expressed concern for the Texans’ image.²¹² He showed no such care for the accused after some horses were stolen from an American camp. “There is reason to believe the thieves were Mexicans,” he wrote. “I would not care so much about being caught in the shoes of those

²¹⁰ Kendall to *Picayune*, April 20, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

²¹¹ Kendall to *Picayune*, April 15, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

²¹² Kendall to *Picayune*, 3 July 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

who have taken them if they are found, be they Mexicans or Indians,” he continued, not at all allowing for the possibility that the thieves might have been American volunteers.²¹³

Kendall employed humor to cast Mexican men as effeminate. He wrote in July 1846 that when several of Gen. Mariano Arista’s junior officers, fresh off a defeat in Matamoros, asked some of the women to join them in a waltz, “The answer of the ladies was noble, and at the same time cutting to a degree: ‘*We do not dance with our own sex!*’”²¹⁴ Kendall repeatedly complained that Mexicans petitioned the U.S. invasion force to keep the Indians under control since their army had fled and the villagers could not stop the marauders. When a small party of Comanches menaced the town of Camargo a few days before American occupation, Kendall wrote, “You may ask, why do not the Mexicans turn out in force – outnumbering, as they do the Indians, ten to one – give them a sound drubbing, and drive them out of the country? It is because they are too lazy in the first place and too timid in the second. So far as I can see, the men here spend one-third of the day in sleeping, one-third in bathing, and the other third in doing nothing.”²¹⁵

Mexican civilians were not spared from Kendall’s ridicule. “Many amusing stories are told of the means resorted to by the superstitious old women to stay the progress of the dreaded flood,” he wrote from Camargo, Mexico, in July 1846. “One old crone, when the waters lacked but a few inches of running over the banks, rushed to the river with a small image of our Saviour and the Holy Virgin, and loudly implored them to

²¹³ Kendall to *Picayune*, July 29, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

²¹⁴ Kendall to *Picayune*, July 3, 1846. Kendall Family Papers. Italics in original.

²¹⁵ Kendall to *Picayune*, Aug. 2, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

stay the progress of la creciente.²¹⁶ An American told her to quit this flummery, go to her house, and save as much of her property as possible.” She only left when the levee broke.²¹⁷ And when civilians crowded around a landing to watch Americans unload a steamer full of provisions, Kendall remarked, “The Mexicans look on with perfect astonishment, and in their stupidity and ignorance probably wonder that there is so much subsistence for man and beast in the world.”²¹⁸ He thought the Mexicans counted on their invaders for everything. “The Mexican officers borrow money of the Americans, the hungry Mexican population clamor about our commissaries’ depots for bread, and now they ask us to defray the expenses of one of the services or celebrations. I hardly know what they will want next,” he complained of the population of Vera Cruz in April 1847.²¹⁹

Bankrupted by the war, Mexico could not afford to pay its civil servants. As a result, many begged the Americans for help. Kendall took the opportunity to gloat at their misfortune, writing from Jalapa:

Poor and most unhappy Mexico! And what is to be the end of all this! Without an army, without military appointments, without resources of any kind, disorganized, disunited, every one of thy ports in the hands of the Americans, hemmed in on all sides and completely shut out from all communication with the fair world, there is nothing left to thy inordinate pride and a willful shutting of the eyes to thy utter capacity – farther to contend with a power morally and physically times innumerable thy superior. Of what avail are all thy vauntings and thy boastings? Will not the evidence of a dozen disastrous defeats convince thee of thy utter inability to continue a war which is daily sinking thee lower and lower in

²¹⁶ “La creciente” means “swelling waters.”

²¹⁷ Kendall to *Picayune*, July 16, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

²¹⁸ Kendall to *Picayune*, July 29, 1846. Kendall Family Papers.

²¹⁹ Kendall to *Picayune*, April 4, 1847. Kendall Family Papers.

the scale of nations? Wilt though blindly and perversely continue to shut thine ears against all proposals of an honorable peace?²²⁰

The logic of Kendall's anti-Mexican writing

Because the *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition* began in serialized form in the *Picayune*, it would be logical to conclude that Kendall inconsistently portrayed Mexicans' character because he never revised his early declarations of their cruelty based on the kindness, pity, and compassion they showed for the Texans. Even if that was the case when he completed the *Narrative* in 1844, Kendall's attitude toward Mexicans only hardened in his coverage of the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-48. And his unpublished manuscript history of the war reflects animosity toward Mexicans that only seems to have increased as Kendall aged. He died Oct. 21, 1867, before he could complete it.²²¹

In the manuscript, Kendall characterized "the Spanish race" as inherently obstinate.²²² He had kinder words for the Mexican military. The cavalry, he thought, was excellent even if its horses were too small and underfed. The artillery was well drilled, and many officers in the corps of engineers learned to make war in Europe.²²³ But the infantry was made up of "the rabble and ruff-scruff of the entire country – the refuse of poor houses and prisoners, or else ignorant and worthless leperos or vagabonds" who were "destitute of patriotism and brutal in their instincts."²²⁴ At every turn, Kendall looked to developing stereotypes to explain Americans' victory. Because they knew the

²²⁰ Kendall to *Picayune*, May 3, 1847. Kendall Family Papers.

²²¹ Georgina Kendall Fellowes, typed obituary. Kendall Family Papers.

²²² George Wilkins Kendall, "War Between the United States and Mexico," hereafter WBUSM, typescript in Fayette Copeland Papers, Western Historical Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries, 38.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 63.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

Mexicans, “lacking industry and spirit, were in the habit of awaiting attacks ... rather than offering resistance outside,” he said Americans were less afraid of maneuvering in the open.²²⁵

The civilians, he thought, showed an irrational fear of Americans who they were told “were barbarians, coming to destroy alike the weak and the strong.”²²⁶ And regardless of the behavior of Mexican civilians, he still condemned them. When Mexicans did sell supplies to U.S. troops, Kendall called them greedy and unpatriotic. But if they refused to sell, Kendall called them ignorant.²²⁷ Ignorance, to Kendall, meant inability to adapt to American ways or lack of American common knowledge. He was far quicker to forgive the ignorance of Americans who spread disease in their camps along the Rio Grande. “Among the volunteers, many of them unused to so warm a climate, and wanting in cleanliness, knowledge of police duties, and that close discipline which insures health in inactive camps or garrison, much sickness prevailed,” he rationalized.²²⁸ Any Mexican with the same deficiencies, he might well have simply termed an ignorant, filthy, undisciplined “ruff-scruff” who deserved whatever disease they caught because of their squalid lifestyles.

If Kendall’s animosity was due to anything other than racism or pro-American jingoism, the reason could have been the material gain to be had through it. Kendall benefited when Mexicans were pushed off their land in the Texas Hill Country around Boerne and New Braunfels. He bought several large tracts of Texas land in 1851 and

²²⁵ Ibid., 256.

²²⁶ Ibid., 247.

²²⁷ Ibid., 284.

²²⁸ Ibid., 381.

1852, moving his young family to a ranch in Comal County, near New Braunfels, in 1856.²²⁹ The tracts totaled 4,106.75 acres.²³⁰ But at the end of his life, as he wrote his history of the war, Kendall adopted some of the dominant Southern attitudes toward the New Mexicans who had been absorbed into the United States.

“Perhaps in no part of America could a population be found so utterly unqualified to govern itself,” he wrote. “... The Cherokees, and perhaps other tribes of Indians upon the borders of the United States, possessed the elements of self government in a far higher degree than did the *mongrel inhabitants of New Mexico* [emphasis added].” Ignorant and superstitious though he said the Pueblo Indians were, Kendall still deemed them superior to “the half breeds.”²³¹

The language of American racial superiority and Mexican racial inferiority marked all of Kendall’s writing about Texas and Mexico. Like Richard Henry Dana Jr., his Early Northern predecessor, Kendall lambasted Mexican men as indolent and unenterprising but layered the attributes of cowardice, and timidity – both traits that Josiah Gregg deemed worthy of comment – and dishonesty, disorderliness, and effeminacy. These traits likely stemmed from the theft of his goods during the Texan Santa Fe Expedition and the bravado of patriotic bigotry. As for his charitable description of Mexican women as kind and generous, it was likely a bow to his fellow Americans’ decisions to take Mexican brides. He found all Mexicans’ Catholicism troubling, interpreting Mexican belief in saintly intercession as evidence of superstition and impure

²²⁹ Georgina Kendall Fellowes, typed obituary, in Kendall Family Papers.

²³⁰ Property Records, Kendall Family Papers.

²³¹ Kendall, WBUSM, 275.

faith. If Kendall believed the races should not mix, he also believed Christianity must be free of indigenous influence.

The construction of the Mexican imaginary in DeBow's Review

James Dunwoody Brownson DeBow was born July 10, 1820, in Charleston, S.C. His relatives on his mother's side were among South Carolina's earliest settlers; they had fought the British in the Revolutionary War. His father, however, died poor after a failed career as a merchant.²³² J. D. B. DeBow grew up in poverty. He saved enough money working in a mercantile house for seven years to pay for his education at the Cokesbury Institute and Charleston College. Right after he graduated from college in 1823, he started studying law books. De Bow was admitted to the bar in 1824.²³³ He soon found out he was not cut out for a legal career. De Bow began submitting articles to the *Southern Quarterly Review* and became associate editor there in 1844.²³⁴

Like the founders of the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Southern Quarterly Review*, DeBow was committed to establishing a distinct Southern literary and intellectual tradition. "For the interest of Southern letters & Southern character & Southern *Right* this work must not be suffered to perish," he wrote to J. F. H. Claiborne that the *Southern Quarterly Review's* editors considered moving the magazine from Charleston to New Orleans in 1845. "It is the last attempt to establish and build up

²³² Edward Reinhold Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines* (Richmond, VA: The Williams Printing Co., 1902), 20.

²³³ Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines*, 20-21.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Southern Literature – if it fails no other man will have the temerity to undertake the task. And why should it fail?”²³⁵

That year, DeBow came to believe that the *Southern Quarterly Review* “lacked sufficient vitality to carry it through a long series of years.” Leaving its editorship in 1845, he moved to New Orleans, where he established *The Commercial Review of the South and West* in 1846.²³⁶ DeBow explained the need he hoped his journal would satisfy in the prospectus for *The Commercial Review*. Because readers in the Old South and the region along the Mississippi River were toiling to subdue the wilderness, they would read only what was practical and not the highly intellectual matter that the *Southern Quarterly Review* and *Southern Literary Messenger* provided for highly educated readers.²³⁷ “The physical want precedes, in the order of time, the intellectual,” DeBow explained. “Ploughshares come before philosophy.”²³⁸ By this logic, DeBow’s new journal would contain useful information. “Commercial” was part of the name because all the topics the journal would cover pertained to commerce. “Touch agriculture, touch the arts, the professions, fortifications, defences, transportations, legislation of a country, and the chances are a thousand to one you touch commerce somewhere,” DeBow wrote in the prospectus.²³⁹ To spread the news about these matters fulfilled an urgent need, DeBow

²³⁵ Michael O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South Vol. 1* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 701. O’Brien quoted from J. D. B. De Bow to J. F. H. Claiborne, Sept. 12, 1845, J. F. H. Claiborne Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives & History.

²³⁶ Rogers, *Four Southern Magazines*, 21.

²³⁷ J. D. B. DeBow, “Position of the Commercial Review, In Relation to Southern and Western Periodical Literature, and Southern and Western Interests,” *Commercial Review of the South and West*, January 1846, 2.

²³⁸ DeBow, “Prospectus,” 3.

²³⁹ DeBow, “Position of the Commercial Review,” 4.

felt, because the South and West had no other commercial journal while the North had only one. “It is evident that a nation vast as ours, and of such resources, cannot be adequately represented by a solitary work upon this principle,” he wrote.²⁴⁰

DeBow embraced a mission of covering trade in commodities, commerce and commercial law, agriculture, manufacturing, internal improvements, and literature – though he took pains to explain that literary works were the least of his concerns.²⁴¹ To do this, he thought it best to exclude “party movements and maneuvering and party tactics” and instead maintain “an active neutrality ... where all parties are to be benefited.”²⁴² Maintaining allegiance to no political party put the *Commercial Review* in a position to moderate a debate among its contributors and within its pages on how best to develop a growing nation. But it also provided a channel for government information to spread to DeBow’s mercantile elite readers. In several instances, government reports flowed from Congress into the hands of elites, then into the pages of newspapers and influential journals. Such reports provided source material for other government reports. These, in turn, informed journalistic commentary, which then found its way back into the hands of policymakers. The relative paucity of information about the U.S.-Mexico border region meant that some source material would be cited a generation later. *DeBow’s Review* was one such influential journal that helped diffuse facts, speculation, and opinion about the Borderlands and its Mexican inhabitants to audiences in the East. That the nation’s growth would lead to war with Mexico meant the opening of farmland, transportation, and opportunities for mining in the Southwest. Mexico inevitably became

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 4.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 5.

²⁴² Ibid., 6.

the subject of the *Review's* practical discussions of the methods by which to subdue lands that would be acquired in the U.S.-Mexico War. A close reading of articles in DeBow's magazine shows that between 1846 and 1853, Mexico moved from an object of speculation to one of derision.²⁴³

How DeBow's first made sense of Mexicans.

Expansionists' view of their role in Mexico was crystallized by an odd short story that *DeBow's Review* ran in 1850. "Little Red Head – A Tale of Texas Border Life" told the story of a young, high-born American who was lured away from his comfortable home in Washington to join a "secret society" in a Texas border town.²⁴⁴ The secret society ended up being the Texas Rangers, with whom the protagonist encountered Mexicans, doubtlessly like many of *DeBow's* readers, for the first time. "Little Red Head," the protagonist whose moniker was bestowed by the Indians he had awed with his skill in combat, was warned to watch his step once he reached the border town of San Antonio de Bexar, "for the assassin's blade is the only one the Mexican wields with effect."²⁴⁵ Treachery and cowardice were the main characteristics ascribed to Mexican men, evidenced by whites' fear of Mexican backstabbing and Mexicans' dread of attacks by Comanches, who had "never yet received a single check upon this frontier until the appearance of a few North Americans in Bexar."²⁴⁶ The Anglos defended the Mexicans

²⁴³ *DeBow's Review*, under all its titles including *Commercial Review of the South and West*, ran 25 articles that substantively discussed Mexico or Mexican people between 1846 and 1860. Fifteen of these ran from 1846 to 1853. They will be addressed in this chapter; the remaining 10 will be analyzed in Chapter Seven.

²⁴⁴ "Little Red Head — A Tale of Texas Border Life," *DeBow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources*, November 1850, 476-491.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 482.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 482.

from the Comanche raiders, and in return the Anglos got whatever they wanted from the cowardly Mexicans. “They heaped indignity after indignity upon them,” the breathless narrator intoned, “and though many a furious eye glared from beneath the shadow of a slouched sombrero upon them as they passed, the hand that clutched the assassin’s knife dared not strike a blow – they feared them – they hated them – but they needed them!”²⁴⁷ This sketch of the Mexican character ran up against Americans’ respectful portrayals of Mexican soldiers’ defense of their homeland. An unnamed correspondent in *DeBow’s Review*, writing in 1849, noted the contradiction. “We call them indolent and barbarous and our soldiers call them brave,” observed an unnamed correspondent who likened U.S. forces to Caesar’s army and Mexicans to the Gauls. “That they are hardy and bold behind breastworks bristled with cannon and defended by a multitude of men, our heavy losses too truly attest. Like the Gauls, they are jealous of their borders. Like the Gauls, they are tenacious of their rights and of their territory, from their apprehension of the lust of power and of aggrandizement which form the features of their more powerful neighbor. They are unfortunately ignorant, and consequently treacherous, fond of war, and devoted to their chiefs.”²⁴⁸

Cowardice, servility, treachery, and indolence – these were the character traits that most *DeBow’s Review* writers saw in Mexicans. These characteristics, the inverse of those that Southern expansionists believed were possessed by the Anglo-Saxons, were raised as reasons for Mexican inability to run their own country. To justify American designs on Mexican land and resources, *DeBow’s* writers through 1853 argued Mexican

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 483.

²⁴⁸“General Literature, Editorial, Etc.,” *DeBow’s Review*, September 1849, 277.

inferiority, American superiority, and American fitness to fix problems Mexicans were incapable of repairing. In the minds of American expansionists, U.S. dominance in the Americas was inevitable and the crowned heads of Europe knew it. Joel Poinsett noted for readers of *DeBow's Review* that Spain's foreign minister feared that the American independence movement of the eighteenth century would ripple into Spain's colonies in the Western Hemisphere.²⁴⁹ After signing the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the Count de Aranda advised the Spanish crown to relinquish all American holdings except Puerto Rico and Cuba and establish monarchies in Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela that would ally with Spain.²⁵⁰ *DeBow's Review* promoted three prominent themes about Mexico: that the nation was broken, that Americans would inevitably regenerate the progress that had been retarded when Europeans lost control of it, and that the United States must seize Mexican land and water access because it was crucial to the growth of American commerce.

Impurity of Mexican blood as an expansionist rationale

J. D. B. DeBow and his contributors assumed that Europeans knew better than the indigenous people they colonized. Recognizing this commonality among Protestants and Roman Catholics made the Catholic presence in Mexico palatable, if only somewhat so. DeBow admired the progress that the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuits, had made in Christianizing the Indians of California.²⁵¹ DeBow explained that when the Jesuits were banished from Portugal, Spain, and Alta California, control of the land passed to the Dominicans. He claimed that under Dominican control, tribes that

²⁴⁹ Joel R. Poinsett, "Mexico and the United States," *DeBow's Review*, May 1847, 411-412.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 411-412.

²⁵¹ J. D. B. DeBow, "Oregon and California," *DeBow's Review*, January 1846, 64-69.

had been partially civilized relapsed. “[A]nd when the revolution of 1822 severed Spain from her trans-Atlantic provinces, and California had united under the Mexican Constitution of 1824, the Indians, set free from all restraints, indulged their natural vices, and the missions fell entirely into decay,” DeBow claimed.²⁵²

The theme of Mexican degeneracy recurred throughout the magazine’s run. In the second issue of the *Review*, just months before war with Mexico would break out, contributor Gustavus Schmidt asked why Mexico was able to overthrow Spanish rule but could not “establish a form of government capable of securing to them the blessings of a liberty which they acquired at the expense of so much blood?”²⁵³ One reason was that intermarriage had watered down the blood of both the Spanish conqueror and the indigenous heirs of the Toltec and Aztec civilizations. Schmidt claimed a clinical detachment that should make him more credible than commentators who had clear biases, but then declared that Mexico was simply inferior to the United States. “[I]f the United States on the one hand, exhibit in bold and beautiful relief the blessings of liberty, Mexico, on the other, shows that freedom may be perverted and degenerate into anarchy, which, in its effects, is not less deplorable than the most oppressive despotism.”²⁵⁴

Schmidt gave four causes for unrest in Mexico: Lack of education, the stranglehold Catholics and the military held on government, the lack of a professional class to challenge them, and “the low state of morals already existing under the colonial

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁵³ Gustavus Schmidt, “Mexico, Its Social and Political Condition,” *DeBow’s Review*, February 1846, 108.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

government, where venality and corruption were not only practiced but tolerated.”²⁵⁵ All of these causes, Schmidt argued, “must be removed ere Mexico can be regenerated.”²⁵⁶ To say Mexico required “regeneration” implied that it had degenerated. Indeed, Schmidt claimed that the Toltecs and Aztecs had made much greater progress toward a civilized state than American Indians and that the Spanish conquest stunted their progress. Schmidt blamed the Catholics for this, contending, “Education, usually entrusted to ignorant monks and priests, served principally to inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience, and to teach scholastic theology, and rarely ever to develop the intellectual and moral faculties of the Mexican youth.”²⁵⁷ Schmidt claimed that in Mexican colleges, “astronomy was taught with the avowed object of inspiring contempt for the system of Copernicus and Galileo, and the Mexican professor of that science maintained stoutly that the sun revolved around the earth, in spite of reason and Sir Isaac Newton.”²⁵⁸

Fortunately, Schmidt conceded, “the Mexicans are possessed of great natural capabilities, which only require proper cultivation and a favorable field for their development, to enable then [*sic*] to attain a high grade of intelligence. From their actual condition it appears to us, however, that they are not yet ripe for the establishment of republican institutions.”²⁵⁹ Thus, Mexicans would require Americans to show them the way to liberty, he concluded. Although Schmidt blamed the Catholic Church for Mexico’s problems, he inadvertently celebrated a priest’s role in the overthrow of Spain.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 112.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 125.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 120.

While Schmidt celebrated Miguel Hidalgo y Castilla as the leader of the Mexican revolution against Spain, he neglected to mention that Hidalgo was a Roman Catholic priest.²⁶⁰ It is unclear whether this omission was due to ignorance or because acknowledging Catholics were involved in the drive for Mexican liberty contradicted his master narrative of Catholic tyranny.

If formerly Mexican lands could not be made American in political spirit, then they would be made American by Anglo displacement of Mexico's natives. "The population of Texas, at present, may be estimated at 200,000 souls, most of whom are Anglo-Americans and Europeans," a writer observed in 1851. "The Mexicans and aborigines are reduced to a cipher, and will soon disappear."²⁶¹

An assessment of Mexico in 1852, by an unnamed author, mixed bitter invective against the Mexican character, declarations of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and an assortment of geographic and agricultural facts.²⁶² The writer claimed that Mexico's people, "plunged into the grossest ignorance, are utterly unfit for self-government," lived in a state "bordering on barbarism" and suffered under "military despotism."²⁶³ Their sheep's wool was inferior due "more to neglect than to nature," while their indolence "prevents all exertions to raise more food than necessary for the wants of a single ordinary season" despite the fertility of the land.²⁶⁴ Lacking any creativity of their own, the article claimed that foreigners staged the arts and told the Mexicans what to do on

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 126.

²⁶¹ "Texas," , *Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources*, June 1851, 636.

²⁶² "Mexico in 1852," *DeBow's Review*, October 1852, 325-354.

²⁶³ Ibid., 329.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 332.

stage.²⁶⁵ The theme of degeneracy came up again in a description of the Indians, who “have undoubtedly degenerated since the days of Montezuma, and under a good government would probably exhibit capabilities of a respectable order. Even the Spanish race have degenerated in Mexico since the conquest, and have carried with them the Indians.”²⁶⁶

In his blindness to the possibility that Mexicans knew how to do anything right, the writer boasted, “The moment Mexico falls into the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race, every foot of her territory will be explored, and, in all probability, there will be brought to light mineral wonders that will equal, if not eclipse, those of California.”²⁶⁷ Using the most modern techniques, the writer claimed, mines that had been abandoned could be reopened with double their peak production. On the plus side, Mexican paper was just as good as any other country’s.²⁶⁸ And even if the priests had too much power and wealth, at least they were “generally well-educated, generous, benevolent and polite.”²⁶⁹

The article also derided Mexico’s Indian population, promoting an increasingly common notion of the Mexican as an indolent bystander in a world that Americans desperately desired to improve. Poverty, the writer claimed, made crime irrelevant to honest Mexican Indians because they had nothing worth stealing. Therefore, the author reasoned, theft was somebody else’s problem:

Labor is little thought of, and the Indian spends his time chiefly in sleep, in drinking his *pulque*, or in singing to his wretched mandolin hymns in

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 340.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 343.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 336.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 339.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 350.

honor of Notre Dame de Guadalupe, occasionally relieving the monotony of his hours by carrying votive chaplets to deck the altar of his village church. Thus he passes his life in dreamy indifference, and utterly careless of the ever-reviving *emeutes*²⁷⁰ which so often disturb the peace of Mexico. The assassinations and robberies, which are constantly occurring on all the public roads, are to him matters of as great indifference as they appear to be to the government itself. ... He views them as the mere harmonious workings of life in Mexico, perfectly in keeping with the morality of the government. The Indian feels perfectly secure, there being nothing about him that a bandit would take. His shirt, blanket and guitar, with his sorry pony, are all he has, and all he desires. He has nothing to fear from robbers, for he has nothing to steal. The most striking feature of the Mexican population is the vast disproportion of the lazarones [*sic*] and vagrants. Their numbers are so great as to render them disgustingly prominent. Half-naked, houseless, penniless, and friendless, they are the legitimate fruits of bad government, and of the iniquity of those in power.²⁷¹

DeBow's saw Mexicans as a people ridden with problems for which they had no solutions. Their mining was inefficient, their farming backward, their industry virtually nonexistent, their schools, where they existed, hopelessly behind the times. All of these problems, the writers in *DeBow's Review* reasoned, sprang from racial degeneracy. Because of their inborn flaws, they could not make progress. Therefore, the writers reasoned, it would take Americans to bring Mexico up to speed.

American solutions for Mexican problems

DeBow's contributors agreed that Mexicans could not solve the problems brought about by a church that bled their purses dry, a corrupt government that looked out only for the needs of the military and the church, and the lack of vitality brought about by race-mixing. Only an energetic and superior American race – increasingly referred to as the Anglo-Saxon race from the late 1840s onward — could solve these problems, the

²⁷⁰ *Emeutes* is French for “riots.”

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 344.

contributors to *DeBow's Review* argued. Mexico's system of centralized government must be replaced with an American-style federal system.²⁷²

Joel Poinsett argued American superiority on a variety of points.²⁷³ “The circumstances, physical and moral, are all in our favor,” the former U.S. minister to Mexico crowed. “The construction of our portion of the continent, intersected by magnificent channels of water communication; our climate, which renders the inhabitants hardy and virtuous; our colonization by a free government; the remarkable character of the early colonists, and the greater length of time which has elapsed since our independence has been achieved, and our perfect fitness for self-government from the first moment of our emancipation, all account for this superiority. We, the descendants of the most energetic race the world has ever known, set out upon our career as a nation, upon a footing of equality with the most civilized people of the age.”²⁷⁴

In contrast, Poinsett wrote that the Mexicans, “descended from the warlike, but indolent Spaniards, had been so entirely excluded from all participation in the government and from all intercourse with foreigners, that in their revolution found them two centuries behind the age.”²⁷⁵ The Indians of Mexico, by contrast, “were susceptible

²⁷² Joel A. Poinsett, “The Republic of Mexico,” *DeBow's Review*, July 1846, 27-42.

²⁷³ Joel R. Poinsett, “Mexico and the Mexicans,” *DeBow's Review*, September 1846, 165-177.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 165. In fairness, it should be noted that Poinsett did not agree with all declarations of Mexican inferiority. Though his commentaries were tinged with Anglo superiority, Poinsett acknowledged Mexican competence in some areas, such as mining. Poinsett took exception to a statement former U.S. ambassador Waddy Thompson made in his *Recollections of Mexico* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1847), 204, that “if Mexico was inhabited by our race, the produce of the mines would be at least five times what it is now. There is not a mine that would not be worked, and as many more new ones discovered.” To the contrary, wrote Poinsett, “The Mexicans are persevering, as well as skilful [*sic*] miners, and never abandoned a mine while there was a fair prospect of profit.”

of improvement,”²⁷⁶ but they first must be freed from superstitious belief that Catholic priests could fix their problems by appealing to the divine. This belief kept Indians tithing to the church; combined with the peon labor system, giving their money away to priests prevented Indians from accumulating wealth, according to Poinsett.²⁷⁷

During the early months of the U.S.-Mexico War in July 1846, Joel Poinsett argued that Mexicans were good and educable, but misguided. What would redeem them was better government and mercy from their American conquerors. On a more strategic note, Poinsett warned that the U.S. must avoid at all costs provoking Mexico’s Catholic leaders; to do so would be to risk pushing the church to use its wealth to arm the military and inspire the populace to fight for their country.²⁷⁸ To understand the church’s influence on Mexican affairs, Poinsett pointed out that “all the great revolutions that country has undergone, during the present century, have been their work. Hidalgo and his co-laborers were priests, and the successful movement that resulted in the separation of Mexico from Spain was instigated by them.”²⁷⁹ Nonetheless, Poinsett wrote, Mexican Catholic leaders “dreaded the ultimate effect of free institutions, and aided to overthrow the federal republic” to bring about a despotic monarchy. Poinsett wrote that “with more experience and better education, the people will gradually comprehend the workings and benefits of free government, and become tranquil. This can only happen, however, under a federal system. A central government, under whatever denomination it may exist, will

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 169.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 166.

²⁷⁸ Joel R. Poinsett, “The Republic of Mexico,” 32.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

be a tyranny.”²⁸⁰ Poinsett predicted that with the American example to guide them, the Mexican people would rise up against the despotism of central government.²⁸¹ To support this point, he pointed out that “a very large majority of the Mexicans are republicans, but from the commencement of their revolution to the present day, there has existed among them a party uniting a great deal of wealth and intelligence, which has maintained the utter unfitness of republican institutions to restrain and govern an ignorant and turbulent people.”²⁸² Fix the government and educate the people in how to run it, and Mexico could take America’s side as a true sister republic.

American businessmen’s lust for Mexican land and resources

The spoils of the U.S.-Mexico War occupied the imaginations of the Southern expansionist writers who charted the region’s future in the pages of *DeBow’s Review*. Mining, shipping, manufacture, and agriculture all posed the possibility of financial bonanzas as America’s armies marched toward the Mexican capital.

DeBow showed a keen interest in control of the Rio Grande, pointing out to his readers, “The mouth of the Rio Grande is about 480 miles from New Orleans, and may be reached in forty-eight hours in steam-vessels, touching at Galveston on the way.”²⁸³

“However the question of the boundary may be settled at the close of our war with Mexico, the Rio Grande must be an important region. It will no doubt be insisted upon as an ultimatum by our government. It already contains several considerable towns,

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 33.

²⁸² Joel R. Poinsett, “The Mexican War,” *DeBow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources*, July 1846, 21.

²⁸³ J. D. B. DeBow, “Progress of the Great West in Population, Agriculture, Arts and Commerce,” *DeBow’s Review*, September 1847, 33.

and the island of Brazos, near the mouth, has been selected by the United States for the erection of hospitals and other public buildings, storehouses, &c. Point Isabel, on the main land at the mouth, has already classic interest, and must, from its admirable position, be the seat of an important commercial town. We are not exactly informed as to the draught of water, but know that its approaches are safe and accessible.”²⁸⁴ DeBow also pointed to the need for a canal to connect the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific. “It is proposed that one of the stipulations in the treaty of peace to be made with Mexico, shall be a right of way in favor of the United States through the appropriate parts of Mexican possessions, for this canal,” he observed. “Such a stipulation should be insisted upon, and will meet the unanimous approval of all nations.”²⁸⁵

Beyond shipping, DeBow obsessed over the agricultural bounty and mineral riches to be exploited in Mexico and the Borderlands. He was thrilled to receive a copy of Friedrich Adolph Wislizenus’ *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico*. The author, a German physician, wrote the report to Congress after he accompanied Col. Alexander Doniphan’s troops through New Mexico during the war.²⁸⁶ DeBow gave his readers several pages from the report describing farmland and the peon system that provided labor to till it.²⁸⁷ Wislizenus wrote that the best land had been given to Mexicans,

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 32.

²⁸⁵ J. D. B. DeBow, “Passage Between the Oceans by Ship Canal,” *DeBow’s Review*, June 1847, 497.

²⁸⁶ Friedrich Adolph Wislizenus, *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Connected with Col. Doniphan’s Expedition, in 1846 and 1847* (Washington: Tappin & Streeter, 1848). The U.S. Senate ordered that 5,000 copies be printed for its use and another 200 be printed for Wislizenus. 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Misc. Doc. No. 26.

²⁸⁷ J. D. B. DeBow, “California, New Mexico and the Passage Between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans,” *DeBow’s Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* September 1848, 204-226.

“apparently a remnant of the old feudal system, where large tracts of land with the appurtenances of Indian inhabitants as serfs, were granted by the Spanish crown to their vassals.”²⁸⁸ Wislizenus said most of the inhabitants were “nothing more than serfs; they receive from their masters only food, lodging, and clothing, or perhaps a more nominal pay, and are therefore kept in constant debts and dependence to their landlords.” These peasants would work their entire lives to retire the debt, Wislizenus claimed. It must have been pleasing to DeBow’s plantation class audience to read, “This actual slavery exists throughout Mexico, in spite of its liberal constitution; and as long as this contradiction is not abolished, the declamations of the Mexican press against the slavery in the United States must appear as hypocritical cant.”²⁸⁹ Just as pleasing must have been Wislizenus’ estimate that some gold mining operations in the territory yielded as much as \$250,000 a year.²⁹⁰

By 1850, J. D. B. DeBow recognized Anglo travelers’ tendency to exaggerate when they sent word back east about California. The time had come for a more objective set of commentators to have their say. “The embellishments of letter writers have given place,” he wrote, “to the more minute and well-considered reports of government agents, selected for their ability, and with few, if any, motives for misrepresentation. We have selected the labors of two of these agents, whose names are at the head of our paper, as a text for the remarks which will follow, and shall embody such facts from other sources as may tend to further illustration of the subject.”²⁹¹ This emphasis on fact over rhetorical

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 223.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 223.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 224.

²⁹¹ J. D. B. DeBow, “California, the New El Dorado,” *DeBow's Review*, June 1850, 539.

flourish would mark the rest of DeBow's reports on the Far West. The writers, Thomas Butler King and T. O. Larkin, would not paint a pretty picture of life in California. Mexican civil laws theoretically remained in effect under U.S. military rule after the war, but the Americans did not know any of them. Because of this, "a system of rule succeeded, which was exceedingly arbitrary and unequal. Extortion became frequent; land titles were involved in confusion – even injustice was preferable to litigation."²⁹²

King saw the Californios much the same as Dana saw them. They were "proverbial for inactivity, indolence, and an unwillingness to learn or improve," but "very happy, and kind and hospitable to all strangers." Americans gained wealth by marrying Spanish and Mexican land heiresses.²⁹³ He used less kind terms for gold-seekers who moved up from Mexico and the rest of Latin America. These were "laborers (*peons*) of the most abject class – mild and inoffensive in their general manners, who are guided with ease. They are, however, slothful, ignorant, and, from early life, addicted to gambling. They will sleep under the canopy of a tree, and enjoy themselves to the full, if they have a blanket, or a sheet, with which to enwrap themselves; and they are content, if they have only paper cigars to last them a week, and a mountebank to resort to at will."²⁹⁴

Judging from such arguments of Mexican indolence, Southern planters and miners who expected to get any work done would have to employ slaves. For a planter, to contemplate agricultural enterprises in the new territories was to spread slavery into those territories. Doing so would require a reversal of Mexican laws banning slavery. The author of a July 1849 article in *DeBow's Review* criticized a proposal by Congressman

²⁹² Ibid., 539.

²⁹³ Ibid., 541.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

David Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, that would ban slavery in any lands wrested from Mexico in the war.²⁹⁵ The writer, who asked that his name be withheld, argued that Mexican laws, including those that banned slavery, were nullified in territories acquired by the United States.²⁹⁶

Commerce and conquest: The logic of Gregg, Kendall, and DeBow

Josiah Gregg, George Wilkins Kendall, and J. D. B. DeBow had commerce in common. All had a vested interest in U.S. affairs with Mexico, though Kendall and DeBow clearly stood to gain more from American conquests than Gregg. Though he profited some from the U.S.-Mexico War, Gregg had the soul of an adventurer who seemed only to need money to bankroll his next sojourn. But DeBow and his contributors all saw piles of profit to be made if only they had control over Latin America's resources. It was in their interest to portray Mexico as too feeble to take care of itself or marshal its labor force to till the bountiful soil and dig out the last of the precious metals from its mines. To do so was to create a market for Negro slaves. Kendall had both DeBow's and Gregg's interests at heart. He could not stand desk work, and military adventurism gave Kendall the excuse to stay in the field.²⁹⁷ But he also profited from Texas aggression against Mexicans – his entire sheep ranch in Comal County and the choice San Antonio lots he invested in were carved out formerly Mexican-owned land.²⁹⁸ Kendall inherited some of his anti-Mexican animosity from his Texan comrades, but the rest grew from the

²⁹⁵ "Slavery in the New Territories," *DeBow's Review*, July 1849, 62-73. DeBow noted to his readers, "The following paper was prepared by an able southern jurist, who declines for the present, that his name should be made public. We commend the argument to the whole South. - - ED."

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁹⁷ Reilly, "American Reporters," 128.

²⁹⁸ The San Antonio lots were in the heart of Anglo development across the street from the Alamo. Copeland, *Kendall of the Picayune*, 277.

abuses he felt at the hands of Mexican military officers. The war put him in a position to make his paper prosperous and to exact some measure of revenge. Despite Kendall's irregular status, Gen. William J. Worth recognized the service he did for the Army by maintaining communication lines between the front and New Orleans. Because of this, Worth named Kendall an aide on his general staff.²⁹⁹ Though ostensibly in the combat zone as a journalist, Kendall did throw himself in harm's way for the American cause. At the Battle of Monterey, he rode through a hail of bullets and shells "so thick it seemed impossible for a man to live amidst the flying missiles" and delivered an order from Worth, then turned and rode again through the firefight and back to Worth's headquarters.³⁰⁰

From the time Gregg first set out for Santa Fe to the early 1850s, Mexicans in the Southern imagination grew from a vaguely exotic people to a treacherous, superstitious, primitive, do-nothing obstacle to American progress. These sentiments would only grow in the decades to come. The Compromise of 1850 brought to a head the question of whether to allow slavery in the territories. The debate carried Southern notions of white superiority into the territories as well. The theme of racial purity and white superiority became more prominent in Southern correspondence, as a review of articles in Chapter Seven will demonstrate.

²⁹⁹ Clipping from *Boston Standard*, February 1857, in Kendall Family Papers.

³⁰⁰ H. C. King to Georgina Kendall Fellowes, November 1903, in Kendall Papers.

CHAPTER 7

LATE SOUTHERN CORRESPONDENTS: G. DOUGLAS BREWERTON, J. ROSS BROWNE, AND J. D. B. DEBOW'S *COMMERCIAL REVIEW*

Six years after the American conquest of California, Arizona, and Texas, the United States' mission of developing the territories' resources had only just begun to take off. The 1850s saw the nation on increasingly perilous political ground. The South took ever more umbrage at Northerners' attacks on slavery as planters in the Cotton South sought more territory in the Southwest and possibly Mexico to extend the chattel labor system that Southerners' referred to as their "peculiar institution." The discovery of gold in California triggered a wave of immigration that inundated the Spanish *ricos* who had long held power over the lower-class Mexican and Indian populations. And a new wave of xenophobia, driven by theories that the Roman Catholic Church was engaged in a conspiracy to undermine American freedom took hold among believers in Protestant, Anglo-Saxon superiority.

These political and cultural forces played a substantial role in shaping the way American journalists perceived racial, religious, and national difference between themselves and the Mexicans they encountered in the West. This chapter examines the journalistic work, personal trajectories, and cultural influences on two Southern correspondents who had extensive experience with and firsthand knowledge of Mexican life and culture in the Borderlands. The first, George Douglas Brewerton, sailed to

California with the First New York Volunteers and accompanied frontiersman, military scout, and government courier Kit Carson across the Sonoran and Mojave deserts from California to New Mexico. The magazine articles that he wrote for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* provided readers in the East a detailed picture of relations between upper-class Spanish Californians, Mexican peons, and Anglo interlopers. Hatred of the Catholic Church and distrust of common Mexicans were the most prominent aspects of Brewerton's work, but his writing also reflected the complexities of class and racial relations in California.

The second, correspondent in this chapter, John Ross Browne, seemingly modeled his life after that of Richard Henry Dana Jr. and Bayard Taylor. Life as an adventure correspondent provided him opportunity for material gain – first by mining his own experiences and refining them into stories for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, then into books and lectures. The knowledge of prospecting that he gained along the way led him into lucrative work documenting mining practices and holdings for Eastern capitalists. Over time, entanglements with industry led him from recognition of the Mexican as other to vicious denunciations of mixed-race Mexicans. Like Brewerton's writing, Browne's articles and books privileged wealthy, fair-skinned Mexicans at the expense of their darker, poorer counterparts. Because of its value as a source of information about the social and commercial interests of the South, articles concerning J. D. B. DeBow's *Commercial Review* are also detailed in this chapter. DeBow's choices as an editor are a valuable gauge of the concerns of Southern plantation and mining interests of the era and therefore provide context with which to interpret the work of Brewerton and Browne.

G. Douglas Brewerton: A Know-Nothing soldier's view of Mexicans

George Douglas Brewerton came to know Mexican life and customs as a volunteer during the U.S.-Mexico War. Training as an artist gave him a keen eye for detail, and he sketched and painted from memory much of what he saw in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. His Baptist faith and Nativist beliefs gave him a particularly vicious view of the Roman Catholic Church.

Brewerton grew up in a military family. His father, Henry, took just three years to complete his education at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., graduating fifth in its inaugural class in 1819. Henry Brewerton became an assistant professor of engineering at West Point and became its superintendent from 1845 to 1852.¹

Though a native of Rhode Island, G. Douglas Brewerton grew up in the South. Born June 3, 1827, he spent the first nine years of his life in Charleston, S.C., while his father prepared Fort Sumter's defenses.² The schoolbooks in common use during his boyhood taught that Americans were God's chosen people led to the New World to lay the foundations of religious liberty.³ As historians Tony W. Johnson and Ronald F. Reed put it, the school texts of the mid-nineteenth century emphasized that the "United States belonged to the White, middle-class, Protestant, native-born citizen" while presenting

¹ "Brewerton, Henry," *The Universal Cyclopaedia Vol. 2*, ed. Charles Kendall Adams (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1900), 157. Henry Brewerton was born Sept. 24, 1801 and died April 17, 1879. He retired in 1867, having been promoted brevet brigadier general for long, faithful, and meritorious service after a forty-five year career in the Corps of Engineers. During his service, he oversaw construction of the Cumberland Road and was in charge of fortifying the harbor of Baltimore in 1852-64, the Delaware River in 1862-64, and Point Lookout, Md., in 1864-65.

² Jourdan Moore Houston and Alan Fraser Houston, "California on His Mind: The Easel and Pen of Pioneer George Douglas Brewerton," *California History* 81, no. 1 (2002): 5.

³ John H. Westerhoff III, *McGuffey and His Readers: Piety, Morality, and Education in Nineteenth-Century America* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1978), 98.

stereotypes of the Negro, the Catholic, the Jew, and the foreigner.⁴ Though these images were common throughout American primary texts, their message blended with a rich-and-poor dichotomy when presented to pupils in the Deep South. In South Carolina, as throughout the South of the 1830s, educators emphasized class identity and outward bearing, both crucially important to elites who needed to project an image of personal authority over Negro slaves and poor whites.⁵ Immersed in a world where human chattel was the basis of the plantation economy, it was only natural that Brewerton grew into an adulthood that saw him take the side of the pro-slavery territorial government of Kansas in the late 1850s and pour derision on Mexicans in his writings. It was his place as a member of a master-race to defend slavery and assert the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon. From Charleston, the family moved to southern Ohio for four years as Henry Brewerton supervised the extension of the Cumberland Road, which connected Maryland to the receding frontier.⁶

When G. Douglas Brewerton enrolled at West Point, he studied drawing under Robert Walter Weir.⁷ Brewerton volunteered to serve in the U.S.-Mexico War with a second lieutenant's commission in Company C of the First New York Infantry Volunteers, under the command of Col. Jonathan Drake Stevenson.⁸ The unit was the brainchild of Stevenson and U.S. War Secretary William L. Marcy, who intended it as a

⁴ Tony W. Johnson and Ronald F. Reed, *Historical Documents in American Education* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), 102.

⁵ Steven M. Stowe, "The Rhetoric of Authority: The Making of Social Values in Planter Family Correspondence," *The Journal of American History* 73, no. 4 (March 1987), 921.

⁶ Houston and Houston, "California on his Mind," 5.

⁷ Stallo Vinton, "Sketch of the Life of George Douglas Brewerton," in George Douglas Brewerton, *Overland with Kit Carson* (New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1930), 23.

⁸ Vinton, "Life of George Douglas Brewerton," 24.

means to populate California with skilled citizen-soldiers.⁹ They were to form the core of a “mighty Anglo-Saxon population” in America’s new acquisition.¹⁰ As *The Alta California* put it, these troops, “being dressed up in uncouth Frenchified uniforms, with caps bearing a close resemblance to an inverted geranium pot, were drilled into an understanding of military tactics for a few weeks on Governor’s Island,” then shipped out on Sept. 26, 1846.¹¹ Brewerton embarked on the *Loo Choo*, which dropped anchor in San Francisco Bay six months later, but Brewerton was not among its passengers. It seems he had second thoughts about his service, and he left the *Loo Choo* in late November 1846 in Rio de Janeiro. In Brazil, he tried to resign from the Army, but his resignation was not accepted, and he was shipped back to the States in the first of several leaves of absence.¹² Brewerton boarded the store ship *Southampton* as a ward room passenger, departing from Norfolk in February 1847.¹³ His date of arrival in San Francisco, then known as Yerba Buena, was Aug. 25, 1847, several months after the fighting had ceased in California.¹⁴ Brewerton was initially stationed at Sonoma, but in November he was transferred to Company K at the Presidio in San Francisco, under the command of Col. Richard B. Mason, military governor of California.¹⁵ There, Brewerton commanded the guard house but spent the month of February 1848 under arrest after one of his men complained that

⁹ Houston and Houston, “California on His Mind,” 6.

¹⁰ Robert Walter Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 170.

¹¹ “Eight years ago yesterday,” *The Alta California*, Sept. 30, 1854, 4.

¹² Houston and Houston, “California on His Mind,” 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Society of California Pioneers, *Constitution and By-laws of the Society of California Pioneers* (San Francisco: Society of California Pioneers, 1912), 97.

¹⁵ Vinton, “Life of George Douglas Brewerton,” 25.

Brewerton had thrown him into the block house under questionable circumstances.¹⁶ That spring, Mason ordered Brewerton to accompany scout, frontiersman, and courier Kit Carson on a mission to deliver mail and confidential messages to St. Louis, where they would be relayed to Washington.¹⁷

Perhaps family connections got him out of that jam. After all, there is evidence that strings were pulled on his behalf on other occasions. In a letter to William L. Marcy, the secretary of war when Brewerton was in California, Brewerton alluded to “certain favors” Marcy had done for him in 1849.¹⁸ Brewerton was under orders to ride with Carson’s caravan to St. Louis and proceed south to Mississippi, where he was supposed to join his new unit.¹⁹ After serving in a number of posts along the U.S.-Mexico border, Brewerton was promoted to first lieutenant in 1852 at Fort Clark, Texas. He resigned immediately after receiving this promotion and showed no interest in leading men in the field again.²⁰ He declined a request to command a New York volunteer regiment in the Civil War, though he served on the staff of Rufus Saxton with the rank of colonel.²¹ His

¹⁶ Houston and Houston, “California on His Mind,” 10. The Houstons quoted a letter by John H. Merrill, who complained, “I have got into trouble with [Brewerton] who is a great bore. He has given me and my family a great deal of trouble since [sic] he came here and also on the ship from New York to Rio Janeiro and when he arrived here he made his boast of it. He has told things disgraceful & false about my daughter and on being told he was a liar if he made such statements he sent the man a challenge and a duel was fought but neither hit.” John H. Merrill, San Francisco, to Thomas Oliver Larkin, Jan. 22, 1847, 1848, in George P. Hammond, ed., *The Larkin Papers, 1847-1848*, 11 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), VII:122-123.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., citing George Douglas Brewerton to William Marcy, filed at the office of the U.S. Secretary of State, Feb. 2, 1857, Feb. 2, 1857. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Letters of Application and Recommendation, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, 1853-1861, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, M967.

¹⁹ Vinton, “Life of George Douglas Brewerton,” 26.

²⁰ Ibid., 27.

²¹ Ibid.

cross-country adventure resulted in a series of articles for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and a subsequent book, *Overland with Kit Carson: A Narrative of the Old Spanish Trail in '48*. His sketches of the West were the basis for woodcuts that accompanied the *Harper's* articles, and he became a significant Western landscape painter. After the Civil War, he devoted himself to painting.

Brewerton's beliefs: Nativism, Anglo-Saxonism, and Baptist faith

The beliefs that shaded Brewerton's representation of Mexicans are evident in his activities far from the border. After military service, he spent most of the 1850s pursuing a career writing for the New York press. He made a brief foray into running his own periodical, *Young America; or, The Child of the Order*. There is no record of how long it ran, and Issue No. 1 in July 1854 might have been the only edition printed. Shortly afterward, Brewerton took on an assignment as special correspondent for the *New York Herald*, which sent him west to report on the Kansas Border War in 1854.

His *Herald* correspondence was the basis for his book *The War in Kansas* (1856). In the book, Brewerton claimed impartiality on whether Kansas should allow slavery.²² But he moved in Democratic Party circles in the pro-slavery territorial capital, Lecompton, having carried letters from *Herald* publisher James Gordon Bennett introducing Brewerton to Kansas Gov. Wilson Shannon and U.S. Sen. David Atchison of Missouri.²³ Brewerton's reviewers questioned that. The *Boston Daily Atlas* charged, "It

²² George Douglas Brewerton, *Wars of the Western Border: Or, New Homes and a Strange People* (New York: Deby & Jackson, 1857), 394.

²³ *Ibid.*, 18. Shannon was characterized as "an extreme Southern man in politics, of the border-ruffian type. Thomas H. Gladstone and Frederick Law Olmstead, *The Englishman in Kansas: or, Squatter Life and Border Warfare* (New York: Miller & Co., 1857), 14. Atchison had engaged his fellow Missourian, U.S. Sen. Thomas Hart Benton, in a power struggle over control of the national Democratic Party. Neither was re-elected, and after his defeat Atchison became one of the leaders of the border ruffians who attacked anti-slavery Kansas settlers. Steven O'Brien, Paula McGuire, and James M. McPherson,

professes to be impartial, but its impartiality consists only in giving the public documents of both sides *in extensor*. It is not difficult to see that throughout all the writer's sympathies are with the border ruffians."²⁴ The *Saturday Evening Post* was more charitable, giving him credit for at least trying to present both sides although it conceded he was "a free and easy man of the world, whose taste inclines towards Southern chivalry."²⁵ Later, the *Atlas* identified Brewerton as "Reporter to the New York Herald, and who a short time since wrote a silly book on the Lawrence war, is an officer in the mob," a reference to pro-slavery men who supported the pro-slavery constitution framed by the Bogus Legislature in the territorial capital of Lecompton.²⁶ In that town, Brewerton studied the law under one Judge Scrugham and was admitted to the bar May 1, 1857.²⁷ Just weeks later, the *New York Herald* reported that "Col. G. Douglas Brewerton" offered a proviso on slavery to be included in a proposed state constitution. It would have banned the import of slaves but allowed "bona fide citizens of Kansas" to keep any slaves

American Political Leaders: From Colonial Times to the Present (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio Inc., 1991), 16.

²⁴ "New Publications. The War in Kansas," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, April 4, 1856, 1. "Border ruffians" were pro-slavery men who crossed over from Missouri to vote fraudulently in Kansas' territorial election.

²⁵ "The War in Kansas," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 12, 1856, 3.

²⁶ "Our Candidates," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, June 23, 1856, 1. By the *Atlas*' account, it was not uncommon for journalists to take up arms and fight on the side of the faction they covered: "There are several reporters in the field, and all are conspicuous for activity, and are on hand in every skirmish. Philips, Reporter for the Tribune, and Redpath, Reporter for the St. Louis Democrat, are in our camp; they have been in several warlike operations, and have proved themselves to be brave men. H. Clay Pate, Reporter of the St. Louis Republican, was captain of a company in the fight near Prairie city, when the enemy capitulated, and was one of the prisoners taken." That the *New York Herald* sometimes identified Brewerton with the title of colonel in its Kansas reports suggests he received a commission in the territory's pro-slavery militia since he had retired from the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant in 1854.

²⁷ Vinton, "Life of George Douglas Brewerton," 26. An article in the *New York Herald* confirmed Brewerton's recognition as an attorney. "Interesting from Kansas," *The New York Herald*, May 27, 1857, 4.

they brought in by the time the constitution was adopted.²⁸ His proposal, and the pro-slavery constitution, went nowhere, and Free State forces were ascendant. A correspondent for the *St. Louis Republican* poked fun at the pro-slavery Democrats who subsequently fled Kansas. One Sheriff Jones, he wrote, “is drinking whisky very hard at Lecompton. Marshal Donaldson has left the Territory in disgust because he could not get a nomination. Col. Brewerton, the special correspondent of the New York *Herald* ... has also left the Territory, in the same frame of mind and for a similar reason.”²⁹

Brewerton’s politics and faith: Mind of a nativist, soul of a Baptist

To understand why Brewerton portrayed Mexican Catholics as he did, it is vital to understand his Baptist faith and nativist politics. His religious beliefs are not well documented. Though he became a Baptist minister at the age of 30, he left no sermons or other writings pertaining to his role in the clergy. One copy of a nativist publication he edited survives. The July 1854 edition of *Young America, or, The Child of the Order* provides the clearest available clues to his political beliefs in the years when Mexicans most drew his attention.

An ad in the *New York Tribune* billed *Young America* as a “Native American Anti-Jesuit Monthly Magazine” and presented this statement of values: “It advocates American principles and American men, and is opposed to foreign and Roman Catholic influence under any form.”³⁰ George Washington’s farewell address provided the slogan for the inaugural edition. It read, “Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, (I

²⁸ “Affairs in Kansas,” *The New York Herald*, June 7, 1857, 2.

²⁹ “Interesting from Kansas,” *The Ohio State Journal*, Aug. 12, 1857, 1. The *Journal* quoted an exchange from the *St. Louis Democrat*.

³⁰ “The Infant of the Monthlies,” advertisement, *New York Daily Times*, June 15, 1854, p. 5. Only one U.S. library holds a copy of *Young America*: the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, N.Y.

conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens,) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of a Republican Government.” Brewerton told readers that the column “To Those Born on the Soil,” a pamphlet that originally appeared in the *New York True American*, represented “an honest exposition of our native American views and sentiments.”³¹ The original title was “To Those Born on the Soil Who Know Nothing,” a reference to the Know-Nothings.³² Know-Nothings were a secret brotherhood founded in New York that had three goals: to prevent non-native-born citizens from holding public office, to proscribe native Catholics from the same rights due to their allegiance to the pope, and to uphold and defend the Union without regard to slavery and other sectional issues.³³ Anti-Catholicism was prominent in Brewerton’s essay, which began with an attack on the character of the church. “Intolerance and Fanaticism march boldly in her van,” he wrote of the Roman Catholic Church, “while Moral and Mental blindness creep in upon her blood-stained track. . . . So long as it shall flourish, Satan will need no emissaries.”³⁴ Claiming that Catholics were an insular people, Brewerton wrote that they

³¹ George Douglas Brewerton, “To Those Born on the Soil,” *Young America, or, The Child of the Order*, July 1854, 8.

³² Nobody Knows Who, *To Those Born on the Soil Who Know Nothing but the Advancement of the Country’s Good* (Brooklyn, NY: n.p., 1854). Brewerton claimed that he wrote this pamphlet in his introduction to a reprint in *Young America*, July 1854, 8. There is little reason to doubt the claim. The essay opens with an apology for the quality of the writing, explaining, “For the last seven years, my life has been spent in military service, or in the companionship of those rough frontiers-men, who lead the van of civilization upon our far-Western border. A residence in the Indian country, and campaigning in the saddle, affords but little opportunity for the cultivation of literary pursuits, and the hand which has become familiarized with the rifle and sabre, [*sic*] is not unlikely to be cramped when it takes up the pen” (p.8).

³³ Cheree A. Carson, “The Rhetoric of the Know-Nothing Party: Nativism as a Response to the Rhetorical Situation.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association (79th, Baltimore, April 27-May 1, 1988, retrieved March 30, 2010, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1d/89/84.pdf), p..5.

³⁴ Brewerton, “To Those Born on the Soil,” 5.

would not absorb any of the nation's dominant values and would threaten the separation of church and state:

They would issue their manifestoes to this people, and unfurl the banner of papal supremacy. They would give us (if they could) a Roman Catholic for a President, and a council of Jesuit priests for his advisers. They would engraft the rottenness of the Old World upon the soundness of the New. They would, could their ability keep pace with their presumption, impose upon us Idolatry and Priestcraft, the Inquisition and the Auto-da-Fe. Need I say that this state of things may not and *shall* not be.³⁵

Concluding the essay, Brewerton spelled out what Americans must ensure, a list that encapsulated the program of the Know-Nothings:

The repeal of all naturalization laws. The doctrines of Washington and his compatriots.³⁶ 'None but Americans for office.' More stringent emigration laws, and the sending back of all paupers who reach our shores. The formation of secret societies to protect American interests. Opposition to the formation of military companies composed of foreigners, and hostility to all Papal influences in any form whatever. American institutions and sentiments and the Bible in our schools. The advocacy of a sound, healthy, and safe nationality, and the amplest protection to interests. War to the knife on Roman-Jesuitism, and eternal enmity to all who attempt to carry out the principles and policy of a foreign Church or State, American laws and legislation; the adherents of Papal supremacy to be regarded as foes and traitors to American Republicanism, ready to assail our liberties openly when an opportunity shall occur."

Brewerton's upbringing in an established Rhode Island family and early childhood in South Carolina suggest that he was exposed equally to Northern and Southern Baptist influences. Among the tenets of Baptist belief in Brewerton's time were belief in a regenerate church membership by baptism; the priesthood of every believer; the primary power and authority of the local congregation and no provision for bishops or other central authority, such as a pope; that the Scriptures, understood through the

³⁵ Brewerton, "To Those Born on the Soil," 6.

³⁶ Earlier in the essay, Brewerton quoted George Washington, who wrote, "The best course of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible."

guidance of the Holy Spirit, are the authoritative basis of doctrine and practice; and that church and state must be separate to protect religious freedom.³⁷ In 1859, just two years after returning from Kansas, the 30-year-old Brewerton answered a call to serve as pastor at North Baptist Church in Newport, R.I.³⁸ During the secession winter in March 1861, he took a post as pastor of a Baptist church in Morristown, N.J.³⁹

But when the Civil War came, he turned to martial pursuits once more. Brewerton was offered command of a New York volunteer regiment during the Civil War but declined. Instead, he accepted appointment as lieutenant colonel with the Tenth Legion of the Fifty-Sixth New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment as aide to Gen. Rufus Saxton.⁴⁰ He combined his artistic ability with his knowledge of warfare, creating *The Automaton Regiment*, *The Automaton Company*, and *The Automaton Battery*, a series of educational tools used to school green recruits in strategy and tactics.⁴¹ After the Civil War, Brewerton became pastor of a Baptist church in Annsville, R.I., in 1866-67 but gave up the ministry because of poor health. He devoted the rest of his life to painting mixed-media landscapes of the mountains and deserts of the West, with occasional side projects

³⁷ Eldon G. Ernst, "The Baptists," *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 555.

³⁸ "Soldier Turned Preacher," *New York Observer and Chronicle*, April 28, 1859, 131.

³⁹ "Ministerial and Church Registry," *The Independent, Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts*, March 28, 1861, 3.

⁴⁰ Vinton's biographical sketch of Brewerton states he was offered command of a regiment though he did not say which one. "Life of George Douglas Brewerton," 26. Brewerton's specific rank and unit came from "The Lieutenant Colonelcy of the Tenth Legion," *The New York Herald*, Nov. 9, 1861, 5.

⁴¹ Vinton, "Life of George Douglas Brewerton," 26.

in poetry. He supported himself through real estate speculation and died in a veterans home in 1901.⁴²

Brewerton's knowledge of the Borderlands

Brewerton drew his facts from his military service in California, New Mexico, and Texas, but he also relied on nonfiction works by American explorers for background information. He quoted directly from Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*, relying heavily on it for a description of casino mistress and monte dealer Gertrudes Barceló, more commonly known in Santa Fe as La Tules.⁴³ In brief, Gregg had written that La Tules was "a certain female of very loose habits" who became so successful at gambling in Santa Fe that she established her own casino."⁴⁴ To Gregg's description, he added his own observation that La Tules "bore most unmistakably the impress of her fearful calling, being scarred and seamed, and rendered unwomanly by those painful lines which unbridled passions and midnight watching never fail to stamp upon the countenance of their votary."⁴⁵ Brewerton thought she was "richly but tastelessly dressed – her fingers being literally covered with rings, while her neck was adorned with three heavy chains of gold, to the longest of which was attached a massive crucifix of the same precious material."⁴⁶

Gregg's book also provided Brewerton with background history about Santa Fe. "Of La Ciudad de Santa Fe, as it existed in this summer of 1848, I can say little that is

⁴² Ibid., 28.

⁴³ Brewerton, "Travel in New Mexico," 588.

⁴⁴ Ibid., quoting from Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies Vol. 1* (Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1851), 239.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 588.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,

favorable,” he wrote in concluding his description of the New Mexican capital, “but as I am unwilling to pass judgment upon so limited an acquaintance, I prefer adopting a description of that city which I find recorded in the narrative of Gregg, to advancing my own hasty impressions.”⁴⁷

Brewerton noted two other sources from which he drew for his articles on the West. He had read about Kit Carson in John Fremont’s writing, most likely *Narrative of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44*.⁴⁸ The second he referred to was William H. Emory’s *Notes on a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego, California*, a report Emory wrote while serving as a lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1848.⁴⁹

Idleness, class, and phenotype: The “Spanish race” vs. the “Mexican race”

As Brewerton waited for Carson to arrive in Los Angeles, he passed the time as might be expected of a young bachelor: “I amused myself with visiting every point of interest about the town, riding out, smoking, and now and then flirting with some fair ‘señorita,’ thus managing, between pleasant friends and dark eyes, to pass the few days prior to Carson’s arrival pleasantly, if not profitably.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 589.

⁴⁸ John C. Fremont, *Narrative of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-44* (New York: Appleton & Co., 1846).

⁴⁹ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 592. He referred to U.S. Senate, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego, California including Part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers by Lieut. Col. W. H. Emory, Mad in 1846-7 with the Advanced Guard of the “Army of the West,”* 41st Cong., 1st Sess., 1848.

⁵⁰ Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 307.

Brewerton associated idleness with tobacco use, noting the leisureliness of the Californios he saw. “Even the usually deserted beach was enlivened by parties of sauntering Californians, who watched our movements with a sort of idle curiosity, smoking their eternal ‘cigaritos,’ or uttering an occasional ‘caramba,’ as the strong wind sweeping down the bay, disturbed the sand and dust, and sent its blinding shower against their faces.”⁵¹

When these upper-class Californians of Spanish descent smoked and sauntered, Brewerton hinted that he saw a certain charm in it, possibly because he, too, was well heeled, fond of tobacco, and leisurely. But by the time he reached New Mexico and saw the same activities in the village of Taos, he was appalled. “Its inhabitants exhibit all the indolent, lounging characteristics of the lower order of Mexicans, the utter want both of moral and mental culture making itself everywhere apparent,” he wrote. Warming to his subject, he continued:

These people, who no know higher duty, and acknowledge no purer rule of conduct than a blind compliance with the exactions of a corrupt priesthood, regard honest labor as a burden, and resort to it only when driven by their necessities. Sleeping, smoking, and gambling consume the greater portion of their day; while nightly fandangos furnish fruitful occasions for murder, robbery, and other acts of outrage. I speak of the country as it impressed me at the period of my passage through it, some years ago, when these remarks were applicable to a large majority of its male population.⁵²

When he spoke of Mexican women who had intermarried with respectable American men, Brewerton conferred honorary whiteness on the women by referring to them as “Spanish” and not Mexican. When he wrote about Josepha Jaramillo, the New

⁵¹ Ibid., 306.

⁵² Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 577.

Mexican wife of Kit Carson, he called her “his amiable wife, a Spanish lady, and a relative, I believe, of some former Governor of New Mexico.”⁵³ The practice was common enough. Texas historian Neil Foley noted, “When Anglo Texans married Mexicans, they often juggled the nomenclature to whiten their spouses by calling them Spanish Americans or simply Spanish. Mexican men, however, were only rarely accorded status as white persons, such as when they were owners of large ranches with marriageable daughters.”⁵⁴

Gendered difference: Cruel men and kindly women

Brewerton drew sharp contrasts between the sexes in New Mexico. Whereas he saw little good in the men, the women possessed the virtues of charity and kindness that George Wilkins Kendall made evident in his *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition*:⁵⁵

It is but just, however, to state, that the women of New Mexico toil harder, and in this respect are more perfect slaves to the tyranny of the husbands, than any other females, if we except [*sic*] the Indians, upon this continent. They are literally “hewers of wood and drawers of water;” but, unlike their cowardly and treacherous lords, their hearts are ever open to the sufferings of the unfortunate. Many have borne witness to the fact; for the wounded mountaineer, the plundered trader, and fettered prisoners dragged as a triumphal show through their villages by men who never dared to meet their captives upon equal terms in the field, have experienced sympathy and obtained relief from these dark-eyed daughters of New Mexico.

The theme of New Mexican women as exotic objects of desire recurred in Brewerton’s narrative. So did the contrast between the sexes. His disapproval of “a blanket-covered Mexican, with his gaudy serape and broad-brimmed sombrero” rang just

⁵³ Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 334.

⁵⁴ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 24.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of this, please see Chapter 5.

as clearly as his approval of “a bevy of dark eyed señoritas, with flowing hair and coquettish scarlet petticoat, just long enough to display a taper foot and faultless ankle; who chatted and smoked their tiny *cigarritos* with a *sang froid* and freedom from restraint which would have rivaled even the assurance of our fashionable belles.”⁵⁶

Brewerton seemed to like Mexican women more than American women, claiming they were unpretentious and did not depend on fashion for their beauty:

And now, though it be a digression, permit me to say that I like the style of these same daughters of New Mexico. There is little of the affected fine lady about them, it is true. They are nothing more or less than women; and, better still, woman as she comes from her Creator’s hands, with eyes, teeth, hair, and figures – ay, and for that matter, *hearts* too, occasionally – founded upon the very best models – Dame Nature’s own. In a word, they are women unstayed and unpadded, who have gained nothing from conventionalism, and have grown up to their full estate in blissful ignorance of a milliner’s modes.⁵⁷

In addition to their beauty, Brewerton praised Mexican women’s industriousness. Explaining his decision to linger awhile in a village while his mule rested and grazed, he wrote, “I must confess that I was not a little influenced in this determination by the bright eyes of two new-made acquaintances – very pretty señoritas, who, in obedience to the orders of the papa (Don Alphabet I shall call him, for his names seemed legion) were then busily employed in cooking choice specimens of the usual products of the country.”⁵⁸

Lower-class Mexican men, Brewerton pronounced, were dishonest, thieving, exaggerating, ugly, and difficult to keep in line. Brewerton described “Señor Jesús García (I will give only two of his half a dozen names),” the first mule driver he hired before

⁵⁶ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 580.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 580.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 582.

hitting the trail with Carson, as “old, ugly, and possessed of a most villainous cast of countenance.” But García gave him a convincing enough sales pitch for Brewerton to hire him as a mule driver, cook, and general servant to see him through the journey from Los Angeles to Santa Fe. “I felt fully satisfied that – if one were to believe his own account of his manifold perfections, both as a man and as a muleteer – there had never existed such a paragon of virtue and skill,” Brewerton wrote. “He could pack a mule in the twinkling of an eye, lasso and ride the wildest horse that ever ran, and as for honesty ‘El Teniente might load him with bags of uncounted doubloons and he would not steal a single medio.’”⁵⁹ Using a familiar form of address usually reserved for children and social inferiors, he referred to his Mexican servants by their first names while referring to Anglos by their last names on second reference.

Brewerton did admire Mexicans’ abilities as horsemen and mule drivers.⁶⁰ But he warned readers that they were untrustworthy, based on his accusation that García stole from him before abandoning him on the trail. “That paragon of virtue had allowed himself to be seduced by a new pair of boots, and a trifle of clothing which he found in my carpet bag,” Brewerton wrote without saying how he knew the identity of the thief. “And if he had not ‘sloped to Texas’ he had at all events migrated to parts unknown; and there was I at the last moment, with seven animals to be taken care of, packed, saddled, or driven, and not a soul to attend to them.”⁶¹

When another Mexican mule driver offered his services, Carson warned him he was “a greater rascal. I don’t think ever lived than that same young Mexican, but he

⁵⁹ Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 309.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 310.

knows how to take care of a mule.”⁶² Brewerton referred to his Mexican muledriver Juan as a “servant” and complained that he had “for some days shown a disposition to give trouble in various ways.” When Juan let a mule’s rope get damaged by dragging on the ground, Carson’s advice to Brewerton was “to give him a lesson which he will remember: if we were nearer the settlements I would not recommend it, for he would certainly desert and carry your animals with him; but as it is, he will not dare to leave the party, for fear of the Indians.” So Brewerton “simply rode back, and without any particular explanation, knocked the fellow off his mule. It was the first lesson and the last which I found it necessary to read him. Juan gave me, it is true, a most diabolical look upon remounting, which made me careful of my pistols for a night or two afterward; but he was conquered, and in future I had no reason to complain of any negligence.”⁶³

As much as Brewerton complained when Mexican hirelings stole from him, he approved of their thievery when it benefitted him. He even recommended the reader that “if he should ever become a traveler in the provinces of Mexico, to instruct his servant in the art of foraging; for if he prove an adept, it shall be well for his master, who might otherwise go supperless to bed.”⁶⁴

Technology: Superior saddles and inferior weapons

Northern correspondents W. W. H. Davis and Albert Deane Richardson proclaimed the inferiority of every piece of Mexican technology they saw. Brewerton, however, made little comment on such matters. He praised Mexican construction techniques and saddles while condemning their antiquated weaponry. That most

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 313.

⁶⁴ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 582.

technology was peripheral to Brewerton's way of life explains this contradiction. It was a source of difference that he found worthy of passing comment, but to concede that Mexicans had adapted to their environs did not constitute a threat to his value system.

Saddles and housing were examples of technology that helped Mexicans get along in the wide-open, desert expanses of the West. Brewerton found Mexican saddles to be far superior to American ones because they were so deep that they kept the horse or mule from throwing the rider. He referred to them as "wooden trees covered with leathers called *macheers*," and he claimed their construction was one reason Mexicans were such fearless horsemen.⁶⁵ And though the adobe buildings of the Pueblo de Los Angeles invited comparisons to the brick and masonry of the United States, Brewerton saw advantages in it. "The streets are narrow, and the houses generally not over one story high, built of adobes, the roofs flat and covered with a composition of gravel mixed with a sort of mineral pitch, which the inhabitants say they find upon the sea-shore," he observed. "This mode of roofing gives a perfectly waterproof covering, but has the rather unpleasant disadvantage of melting in warm weather, and in running down, fringes the sides of the building with long *pitchicles* (if we may be allowed to coin a word), thus giving to the houses an exceedingly grotesque appearance; when the heat is extreme, pools of pitch are formed upon the ground."⁶⁶ The walls themselves, however, were sturdy and practical. "The adobe is a brick, made of clay, and baked in the sun. Walls built of this material, from the great thickness necessary to secure strength, are warmer in

⁶⁵ Brewerton, "Ride with Kit Carson," 310.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 307.

winter, and cooler in summer, and are therefore better adapted to the climate than either wood or ordinary brick.”⁶⁷

Differences between Yankee and Mexican firearms, however, hit closer to home since Brewerton was a soldier. “A few resolute men might have captured their property, and driven the traders like a flock of sheep,” he wrote, describing a trade caravan on the Old Spanish Trail. “Many of these people had no fire-arms, being only provided with the short bow and arrows usually carried by New Mexican herdsmen. Others were armed with old English muskets, condemned long ago as unserviceable, which had, in all probability, been loaded for years, and now bid fair to do more damage at the stock than at the muzzle.”⁶⁸ Their swords were nearly as bad as their guns. “Another description of weapon appeared to be highly prized among them – these were old, worn-out dragoon sabres, dull and rusty, at best a most useless arm in contending with an enemy who fights only from inaccessible rocks and precipices,” Brewerton observed, “but when carried under the leathers of the saddle, and tied with all the manifold straps and knots with which the Mexican secures them, perfectly worthless even at close quarters.”⁶⁹

Brewerton’s view of Catholicism

Brewerton combined detailed observations with opinion-driven inferences throughout his writing, but this discursive practice is particularly evident in what he

⁶⁷ Brewerton Ibid., 307.

⁶⁸ Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 313.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

wrote about the Catholic priests of New Mexico. In a town on the road from Taos to Santa Fe, the Brewerton and his fellow riders were greeted by one Father Ignatio:⁷⁰

Among others, the village priest figured most conspicuously, and, from his clerical dress, to say nothing of his ample rotundity of figure, attracted no small share of my attention. Were I to attempt a description of Father Ignatio, I should say that his style, though peculiar, was not unlike that of Saint Nicholas of Christmas holiday memory, for ‘He had a broad chin, and a little round belly, That shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly.’ Indeed, I am inclined to suspect that the worthy priest was a man of the world, who loved better to gather life’s roses than to encounter its thorns; preferring a good dinner and a long afternoon *siesta*, with other carnal enjoyments, to the performance of a penance or the keeping of a fast.⁷¹

Father Ignatio gave Brewerton an opportunity to represent his belief in the intemperance and gluttony of Mexican Catholic clerics. He wrote that as he pondered the strange streetscape before him, he “was interrupted in my meditations by the fat fingers and unctuous voice of Father Ignatio, who tapped me upon the shoulder, at the same time whispering an invitation to drink a quiet glass of *aguardiente* with him at his own particular sanctum.”⁷² Once there, Brewerton explained:

[W]ith a sly glance from the window to discover if any prying loiterer was near – not (as the good father explained to me “for fear of scandal; for a Mexican priest – *gracias a Dios*’ – (here the old sinner smacked his lips) ‘did pretty much as he pleased;’ but lest some thirsty neighbor should drop in to share the liquor. My host unlocked a hidden closet in the wall, and brought forth a weighty flask, whose cobwebbed sides and well-sealed mouth gave fair promise of a good thing to come. The Padre’s Bardolphian nose grew a shade rosier as he uncorked it; and his little black eyes fairly twinkled as, with a laudable desire to prevent mistakes, he carried it to his lips.⁷³

⁷⁰Brewerton, like many American writers, frequently misspelled Spanish words and names. The conventional version of this name is “Ignacio.”

⁷¹ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 580.

⁷² Ibid. *Agua ardiente* is a strong, rum-like alcoholic beverage.

⁷³ Ibid.

Brewerton then explained the contrast between his own American refinement and the Mexican priest's uncouth habits. While Ignatio quaffed copious quantities straight from the bottle, Brewerton said he drank lightly from a cup because he was a "firm believer in the virtues of temperance."⁷⁴

If Brewerton thought Father Ignatio was guilty of the sins of gluttony and intemperance, he claimed that a New Mexican mule driver who led him to Santa Fe provided evidence of priestly greed and gambling. Being a nativist of an evangelical denomination, Brewerton began an argument about Roman Catholicism. "Upon this topic I found the old fellow excellently disposed to agree with me," he wrote of the man he nicknamed Ali Baba, "for the money, 'which, with the assistance of Saint Joseph, he expected to receive for his cargo, would, *Valga me Dios*, be all expended upon his return in the payment of a certain debt, due for religious services and indulgences which he had obtained from the village priest, who would most probably (added my informant, with a terrible punch of his *burro*'s back, who resented the blow instanter by kicking out with a vigor which nearly dislodged its rider) 'spend it at the '*Monte*' bank, or lose it at the cockfights after mass on Sunday afternoon.'"⁷⁵

When Brewerton reached Santa Fe, he found just the behavior that he claimed the mule driver predicted. Brewerton described a Mexican priest he found in a casino who "in the clerical garb of his order, with cross and rosary most conspicuously displayed, was seated at one of the tables near me, where he seemed completely engrossed by the chances of his game, the fluctuations of which he was marking by the utterance of oaths

⁷⁴ Ibid., 580-581.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 583.

as shocking and blasphemous as ever issued from human lips. Unlike my jolly friar, Father Ignatio (whom may Bacchus defend), he sinned, not from carelessness, or out of a genial exuberance of animal spirits, but from the evil workings of the sin-blackened soul within. Yet this man was a minister at the altar, and a sworn protector of Christ's flock; who held, according to his creed, the power to absolve and to baptize, to shrive the dying and intercede for the dead; who would go from the curses of a 'hell' to the house of the living God, and there stand in his sacerdotal robes and say unto his people, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee!"⁷⁶

In Brewerton's eyes, the blame for New Mexicans' moral deficiency fell on the Catholic priesthood. After leaving a Santa Fe gambling hall, he remarked:

Upon regaining the, by comparison, purer air of the uncleansed alley-way without, I could scarcely avoid moralizing upon the scenes which I had so recently witnessed. Here were men, women, and children – the strong man, the mother, and the lisping child – all engaged in that most debasing of vices, gambling, an entire devotion to which is the besetting sin of the whole Mexican people. But yet these transgressors were not without an excuse. What better could you have expected from an ignorant, priest-ridden peasantry, when those whom they are taught to reverence and respect, and who should have been their prompters to better things, not only allow, but openly practice this and all other iniquities? If there be a curse (as who shall doubt? Pronounced against those who are instrumental in whelming a land in moral darkness, what must be the fate of those 'blind leaders of the blind,' the Roman Catholic priesthood of New Mexico?⁷⁷

Brewerton took a jaundiced view of the religious artworks that commonly adorned New Mexican households. He did not take offense to their sacramental role; rather, their rustic folk-art style jarred his classically trained sensibilities:

⁷⁶ Brewerton, "Travel in New Mexico," 588-589.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 589.

Both rich and poor, however, agree in appropriating one end of their dwellings to a sort of family altar or chapel, where rude engravings of saints, images intended to represent the Saviour, or 'La Madre de Diós,' sacred relics, and consecrated rosaries, are displayed around a huge crucifix, which occupies the centre of the wall on that side of the apartment. These images, particularly upon high 'fiestas' and holidays, are decked out by the females of the family with all sorts of tawdry ornaments; and on such occasions it is by no means uncommon to see a doll representing the Virgin Mary arrayed in a muslin frock, trimmed with artificial roses, and festooned with ribbons of the gayest hues. Here and there are oil paintings; a worse copy of a bad picture, or, it may be, a veritable 'Old Master,' occupies the post of honor, and portrays saints, angels, and demons in every possible and impossible attitude, and engaged in every improbably avocation.⁷⁸

Brewerton wrote kindly of New Mexicans who helped him along the way and defied his expectations with their fair business dealings. He gave seemingly affectionate nicknames to those who treated him kindly, such as the mule driver who confirmed his distrust in Catholic priests, rented him a mule when his mount gave out, and taught him how to control it on the trail to Santa Fe.⁷⁹ But he largely viewed relations between Americans and New Mexicans in us-vs.-them terms. He made this plain when he explained the term "Greaser" to his readers in a footnote. When he asked a soldier where to find the Army paymaster, the soldier replied that he lived around the corner from the downtown plaza and would "send a young Greaser" to show the way. "The nickname 'Greaser' is very generally applied to Mexicans by the Americans residing in our 'new acquisitions.' It is almost needless to remark that it is no complimentary phrase, being intended as a set-off to the 'Gringo' – plain English, greenhorn – by which they are accustomed to denigrate us." The term was commonly used by Americans in Texas and New Mexico, but it was uncommon among Americans in California. Therefore, it is

⁷⁸ Ibid., 578.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 584.

likely that Brewerton picked it up when he went to New Mexico. To say that “Gringo” meant “greenhorn” is a revealing and ironic misunderstanding. The etymologist Félix Rodríguez González traced the word’s origins to eighteenth-century Spain. Translated into English, the 1786 dictionary by Esteban de Terreros y Pando noted, “In Malaga, *gringo* is what they call foreigners who have a certain kind of accent which prevents their speaking Spanish with ease and spontaneity; and in Madrid the case is the same, and for the same reason, especially with respect to the Irish.” The word derived from *griego*, or Greek, a word used in the phrase “hablar en griego,” meaning “to speak in an incomprehensible language.”⁸⁰

Brewerton’s animosity toward most New Mexicans reflects disdain for their religion and their socioeconomic status. Most of them lived in poverty and lacked the social graces of the California grandees. But his adoption of the term “greasers” once he reached New Mexico suggests that he learned the term in that territory. When Brewerton told some American mountaineers that “some unseen hand” fired shots at him on the road from Taos to Santa Fe, he wrote that they “‘allowed that a greaser wanted to raise my har;’ [*sic*] which, being translated into plain English, signifies that I had that day served as a target for some prowling Mexican.”⁸¹

The boundaries of the binary, white-black racial system of the South constrained Brewerton’s view of Mexicans. In his eyes, Mexican peons were similar to Negro slaves but more difficult to keep in line. That is, he believed they were fine laborers who

⁸⁰ Beatriz Varela, “Ethnic Nicknames of Spanish Origin in American English,” ed. Félix Rodríguez González, *Spanish Loanwords in the English Language: A Tendency Toward Hegemony Reversal* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1996), 143. The 1786 dictionary quoted is the *Diccionario Castellano con las Voces de Ciencias y Artes y sus Correspondientes en las 3 Lenguas Francesa, Latina e Italiana*, by Esteban de Terreros y Pando.

⁸¹ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 579.

required constant supervision. They drove mules, cooked, and looked after affairs in camp well but would steal if given the opportunity.⁸² Brewerton equated Mexican servants with slaves, “for they are little better.”⁸³ When he described the activities of laborers in New Mexico, they did not just perform tasks; they performed them *lazily*. He stopped to ask directions from a “peasant who was lazily working upon one of the numerous irrigation ditches which are inseparable assistants of New Mexican agriculture.”⁸⁴ At times, Brewerton lowered Mexican laborers to the level of animals. When he set the scene on a ranch through which he and Carson passed, Brewerton mixed peasants in with the livestock. “Every discordant sound, of which a California farm-yard is so prolific, seemed present and doubly magnified to grace the occasion,” he wrote. “Donkeys brayed, Mexicans chattered, cocks crew, every horse in the *corral*, or horse-yard, seemed determined to give us his farewell neigh.”⁸⁵

Brewerton’s portrayal of Mexicans reflected a hatred of the Roman Catholic Church, which he and his fellow Know-Nothings feared was bent on subverting American democracy by enslaving the people of the U.S. under papal rule. It equally demonstrated Manifest Destiny’s powerful ideological grip on the nation. Americans were not only justified in taking land from inferior races; they were ordained by God to do so, according to its logic. Not all of the Californians, it turned out, were created equally inferior in Brewerton’s writing. It would be easy to mistake his favor for Spaniards and disdain for Mexicans as a matter of national preference. But Californios’

⁸² Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 309-310.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁸⁴ Brewerton, “Travel in New Mexico,” 582.

⁸⁵ Brewerton, “Ride with Kit Carson,” 306.

desire to maintain their power combined with American economic elites' desire for resources dictated that the two sides reach an understanding. As historian Douglas Monroy noted, Californio elites started calling themselves Spanish to distinguish themselves from lower classes of Californians whom Yankee newcomers preyed upon and disparagingly called Mexican regardless of their origin, economic standing, or moral quality.⁸⁶ Allying themselves with the Americans, the Spanish Californians gained a degree of protection while throwing the rest of their countrymen open to exploitation.⁸⁷ Social intercourse led to intermarriage between Yankee men and the daughters of the Spanish California *ricos*.⁸⁸ Intermarriage between California women and American and European traders had taken place since the 1820s, establishing a longstanding sense in the territory that such practice was normal and desirable.⁸⁹ Brewerton's kindly treatment of Spanish women reflected their status as objects of American sexual desire. This status was also reflected in the work of Brewerton's fellow Southerner, J. Ross Browne. If Brewerton's vision of American conquest was military and ecclesiastical, then Browne's vision of conquest was largely commercial.

J. Ross Browne: Capitalism's advance scout in the mining regions

John Ross Browne alternated between journalism and government service throughout his career. The third of seven children born to Thomas Egerton Browne and

⁸⁶ Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 206.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁸⁸ Monroy *Ibid.*, 222.

⁸⁹ Deborah Moreno, "Here the Society is United: 'Respectable' Anglos and Intercultural Marriage in Pre-Gold Rush California," *California History* 80, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 2-17.

Elana Elizabeth Buck, his date of birth is unknown but he was christened Jan. 23, 1821, in Beggarsbush, a tiny village on the outskirts of Dublin, Ireland.⁹⁰ His father was convicted of “seditious libel and inciting to revolt” for publishing prose and cartoons that made fun of the British Crown in 1833. After Thomas Browne had served four or five months of a one-year prison sentence, his wife and friends got his term commuted to banishment for seven years. So at the age of 12, John Ross Browne found himself and his exiled family in Indiana, where his father established a sawmill and ferry.⁹¹ From there the family moved to Louisville, Ky., where his father resumed his journalistic work. Thomas Browne counted *Louisville Journal* editor George Denison Prentice among his friends. Brown contributed to both the *Journal* and the more conservative *Louisville Advertiser*. He became editor of the *Louisville Daily Reporter* in April 1839.

John Ross Browne caught the travel bug early. By the age of 17, he and a friend roamed 600 miles on foot and 1,600 miles as a deckhand on a flat-boat, a journey that carried them from Louisville down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, over to Texas, and back.⁹² In 1839, at the age of 18, he became a police reporter for the *Louisville Advertiser*, occasionally sending correspondence to newspapers in Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio.⁹³ He tried to become a doctor but left Louisville Medical School after a few months. Thereafter he devoted himself to writing, dabbling in short fiction in addition to his police reporting. He succeeded in getting a few short stories published in

⁹⁰ Lina Ferguson Browne, ed., *J. Ross Browne: His Letters, Journals and Writings* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), xv.

⁹¹ “Our Artist-Correspondent At-Large,” *Harper’s Weekly*, Feb. 21, 1863, p. 125.

⁹² Browne, *J. Ross Browne*, xvi.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Graham's Magazine*, which Edgar Allen Poe edited at the time.⁹⁴

The family moved to Washington in 1841, when Thomas Egerton Browne took a job reporting on the U.S. House and Senate for the *Congressional Globe*. Ross Browne picked up shorthand so he could help his father, but his real aim was to save enough money to finance a trip to Europe.⁹⁵ With \$15 to his name, J. Ross Browne set off to see the world. The money got him as far as New York, where he found lodging at the Astor House and ran out of cash in just two days. Forced to economize, he signed on as a crewman on a whaling vessel that carried him to the Azores, Cape Verde, the Canary Islands, Madagascar, Makumba, and the Comoros, before he left the ship in Zanzibar during a mutiny over cruel treatment of the crew.⁹⁶ From Africa's eastern coast he worked his passage home on a ship bound for the United States.

Browne arrived back in Washington in November 1843.⁹⁷ The journey gave him the makings of his first article for *Harper's Weekly*, "Etchings of a Whaling Cruise," published. Browne refined and expanded the article into a book published by Harper and Brothers in 1846, *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise with Notes of a Sojourn on the Island of Zanzibar*.⁹⁸ He received just \$200 for the manuscript, but the book's success commenced

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ "Our Artist-Correspondent At-Large," *Harper's Weekly*, Feb. 21, 1863, 125.

⁹⁷ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 25.

⁹⁸ David Michael Goodman, *A Western Panorama 1849-1875: The Writings and Influence of J. Ross Browne on the Pacific Coast, and in Texas, Nevada, Arizona and Baja California, as the first Mining Commissioner, and Minister to China* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1966), 27.

a twenty-year relationship with the publishing house. The Harpers accepted every subsequent manuscript he submitted in his career.

In Washington once more, he resumed his reporting for the *Congressional Globe* and refined his trip notes into articles for *Harper's Weekly* before *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise* was released. Browne moved in the capital's young literary circles, where he met his future bride, Lucy Anna Mitchell. They wed in 1845 and went to meet Browne's family and friends in Kentucky and Ohio.⁹⁹ In Columbus, Ohio, Browne worked for two months as a clerk, contributor, reporter, and business manager at the *Ohio Statesman*. Bookkeeping at the paper prepared him to accept a job as confidential secretary to U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert J. Walker. In December 1848, Walker appointed Browne as a lieutenant in the U.S. Revenue Marine and sent him to San Francisco.¹⁰⁰ His mission was to learn how to prevent American seamen from deserting to join the Gold Rush, then carry revenue service dispatches to Oregon.¹⁰¹ To his surprise, he learned via a report in the *National Intelligencer* that his mission had been canceled.¹⁰² This left him penniless, but also open to other opportunities. Browne profited greatly from his time in California – not as a miner, but as the secretary of the California Constitutional Convention. Organizers agreed to pay him \$10,000 to report and publish the convention proceedings, which gave him a profit of \$4,000 and put his name before thousands of influential

⁹⁹ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 26.

¹⁰⁰U.S. House. *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting Information in Answer to a Resolution of the House of the 31st of December, 1849, on the Subject of California and New Mexico*. 31st Cong., 1 Sess., H. Exec. Doc. 17, 54-55.

¹⁰¹U.S. House. *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting Information in Answer to a Resolution of the House of the 31st of December, 1849, on the Subject of California and New Mexico*. 31st Cong., 1 Sess., H. Exec. Doc. 17, 54-55.

¹⁰² John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, 27 Aug. 1849. In *J. Ross Browne*, 128-129.

readers in Congress, the executive branch of government, and in partisan political circles across the country. A thousand copies were printed in English and 250 in Spanish in the initial printing, but Browne wrote to *Richmond Inquirer* editor Thomas Ritchie that the Senate requested 2,000 copies and the House deliberated the purchase of 2,000 more.¹⁰³ Lecturing, too, gave Browne an opportunity to augment his income and extend the influence of his ideas and knowledge.

Though he enjoyed a measure of prosperity through his writing, it was his services to the mining industry that proved the most lucrative. Browne's credibility with the federal government flowed from his expertise as well as the perception that he was an unbiased and neutral observer. But as his career progressed, Browne became entangled in the industry to the point that its interests became his interests. Between articles, industrial reports and sketches, and services as a broker assisting in the sale of mining properties, mineral industries centered in Western lands wrested from Mexicans made Browne a wealthy man. In the fall of 1864, he wrote his wife, Lucy, that he would earn \$3,000 above expenses making sketches of Nevada silver mines and selling them to their owners.¹⁰⁴ He also gave mine sketches in return for referrals; he wrote R. B. Harris of the Prest. Bodie Bluff Gold and Silver Mining Co., "May I ask the favor of your influence to procure me some more work in New York? I am prepared to report on mines in Nevada, in Idahoe [*sic*] Arizona, Japan or South America for a reasonable consideration. Will sketch insides and outsides – have no objection to going into the Country – any country."¹⁰⁵ His popularity as a lecturer grew, and so did his sketches and reports for the

¹⁰³ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Sept. 27, 1864, in *J. Ross Browne*, 312.

¹⁰⁵ John Ross Browne to R. B. Harris, March 13, 1865, in *J. Ross Browne*, 312.

mining industry. He confided in Lucy Browne that “The Eastern companies are keen to have my sketches and reports. I do nothing now, short of special jobs for particular friends, for less than \$500.”¹⁰⁶ He cleared \$6,000 in the first six months of 1865.¹⁰⁷ And he made \$10,000 for helping a San Francisco investor sell his mines in July 1865.¹⁰⁸ He used at least some of these proceeds to speculate on mining properties and other real estate. In 1871, he sold a mine for \$400,000 and town lots in San Diego for \$2,500.¹⁰⁹

Cultural influences: Christianity and Democratic politics

Browne was a Christian, born in Catholic-dominated Ireland and laid to rest with the services of a Presbyterian preacher. His father clearly had no love for the Church of England, which he lampooned in a pamphlet called “The Parson’s Horn-Book” in protest of the requirement that Irish Catholics pay a tithe to the Protestant church as well as the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹⁰ His family came from a largely Catholic region near Dublin, but his writings do not make his leanings evident. In a letter to his wife soon after they married, he ridiculed the cadence of Methodist revival sermons: “Last night-a I went to the Methodist Church-a and heard a very strange man preach-a, whose sermon I forget-a.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, May 28, 1865, in *J. Ross Browne*, 312.

¹⁰⁷ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, June 3, 1865, in *J. Ross Browne*, 313.

¹⁰⁸ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, July 19, 1865, in *J. Ross Browne*, 316.

¹⁰⁹ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, June 21, 1871, in *J. Ross Browne*, 381; John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, June 4, 1871, in *J. Ross Browne*, 374.

¹¹⁰ James D. Birchfield, “Banned in Dublin: The Parson’s Horn-Book,” *The Journal of Library History* 10, no. 3 (July 1975): 231-240.

¹¹¹ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Oct. 13, 1844. In *J. Ross Browne*, 46.

Browne publicly claimed no denomination. Though he apparently died Presbyterian, his actions indicated sympathy for Roman Catholics. Among his lecture venues was the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, in San Francisco, a place he would have disdained had he been a Know-Nothing.¹¹² He was once mistaken for a temperance promoter in Ohio because he would not drink whiskey, but his abstinence in public sprang from concern for his reputation more than anything else.¹¹³ The clearest available evidence of Browne's religious beliefs can be found in his obituary in the *Oakland Tribune*. "But what shall we say of his religion?" asked the Rev. L. Hamilton of Oakland's Independent Presbyterian Church in the sermon at Browne's funeral. "Like his home and his pictures and his writings and his manners: It was as unconventional as possible. It never asked what way the religion of others took to express itself. He adopted no creed; he conformed to no ritual. Yet his pure and beneficent life was a continuous worship. He was generous to others almost to prodigality. He shared the best he had with the needy."¹¹⁴

Much as he tried to keep neutral in political matters, Browne had a few political biases. He ran for mayor of Oakland, Calif., on the Democratic ticket,¹¹⁵ and he was no abolitionist. He confided to his wife, "I have been introduced to Cassius M. Clay, the great hero of abolitionism. He is a very pleasant, sociable man personally, but I do not

¹¹² "Lecture for the Catholic Orphan Asylum," *San Francisco Bulletin*, March 14, 1859, 3.

¹¹³ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Oct. 13, 1844. In *J. Ross Browne*, 46.

¹¹⁴ L. Hamilton, "J. Ross Browne. Beautiful Tribute to the Memory of a Noteworthy Man," *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 20, 1875, 3.

¹¹⁵ *Oakland (Calif.) Weekly Journal Miner*, April 2, 1870, 3.

believe in his political heresies, and therefore keep merely within the bounds of politeness.”¹¹⁶

Private writing on Mexicans

Browne was generally respectful of California women. He wrote that the “ladies of Monterey (I speak of native Californians) are quite sociable when one becomes acquainted with them.” In a letter to his wife, Lucy, he noted that some “señoritas” married American officers: “Once in a while a match is made up, and they have great matrimonial ceremonies. Captain Burton married a beautiful señorita not long since.” Such marriages were not without difficulties, however. “The affair occasioned some difficulty in the Church, in consequence of the exclusiveness of the Spanish Catholics in matters of this kind. A dispensation from the Pope will be necessary before the lady can be recognized as a married woman. At present she is banished from Catholic society, and received no better than a chere amie by her countrywomen.”¹¹⁷

Amiable as he found these upper-class California women, he did not think they compared to those of Peru. “Captain Marcy promised to introduce me to some Spanish ladies this evening,” he wrote his wife. “I have seen some very pretty señoritas here but none to equal the ladies of Lima. There they are not only beautiful but easy of access; here they are rather cold. This is not their natural character, but during the stay of Col. Stevenson’s regiment they learned the necessity of a guarded manner towards the Americans.”¹¹⁸ The regiment he referred to was the First New York Volunteers, in which G. Douglas Brewerton was commissioned as a lieutenant.

¹¹⁶ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Jan. 12, 1846. In *J. Ross Browne*, 50.

¹¹⁷ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, 27 Aug. 1849. In *J. Ross Browne*, 129-130.

¹¹⁸ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, 27 Aug. 1849. In *J. Ross Browne*, 128.

Browne thoroughly disapproved of Mexican ranch houses he saw near Monterey. He judged them according to American aesthetics. "You cannot imagine anything more desolate than a California rancho, or farm," he wrote home to Lucy Browne. "The houses are built mostly of adobe or burnt clay, and thatched with tiles and sometimes long stalks of weeds."¹¹⁹ He assumed a farm's untidy appearance indicated its owner was morally deficient. "The dismal color of the adobe, which is seldom whitewashed, the absence of windows, the wretched and poverty-stricken appearance of the whole place, convey a most unfavorable impression of the character of the inhabitants," he wrote.¹²⁰

Intertextuality is evident in Browne's articles about California, Mexico, and the Southwest in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. His judgment that California Mexicans were indolent mirrored that of Richard Henry Dana Jr. This is not surprising, given his admiration for Dana. He wrote the author that he had found a copy of his *Two Years Before the Mast* in a trader's hut in Madagascar while on his whaling voyage.¹²¹ "If you derived enjoyment from a stray copy of 'Paul Clifford' judge how much greater was my enjoyment when I accidentally became possessed of a work which I had heard the sailors mention enthusiastically a thousand times," Browne enthused, "and with which I had made up my mind to be delighted. Need I say I was not disappointed?"¹²² Because of his role as a confidential agent for the federal government of the United States, stenographic reporter for the California Constitutional Convention, and friendships with federal bureaucrats, Browne had ready access to government documents. He was familiar with

¹¹⁹ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Aug. 29, 1849. In *J. Ross Browne*, 130.

¹²⁰ John Ross Browne to Lucy Browne, Aug. 29, 1849. In *J. Ross Browne*, 130.

¹²¹ John Ross Browne to Richard Henry Dana Jr., Nov. 9, 1846. In *J. Ross Browne*, 52.

¹²² John Ross Browne to Richard Henry Dana Jr., Nov. 9, 1846. In *J. Ross Browne*, 52.

the Pacific Railroad Surveys, which informed his writing about Arizona and New Mexico, and John Russell Bartlett's description of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Survey Expedition.¹²³

Browne's logic: Mining experience and marketing it as prose

Browne mined articles from his experience during the California Gold Rush for many years after he arrived there in 1849. A two-part series in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* told of his adventure riding and walking from his point of arrival in San Francisco to San Luis Obispo, some 250 miles to the south. He passed through the expanse of the Salinas River Valley, covering open terrain, Spanish mission lands, small farms, and ranches between the sand hills rimming the Pacific Ocean to his right and the Coast Range to his left. In this land, conflict between Spanish Californians, Mexicans, Indians, and Anglo newcomers unfolded as Americans poured into the land to lay claim to what was not theirs. "No event in the history of American enterprise has promoted in a greater degree the extension of civilization than the discovery of the gold placers of California in 1848," Brown declared at the start of an article about the state's New Almaden quicksilver mine.¹²⁴ "In regular progression one beneficial result has followed another, till nearly the whole of that vast region divided in part by the Rocky Mountains and stretching west to the Pacific Ocean, bordered on the north by the British Possessions and on the south by Mexico, has been redeemed from the sway of the nomadic tribes and

¹²³ J. Ross Browne, "A Tour Through Arizona. First Paper," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 29 (October 1864): 556. The boundary survey was widely available in the United States. John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua: Connected with the United States and Mexican boundary Commission, During the Years 1850, '51, '52, and '53* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1854).

¹²⁴ J. Ross Browne, "Down in the Cinnabar Mines," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, October 1865, 545.

rendered available to the uses of civilized man.” By the logic expressed, here neither Spaniards nor Mexicans did enough to relieve the earth of its valuable commodities and must make way for American progress or take part as its disciples. Browne’s work vacillated between embracing Latinos as a necessary labor force and rejecting them as an obstacle to progress. The nature of labor in the West made Californios necessary to American capitalist designs.

Criticism of the Roman Catholic Church is notably absent in Browne’s work. This may owe to his early childhood in heavily Catholic Ireland, though he embraced no denomination when he died. Unlike his fellow Anglo correspondents, Browne saw good in the works of the Roman Catholic Church. He praised the “suffering, heroism, and ecclesiastical zeal” of the Jesuit missionaries, “whose labors have made it a classic land.”¹²⁵ He admired their commitment to spreading European civilization. “Not only were they governed by an intense religious enthusiasm – sometimes misguided, but always sincere – and an exalted spirit of self-sacrifice, but by a patriotic ambition to wrest from barbarism new empires for the Spanish Crown,” Browne observed:

With them it often became a struggle for the very means of subsistence. Owing to the difficulties of communication they were frequently cut off for years from the sources of supply, and their history is an almost broken record of suffering from hunger and thirst. It was a matter of vital importance to them to increase their resources, so as to provide against the terrible periods of drought and scarcity which from time to time reduced them to the verge of starvation. They were in constant communication with the wild and predatory tribes who roamed over the desolate plains and rugged mountains of the Peninsula. Wherever there was a prospect of establishing a mission, or cultivating a patch of earth, they searched it and demonstrated its capacity for the support of their people. While they paid but little attention to the mineral resources of the country, it is beyond

¹²⁵ Browne, “Lower California I,” 579.

question they arrived at a very thorough understanding of its unfitnes for cultivation on an extended scale.¹²⁶

Browne romanticized the conquistadors who marched beneath the flag of Spain and the cross of Rome, imagining “the brave old Spaniards and their heroic explorations across the Colorado.”¹²⁷ The notion that Catholics imposed Western civilization on the wilderness of the Americas may well have been enough to redeem them, as far as Browne was concerned. Their industriousness, assertion of white superiority over Indians, and Christian faith gave them much in common with American proponents of Manifest Destiny. And though Browne grew to maturity as a Southerner like G. Ross Brewerton, he was no Know-Nothing. Nonetheless, Browne was a believer in extending American domination over Mexicans and Indians.

Spanish progress and Mexican indolence

Throughout his articles about California, Arizona, and New Mexico, Browne associated progress with European colonists while portraying Mexicans as indolent obstacles to this progress. The theme of the indolent California Mexican, which first gained a foothold in American media in Richard Henry Dana Jr.’s *Two Years Before the Mast*, marched with Browne across the desert Southwest. Belief in European superiority provided Browne with convenient explanations for Mexican behavior. When they did not work at all, they were indolent. When they could be induced to work for money, they were only doing so because of Americans’ ability to impose order on the region’s natural resources. To Dana, Mexicans were overly generous spendthrifts deserved only

¹²⁶ Ibid., 746.

¹²⁷ Browne, “Tour through Arizona 1,” 568.

disrespect because they did not know how to bargain. But to Browne, when Mexican miners stopped working, they were indolent.

Spaniards imposed European progress on the Baja California landscape while Mexicans followed their orders. “I got some very good pears from the old Spaniard in charge of the Mission – a rare luxury after a long sea-voyage. The only tavern in the place was the ‘United States,’ kept by an American and his wife in an old adobe house, originally part of a missionary establishment.”¹²⁸ In contrast, the natives could be counted on to produce nothing. Browne credited Anglos with bringing progress and civilization to the West, but he paired decay with Mexicans, whom he portrayed at times as barely a step above animals. Describing the former mission of San Miguel, north of San Luis Obispo on the central California coast, he wrote:

Not a living being was in sight. The carcass of a dead ox lay in front of the door, upon which a voracious brood of buzzards were feeding; and a coyote sat howling on an eminence a little beyond. I walked into a dark, dirty room, and called out, in what little Spanish I knew, for the man of the house. ‘Quien es?’ demanded a gruff voice. I looked in a corner, and saw a filthy-looking object wrapped in a poncho, sitting lazily on a bed.¹²⁹

In the abandoned mission, Browne approached the vaquero, who seemed to be in charge of the place – Browne claimed he deduced this based on “his uncouth manner and forbidding appearance” – and asked for help locating his mule, which had wandered away. Browne seemed to blame Mexicans for his own inability to speak their language in their land, judging from the way he described his attempts to communicate with them. “With considerable difficulty I made him comprehend that I had lost my mule and

¹²⁸ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 1,” 741.

¹²⁹ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 2,” 11.

supposed it had strayed to San Miguel,” he wrote.¹³⁰ Browne seemed to have forgotten that the Spaniards who fed him in the first installment of “A Dangerous Journey” were reluctant to help him because other Americans had taken advantage of their hospitality.¹³¹ Yet Browne seemed to expect this one to come immediately to his aid after being roused from slumber without assessing whether Browne was a threat.

Indifference and indolence met in Browne’s characterizations of the Californios he encountered. “Ask him the simplest question,” Browne wrote in frustration, “and the extent of his knowledge is *quien sabe?* His whole life is a *quien sabe* business, signifying nothing. The world can not afford a more depressing specimen of degraded humanity.”¹³² One response among the Californios was to simply ignore him since they could not understand him anyway. When Browne, who conceded he spoke Spanish badly, continued to press questions in barely intelligible Spanish, Spanish-speakers’ responses became disgustingly familiar, though Browne apparently assumed they were ignorant rather than unable to decipher his utterances: “‘Quien sabe?’ said the fellow, indifferently. . . . Could he not find it? I would be willing to reward him. I would give him the blankets. I was an *Oficial*, and was on my way to San Luis Obispo. To each of these propositions the man returned a stupid and yawning answer, ‘Quien sabe – who knows?’”¹³³ Asked whether he knew about five murders that had been committed in the area recently, Browne wrote, “‘Quien sabe?’ said he, in the same indifferent tone.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 1,” 743.

¹³² Browne, “Tour through Arizona,” 30 (January 1865), 149.

¹³³ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 2,” 12.

‘Muchos malhos hombres aqui.’ This was all he knew, or professed to know, of the murder.”¹³⁴

Discovery of gold in California, silver in Nevada, and copper in Arizona made mining companies hungry for accurate information to guide their decisions. They found a reliable source in Browne. His articles for *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* in the 1850s and 1860s established him as a trusted expert on the industry in the West.¹³⁵ Businesses and the federal government consulted him on the subject, and Congress tapped him in 1866 to investigate the potential for mining west of the Rockies as it considered establishing a national bureau of mining.¹³⁶ He labored for several weeks, drawing on his observations of gold panning, hard-rock mining, and the control of labor in the West, consulting scientists in California, and extracting information from dozens of government reports to write his 321-page *Mineral Resources of the Pacific Slope*, which he submitted in mid-November 1866. By the end of February 1867, 31,000 copies had been published by the Government Printing Office.¹³⁷ While his findings filtered into the minds of policymakers in the Capitol during the fall of 1866, the Lower California Colonization Land Company hired him to lead an expedition of scientists to ascertain the profitability of establishing a colony in Baja California.¹³⁸ The tour resulted in two articles for

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 222.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 224.

¹³⁸ Goodman, *Western Panorama*, 225. The team included William More Gabb of the California State Geological Survey, topographer F. Von Lohr, historian Alexander S. Taylor, surveyor John A. Veatch, and numerous local guides and servants.

Harper's New Monthly that fixed in his mind and writing the image of American progress chasing away Mexican decay.

The decay was due to a lack of enterprise, Browne reasoned, and he naturally believed American leadership could sow seed capital in Mexico and put its native people to work for American industrial interests. Mexicans would work, he concluded, but only if they were carefully supervised. "Wherever the inhabitants take the trouble to dig wells and irrigate the land, it is productive," Browne observed. "Oranges, grapes, and almost all kinds of fruit and vegetables grow here with wonderful luxuriance; but every thing produced by the earth, except its natural crop of chaparral and cactus, requires laborious irrigation. The native Californians are too indolent for any kind of hard work."¹³⁹ What agricultural progress had occurred was to Anglos' credit, Browne claimed, not Mexicans.' "There are no signs of cultivation near the Cape except in a small garden belonging to Captain Ritchie, the only foreign resident of the place," he observed. "Here the experiment has resulted satisfactorily, so far, at least, as to show the capabilities of the soil."¹⁴⁰ Crops would grow in Baja, but Browne implied Mexican indolence prevented the peninsula from becoming a garden of civilization. A sugar factory "of very primitive construction" was clearly Mexican, while "brick stores indicate the presence of foreigners."¹⁴¹

In the 1868 articles, Browne concluded that Californios had more strengths and fewer deficiencies as miners than other nationalities. Americans, he wrote, were "bold

¹³⁹ J. Ross Browne, "Explorations in Lower California, First Paper," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 37, no. 221 (October 1868): 578.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 582.

and enterprising, wasteful and prodigal, restless and somewhat disposed to quarrel; but fortunately there are not many of them.”¹⁴² Cornish miners were “a steady, industrious race; illiterate, though naturally intelligent; frugal in their habits, and reliable when their avarice is not too strongly tempted. Physically they are strong and heavy – good for endurance. They work hard and save their money.”¹⁴³ Italians, Chileans, French, and Irish “develop respectively their characteristic traits of passion and impulse, recklessness and lack of common sense.”¹⁴⁴ Germans worked hard but were “deficient in boldness and enterprise,” by which Browne meant they were unwilling to risk their lives to go deeper into a mine shaft. But Mexicans and Californians were model workers from the point of view of the company. Of course, he noted, they had to be closely supervised. As Browne explained:

The Sonoranians and native Californians are generally expert miners. As prospectors they are unsurpassed. They possess great natural sagacity; know every indication by instinct; are willing to run any amount of risk, and seem imbued by an adventurous spirit which fits them peculiarly for the business of mining. Irregularity is their besetting fault. They can do any kind of work which affords variety and requires little method. Under a rigid supervision they are accounted among the most useful men in the employ of the Company.¹⁴⁵

The roles Browne assigned Mexican men and women reinforced an emerging image of males subordinated to employers and females relegated to the status of objects of sexual desire. Payday in the quicksilver mines near San Jose, which paid a “steady,

¹⁴² Browne, “Cinnabar Mines,” 553.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

industrious” contract laborer two to three dollars a day, gave Browne the opportunity to illustrate this:¹⁴⁶

The Spaniards are flush, and like sailors, spend their money on the fair sex with a prodigal hand. Señoritas from San Jose know where their charms can be appreciated, and stage-loads of them arrive in season to partake of the festivities. The late Superintendent undertook to place an embargo upon this branch of commerce, but did not succeed. Enterprising females would come in spite of rules and regulations. Drinking and gambling might to some extent be arrested, but there was no stopping the love of man for woman. The Superintendent was Quixotic; the Señoritas laughed in their sleeves at him; and the grand institution of baile and fandango flourished as usual.¹⁴⁷

Californio and Mexican miners under American direction north of the border were productive, Browne claimed, while their counterparts in Baja California were “lazy and harmless, to suit the climate, devoting themselves chiefly to sleeping and gambling.”¹⁴⁸ The natives of Santiago were little better: “half Mexican, half Indian, lazy and thriftless. Their nights they spend in gambling – their days in sleeping.”¹⁴⁹ In Baja’s San José Valley, Browne wrote, “The native population have no energy, and dislike the intrusion of foreigners. He observed that “they seem to care for nothing but the simple means of subsistence” and argued, “Avarice is a sign of civilization. These primitive Californians do many things from hatred and malice, but seldom do any thing for money.”¹⁵⁰ By this logic, greed was a virtue because it brought about capitalistic progress – an observation no doubt logical and soothing to the mining investors who hired him to lead their survey of Baja California. Avarice, after all, was the key to prying land away

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Browne, “Lower California 1,” 582.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 585.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 582.

from the natives. “The only practical way of acquiring real estate in Lower California is to settle among the people and lend them money at usurious interest, secured by mortgage,” Browne recommended. “They are never able to pay it back; and their property falls a sacrifice to their indolence or want of forethought.”¹⁵¹

Driving Mexicans into debt, then, would secure a long-term labor force for American industrial interests, but Browne warned that Mexicans south of the border would not work hard enough. Because of this, he argued, companies would have to import foreigners. “In the hands of an American population, some use might be made of the San José Valley,” Browne claimed. “Sugar and cotton could be grown – the former in much larger quantities than at present.” But he emphasized that Americans should possess and control the land, not actually live there. Only a frugal people would do since the land would not produce both food for the workforce and cotton and sugar for export. “The arable portions of the valley, however, would not support a large colony of Americans,” he warned *Harper’s* readers in 1868 while he was in the employ of the mining industry. “Wherever our people go they require extensive tracts of land to make the cultivation of the earth profitable. It would be an admirable locality for an industrious and frugal population of Chinese.”¹⁵² It was only natural, then, for Americans to stay where they were and put to work races that they believed could get by on so little that plenty of profit could be extracted from their labor.

Before Browne worked for the Lower California Colonization Company, he wrote a report to Congress that made clear his understanding of the company’s intentions and

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 583.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

his beliefs concerning the potential impact of Americans on the land, and vice versa. “This seems to be a favorite land for colonization schemes,” he reported. “Two American companies are already in possession of the larger and better portions of the peninsula. Whether these companies shall prove benefits and blessings to humanity, or whether they shall prove huge monopolies and establish legal systems of slavery and peonage, remains to be seen.”¹⁵³ At the time, their mines were mainly dormant, with “the owners waiting to ‘see how things are coming out’ – which invariably means waiting for the peninsula to be annexed to the United States Government.”¹⁵⁴ Negotiations that would allow the American colonies to establish their own laws went nowhere when the companies attempted to negotiate with Baja California Gov. Antonio Pedrin. Browne wrote in *Harper’s* that Pedrin “felt satisfied that the settlement of the country by Americans would be disastrous to the native California population. With crowds of miners pouring in from Upper California they must soon drive out the present occupants.”¹⁵⁵ The Lower California Colonization Company, which hired him after he wrote the report and, owned almost all of the land in Baja California: 46,800 square miles, purchased for \$260,000 in gold.¹⁵⁶ This resistance to American settlement likely forced the company to rely on Chinese and African colonists, who would constitute cheap labor.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ John Ross Browne and Alexander Smith Taylor, *Resources of the Pacific Slope: A Statistical and Descriptive Summary of the Settlement and Exploration of Lower California* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1869), 175. The authors noted on the same page that the principal investors in the Lower California Colonization Company were Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts, Ben Holladay of New York, Sam Brannan of San Francisco, and Caleb Cushing of Wells Fargo & Co.

¹⁵⁴ Browne and Taylor, *Resources*, 175.

¹⁵⁵ J. Ross Browne, “Explorations in Lower California, Second Paper,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 37 (November 1868): 740.

¹⁵⁶ Browne and Taylor, *Resources*, 175.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

It is telling that Browne's report assigned Anglo-Saxons, Irish, and Mexicans a higher position in the racial hierarchy than Asians and blacks. "No companies and no combination of companies can colonize and control the free will of the Anglo-Saxon, the Celtic, and the Latin races," he wrote. "If men of such blood and lineage come to this country they will come of their own free will – their own complete masters. As a consequence, then, since the charter or purchase right of the company exacts that at least two hundred families shall be colonized within a certain period, it is most likely that such families must belong to the African or China races."¹⁵⁸ Through their obstinate resistance to American attempts at imposing their work ethic and cultural values on them, Mexicans earned a place alongside Anglo-Saxons and the Irish as free in Browne's reckoning, even if he begrudged them for it.

But this did not mean he respected Mexicans. Rather, he looped them in with every source of danger the desert had to offer. Introducing a series of articles in *Harper's* in October 1864, he wrote, "I have now to offer a new programme of exploration and adventure, very different indeed from our last, but possessing peculiar charms in the absence of every species of accommodation for travelers, and extraordinary advantages in the way of burning deserts, dried rivers, rattlesnakes, scorpions, Greasers, and Apaches; besides unlimited fascinations in the line of robbery, starvation, and the chances of sudden death by accident."¹⁵⁹ The characteristic that Browne most commonly associated with the Hispanic people of the West and Southwest was indolence.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ J. Ross Browne, "A Tour Through Arizona. First Paper," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 29 (October 1864): 553.

Inertia, to Browne, defined the Mexican's natural state of being. He could not be brought to care about anything resembling progress, could not be induced to labor even with the offer of gold, and could not be roused from his torpor for anything other than that which would satisfy his appetites with the least amount of effort. What Browne mainly saw in Mexican life was sleeping, smoking, and staying as far away from work as possible. Mexicans offered information readily if they could understand his broken Spanish and if it did not require them to move, as when he stopped to let his mule drink from the Salinas River and "a Spanish vaquero, whom I found under the trees enjoying the siesta to which that race are addicted, informed me that it was 'Dos leguas poco mas o meno' ["two leagues, more or less"] to Soledad."¹⁶⁰

Browne perceived laziness everywhere he encountered Californios. In Baja California during his 1867 tour on behalf of the Lower California Colonization Company, he described "two or three half-breeds, who contrive to live in some mysterious way, were lazily reclining in under the bushes, as if time and business were matters of no concern to them."¹⁶¹ The Sonorans he ran across "were smoking cigarritos by the fire, others lying all about under the trees playing cards, on their ragged saddle-blankets, with little piles of silver before them; and those that were not thus occupied were capering around on wild horses, breaking them apparently, for the blood streamed from the nostrils and flanks of the unfortunate animals, and they were covered with a reeking sweat."¹⁶² Thus, Mexicans worked, at times, but their labor was an exception, as Browne saw

¹⁶⁰ J. Ross Browne, "A Dangerous Journey. In Two Parts. – Part II," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 25 (June 1862): 742.

¹⁶¹ Browne, "Lower California 2," 12.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 13.

things. “The native or Mexican population, although good miners, can not be relied upon for labor,” Browne wrote in 1868, when his view toward Mexicans had hardened. “They work cheap, but quit upon the most trivial pretexts.”¹⁶³ One such pretext was payday at the copper mines in Santa Cruz, Arizona Territory. Browne complained that “for two or three days the whole hacienda presents a lively and characteristic scene. Work is out of the question, so far as the peons are concerned.”¹⁶⁴

When he described Californios’ actions, he frequently wrote that they were performed lazily. This laziness, Browne surmised, accounted for the uncultivated, squalid, ruined state of some of the old Spanish missions. He wrote in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*:

A more desolate place than Soledad can not well be imagined. The old church is partially in ruins, and the adobe huts built for the Indians are roofless, and the walls tumbled about in shapeless piles. Not a tree or shrub is to be seen any where in the vicinity. The ground is bare, like an open road, save in front of the main building (formerly occupied by the priests), where the carcasses and bones of cattle are scattered about, presenting a disgusting spectacle. But this is a common sight on the Spanish ranches. Too lazy to carry the meat very far, the rancheros generally do their butchering in front of the door, and leave the Indians and buzzards to dispose of the offal.¹⁶⁵

One partial explanation for this indolence, Browne offered, was the abuse of American squatters and volunteers. He seemed surprised that a young Spaniard, who “was the only person at home with the exception of a few dirty Indians who were lying about the door,” received him indifferently and did not attend to his mule.¹⁶⁶ To assume

¹⁶³ Browne, “Lower California 1,” 740.

¹⁶⁴ J. Ross Browne, *Adventures in the Apache Country: A Tour Through Arizona and Sonora, with Notes on the Silver Regions of Nevada* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), 205.

¹⁶⁵ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 1,” 743.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

the Spaniard would be at all concerned about his mount, Browne had to have viewed him as some kind of a servant whose role was to take care of Yankee travelers. Browne later allowed, however, that the Spaniard's indifference was justified by abuses at the hands of the Argonauts. "I learned afterward that this family had been greatly imposed upon by travelers passing northward to the mines, who killed their cattle, stole their corn, stopped of nights and went away without paying any thing," he told readers. "At first they freely entertained all who came along in the genuine style of Spanish hospitality; but not content with the kind treatment bestowed upon them, their rough guests seldom left the premises without carrying away whatever they could lay hands upon. This naturally imbittered [*sic*] them against strangers, and of course I had to bear my share of the ill-feeling manifested toward the traveling public."¹⁶⁷

In Baja California, Browne made sure to tell readers that Americans were responsible for the little agricultural production that could be found there. "Where ever the inhabitants take the trouble to dig wells and irrigate the land, it is productive," he wrote. Oranges and grapes were abundant, as well as every other variety of cultivated and irrigated produce planted by Americans, who were the only ones tilling the soil because the "native Californians are too indolent for any kind of hard work, and there are no signs of cultivation near the Cape except in a small garden belonging to Captain Ritchie, the only foreign resident of the place."¹⁶⁸

If he credited Americans with progress, then Browne only associated Mexicans with decay. Where they could be found, carcasses were not far away. "Two or three

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ J. Ross Browne, "Explorations in Lower California, Second Paper," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 37 (October 1868): 578.

Mexican huts, around which lay the dead carcasses of cattle, constituted the only visible signs of civilization.”¹⁶⁹ As he spent more time with Mexicans, another explanation for their “indolence” occurred to him: miscegenation, which he associated with not just laziness but moral degeneracy.

Miscegenation as the well-spring of character flaws

Mixed-race Mexicans suffered particularly harsh portrayals by Browne. Calling them mongrels and half-breeds, Browne associated treachery and villainy with their hybridity. Lack of vigor and cowardice were conditions of their watered-down blood, Browne implied. When the military party with which he rode through Sonora in 1863 entered a village south of the Arizona border, he wrote:

The ‘blanketed thieves,’ as Mr. Calhoun once called these mongrel Mexicans, peeped from behind the corners of their wretched adobe huts and looked for all the world like pickled cucumbers shivering in their skins. Since the Crabbe massacre they entertain a natural dread of retribution. Couriers were sent ahead of us, from village to village, informing the inhabitants of our approach; and it was evident there was a lurking suspicion in the minds of the people, notwithstanding our peaceful professions, that we had entered the country on some mission of vengeance. Our thirty volunteers, with their devil-may-care bearing and style of costume, looked very much like a band of invaders.¹⁷⁰

Miscegenation was everywhere in Arizona, and Browne could only speculate about its causes. “Owing to the climate, perhaps, and idleness, which the father of all mischief and many mixed breeds of babies, these mongrel little humans abound to an amazing extent in the small towns of Sonora,” he wrote. “Nearly all of them have Indian blood in them, and many denote a growing proclivity toward the American race.” The way he described mixed-race children suggests that Browne struggled to understand how

¹⁶⁹ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 1,” 743.

¹⁷⁰ J. Ross Browne, “A Tour through Arizona. Fourth Paper,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, January 1865, 138.

they were even possible. “[Y]ou often see in one family a remarkable variety of races,” he explained. “A mother with white-headed and blue-eyed children, and black-headed and black-eyed children, and children with straight hair and curly hair and thin lips and thick lips and noses long and noses short, all bearing a strong family resemblance, is a very common kind of mother in this latitude.”¹⁷¹

If miscegenation fascinated Browne because of the varied appearances of mixed-race Mexicans, it also had dire consequences by his judgment. Browne believed that poverty, laziness, and lack of vigor resulted from intermarriage. “When these mixed races are compelled to work they sicken and die,” Browne pronounced, commenting that they barely farmed enough to sustain themselves.¹⁷² “The inhabitants of Imuriz, Terranati, San Ignacio, and the smaller villages or Rancherías are miserably poor and lazy,” he claimed. “Their cattle have nearly all disappeared, in consequence of the frequent raids of the Apaches; and their milpas, or fields, formerly cultivated with considerable success, have gone to ruin. Scarcely sufficient food to sustain life is now produced.”¹⁷³ The responsibility lay with the people and not the quality of the soil, Browne charged. “The ground is rich and the climate unsurpassed, and with the rudest cultivation abundant crops of wheat, maize, pomegranates, and oranges might be produced; but all hope for the future seems to have been crushed out of those miserable people,” he wrote. “All day long they sit by the doors of their filthy little adobe huts, smoking cigarritos and playing

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 141.

¹⁷² Ibid., 140.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

cards. I fancy they like it better than working. At least they live by idleness. Industry would kill them.”¹⁷⁴

Miscegenation, in Browne’s mind, resulted in hopelessness for the offspring of mixed marriages. “I thought I had seen the concentration of filth, laziness, and inanity, and the perfection of vicious mixtures of races at Imuriz and Magdalena; but Santa Cruz caps the climax,” he wrote of what he saw in Arizona in 1863. “Too inert to stir about and gather sufficient wood for a comfortable fire, a genuine native of this region sits shivering all day long over three twigs of mesquite, his dirty serape drawn up over his shoulders, his skin a bilious black yellow, the inevitable cigarrito in his mouth; a score of starved coyote curs snapping around his heels. Not gloom of hope in his eye, no spark of ambition in his nature – a dreary spectacle of wretchedness and inanity.”¹⁷⁵

If intermarriage led to a degenerate race of mixed-breed Mexican-Indians in Arizona, it had done worse things over several generations south of the border in Sonora, Browne contended. “Sonora can beat the world in the production of villainous races,” he wrote. “Miscegenation has prevailed in this country for three centuries. Every generation the population grows worse; and the Sonorians now may be ranked with their natural compadres – Indians, burros, and coyotes.”

The most dangerous variety of intermarriage, Browne contended, was any combination that included Yankee blood. “The worst of the whole combination is that which has the infusion of rascality in it from American sources,” he claimed. “Mexican, Indian, and American blood concentrated in one individual makes the very finest

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Browne, “Tour through Arizona,” 30 (January 1865), 149.

specimen of a murderer, thief, or gambler ever seen on the face of the earth. Nothing in human form so utterly depraved can be found elsewhere. I know of no exception, and do not believe a good citizen of sound morals ever resulted from such an abominable admixture. Of such material as this is that town of Magdalena composed. It is said to be a very quiet and orderly place compared with Hermosillo, and I can well believe the statement; for while Magdalena has not been much feared with the presence of renegade Americans within the past few years, Hermosillo has long been their favorite place of resort, for the exercise of all the depraved passions of human nature.”¹⁷⁶

Gendered representations: Señoritas and murderous ladies

Miscegenation was also implicated in Browne’s depiction of Mexican women. Those who behaved like Anglos met his approval, but those who looked too Indian or Negro were singled out as malevolent and carnal. His description of a California fandango provides a window into Browne’s perception of Mexican women. For Spaniards and Mexicans alike in mid-nineteenth-century California, social life revolved around fandangos. Unlike the world of work, these dances brought the genders into one social sphere in which Browne observed, assessed, and judged the participants.

All classes and nationalities drew his scrutiny, including Americans, but the unfamiliarity of Californios made them a richer subject for Browne. The frontier seemed to degrade all who came to it, Spaniard, Mexican, and American alike. Browne did not hide his disgust with the white men he encountered. “The presence of the females imposed no restraint upon the subject or style of the conversation, which was disgusting to the last degree,” he wrote. “I felt ashamed to think that habit should so brutalize a

¹⁷⁶ Browne, “Tour through Arizona 4,” 141.

people of my own race and blood.”¹⁷⁷ Most of the Americans were Texans who had crossed the desert through Chihuahua and “compared not unfavorably with the Sonorians in point of savage costume and appearance.”¹⁷⁸ They hardly dressed like gentlemen. The agave, yucca, beargrass and cactus of the desert plains through which they crossed had shredded the broadcloth frock-coats of those who had a coat.¹⁷⁹ Others wore red flannel shirts with pantaloons tucked into their boots “in a loose, swaggering style.”¹⁸⁰ Revolvers and bowie-knives swung from their belts, giving them what Browne called “a reckless, devil-may-care” appearance.¹⁸¹ “Take them altogether,” Browne wrote,” with their uncouth costumes, bearded faces, lean and brawny forms, fierce savage eyes, and swaggering manners – they were a fit assemblage for a frolic or a fight.”¹⁸²

The women came in two categories: beautiful young Spanish señoritas and half-breed criminals, all fine dancers with a taste for flashy jewelry and brightly colored dresses “in which flowers, lace, and glittering tinsel combined to set off their dusky charms.”¹⁸³ Browne observed that “those who had no great pretensions to beauty in other respects were at least gifted with fine eyes and teeth, rich brunette complexions, and forms of wonderful pliancy and grace.”¹⁸⁴ Their freeness of fashion carried over to their movements on the dance floor. “I saw some among them who would not have compared

¹⁷⁷ Browne, “Dangerous Journey 2,” 16.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

unfavorably with the ladies of Cadiz – perhaps in more respects than one,” Browne wrote. “They danced easily and naturally; and, considering the limited opportunity of culture they had enjoyed in this remote region, it was wonderful how free, simple, and graceful they were in their manners.”¹⁸⁵

These señoritas faded into the background compared with “the belle of the occasion,” a “dark-eyed, fierce looking woman, of about six-and-twenty, a half-breed from Santa Barbara.”¹⁸⁶ Browne described her in other-than-human terms, part animal, part temptress, part witch. This, Browne told readers, was some kind of an animal, implying that her mixed blood had degraded her appearance and behavioral tendencies. “Every motion, every nerve seemed the incarnation of suppressed vigor,” he claimed, “every glance of her fierce, flashing eyes was instinct with untamable passion. She was a mustang in human shape – one that I thought would kick or bite upon very slight provocation.”¹⁸⁷ He seemed, with his description and scene-setting, to cast himself as Odysseus to her Circe in *The Odyssey*:

I thought I could detect something of the secret of her magical powers in her voice, which was the softest and most musical I had ever heard. There was a wild, sweet, almost unearthly cadence in it that vibrated upon the ear like the strains of an Aeolian. Added to this, there was a power of alternate ferocity and tenderness in her deep, passionate eyes that struck to the inner core wherever she fixed her gaze. I could not determine for the life of me which she resembled most – the untamed mustang, the royal

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. In comparing the California women to the “ladies of Cadiz,” Browne was connecting them to women from the coastal city of Cadiz, south of Seville and west of Gibraltar. The Chevalier de Bourgoanne, a French traveler, wrote in 1803 that they “unite the most enchanting graces of the Andalusian women to those polished manners with result from their intercourse with foreigners, the lovely Gaditanes naturalize here for some weeks all the enjoyments of the city.” Chevalier de Bourgoanne, “Travels in Spain: Containing a New, Accurate, and Comprehensive View of the Present State of that Country.” In *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World Vol. 5*, ed. John Pinkerton (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809), 586.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

game-bird, or the rattlesnake. ... Had it not been for a horror of her repulsive crimes, it is hard to say how far her fascinating powers might have affected me.¹⁸⁸

He called her features “far from comely, being sharp and uneven,” noting her skin was “scarred with fire or small-pox,” and her figure “too lithe, wiry, and acrobatic to convey any idea of voluptuous attraction.”¹⁸⁹

The rumors about her were scandalous. He quoted a Texan as having said:

”Perhaps you will not be surprised to hear something strange and startling about that woman. ... She is a murderess!’ Not long since she stabbed to death a rival of hers, another half-breed, who had attempted to win the affections of her paramour. But, worse than that – she is strongly suspected of having killed her own child a few months ago, in a fit of jealousy caused by the supposed infidelity of its father – whose identity, however, can not be fixed with any certainty. She is a strange, bad woman – a devil incarnate; yet you see what a spell she casts around her! Some of these men are mad in love with her! They will fight before the evening is over. Yet she is neither pretty nor amiable. I can not account for it.”¹⁹⁰

Border warfare as a factor in Browne’s representation of Mexicans

The Mexicans of Sonora, who had been unable to defend themselves against Apaches who crossed the border from Arizona Territory under American protection and crossed the border on their own marauding missions in the early 1860s, received Browne’s strongest condemnations.¹⁹¹ The Apaches attacked with impunity under local, “calico,” treaties they entered with American entrepreneurs. Under these pacts, Apaches promised to leave American settlers alone in exchange for gifts of salt, beef, flour, and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.,17.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.,16.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.,17.

¹⁹¹ Browne, “Tour through Arizona 1,” 558.

the right to prey on Sonorans without American interference.¹⁹² “The whole state of Sonora was devastated,” Browne remarked, “and the inhabitants in a starving condition. Arizona possessed at least the pretense of military protection. It soon became infested with the refuse population of Sonora – the most faithless and abandoned race, perhaps, on the face of the earth. What the Apaches left undone in the way of murder and robbery they [the Apaches] seldom failed to complete, and indeed were regarded with more distrust by respectable citizens than even the barbarous Indians.”¹⁹³ Browne left the calico treaties out of his articles while condemning Sonorans for attacking the mining companies:

The Sonorians, greedy for plunder, rushed in from the borders by hundreds, and commenced ransacking the mines, stealing the machinery, and murdering the few employees that remained. At Tubac, the headquarters of the Arizona Mining Company, the Apaches besieged the town on one side, while the Sonorians lurked in the bushes on the other. Twenty men held it for three days, and finally escaped under cover of night. There was nothing left. The troops had burned all the stores, provisions, and groceries, public and private, that they could lay hands upon; tore down the mill at Tucson; burnt the Canoa; and destroyed government stores at Breckinridge and Buchanan worth probably half a million of dollars. Treason, cowardice, or incompetence must have been the cause of these disgraceful proceedings. There was no satisfactory reason, that can now be seen why they should have so precipitately evacuated the Territory, and yielded peaceful possession to the enemies of the Federal Government.¹⁹⁴

If the Sonorans knew about the treaties, it would explain their ire toward American capitalists. In light of the calico treaties, Mexican attacks on American mining companies were not acts of plunder, but revenge and resistance. Even if they were not aware of

¹⁹² Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 41.

¹⁹³ Browne, “Tour through Arizona 1,” 559.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 561.

them, they knew that the American government did nothing to restrain the Apaches because the U.S. lacked an Indian policy in Arizona Territory. Mexicans defended their rights when American volunteers crossed into Mexico and took their property, but Browne appeared to be appalled that they even tried.

Browne and the military expedition he accompanied crossed the Arizona line into the Mexican state of Sonora in hopes of intercepting a band of Americans who had gone missing.¹⁹⁵ As they did so without prior permission from the Mexican government, Browne acknowledged that his party had violated international law.¹⁹⁶ A Mexican prefect warned them of this but granted permission to cross Sonora when they explained their reason for being there. As an aside, Browne noted, “between ourselves, reader, it *was* a little irregular to enter a foreign State with thirty soldiers, who would have been delighted to sack, burn, and destroy any town within the range of our travels – especially Fronteras, the trading-post of the Apaches.”¹⁹⁷

Given his own wealth as an American entrepreneur and professional, Browne could not comprehend the value that Mexicans in impoverished, marauder-stricken Sonora placed on the basic necessities of life. The soldiers with whom he traveled treated Mexican property and resources as if it belonged to them and foraged for firewood along the trail. Browne complained when Mexicans protected what was theirs in their own country, writing, “Another of these miserable vagabonds made a great fuss because the soldiers had burned a couple of worthless logs which they found on the road. He claimed damages to the amount of ‘cinco pesos.’” The American officers refused payment and

¹⁹⁵ Browne, “A Tour through Arizona, Third Paper,” December 1864, 32.

¹⁹⁶ Browne, “Tour through Arizona 4,” January 1865, 140.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

told him he would be taken prisoner in connection with an unsolved crime in Arizona if he did not.¹⁹⁸

When Mexicans in Sonora complained that American troops took wood from their fences to make campfires, Browne did not scold the volunteers for violating Mexican property rights. Rather, he blamed the Sonorans for being so poor that a few sticks from the end of a broken fence even mattered to them. After a Sonoran demanded that the lieutenant leading an American expedition pay after a volunteer foraging for fuel took wood from a Mexican's land, Browne claimed the incident illustrated "the shifts to which these wretched beings resort to procure the means of subsistence." As soon as the caravan stopped in a town plaza, "a miserable-looking wretch, shrinking into the folds of his serape, made a formal call upon our Lieutenant in company with the Alcalde and demanded 'cinco pesos' for the wood, alleging that it was gathered on his ground, and formed a part of his fences." Unable to settle the matter after offering to pay just fifty cents or return the armload of wood, and in the name of avoiding "the unpleasant results of a storm that was gathering in the faces of our indignant volunteers, who were spoiling for a chance to raze the town," the Americans repacked their wagons and got back on the trail.¹⁹⁹

Browne's hostility toward Mexicans escalated just after he wrote about Sonoran attacks on mining interests. This made sense, given his personal financial stake in the industry's well-being. While he celebrated the onset of American progress in Arizona Territory, he also delighted in the suffering that the Apaches inflicted on Mexicans. This

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

included pushing Mexicans out of their own homes, an act that allowed the quartering of newly arrived American troops. He told *Harper's* readers in December 1864:

Since the coming of the California Volunteers, two years ago, the state of things in this delightful metropolis has materially changed. The citizens who are permitted to live here at all still live very much in the Greaser style – the tenantable houses having been taken away from them for the use of the officers and soldiers who are protecting their property from the Apaches. But then, they have claims for rent, which they can probably sell for something when any body comes along disposed to deal in that sort of paper.²⁰⁰

Mexicans were oppressed on one side by Americans and on the other by Apaches. Rendered homeless by soldiers who occupied their houses, the Mexicans in Tucson also were deprived of livestock by Indian marauders. “Formerly they were troubled a good deal about the care of their cattle and sheep,” Browne chuckled. “Now they have no trouble at all; the cattle and sheep have fallen into the hands of Apaches, who have become unusually bold in their depredations; and the pigs which formerly roamed unmolested about the streets during the day and were deemed secure in the back-yards of nights, have become a military necessity. Eggs are scarce, because the hens that used to lay them cackle no more in the hen form.”²⁰¹

The connections between American culture, Browne’s personal alliances and career trajectory, and his representation of Mexicans as subordinate to white Americans fit together logically. His enterprises in mining, real estate, and journalistic writing, and his constant preoccupation with money as evidenced in his private correspondence show that commercialism lay at the core of his social identity rather than religious, military, or

²⁰⁰ Browne, “Tour Through Arizona 3,” 24.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

political concerns – and it was certainly more important to him than any notion of journalistic objectivity. Distinctions between deadly “half-breed” harlots and comely Spanish ladies reflected a Southern concern for racial purity while allowing for strategic marital alliances between ambitious white American men and the daughters of Spanish Californio elites. To distinguish between hardworking, risk-taking Mexican miners north of the border who were kept on task by white American overseers, on the one hand, and slothful, indolent, unreliable “Greasers” south of the border, on the other, reflected the concerns of a man who relied on the mining industry for his own prosperity. These themes underscored the Southern capitalists’ desire to acquire land and a subordinate race well-suited to work it. Perusal of the leading industrial journal of the South, *DeBow’s Review*, makes these concerns evident.

DeBow’s Review during the late antebellum and early Reconstruction

After the Pacific railroad surveys gave American lawmakers and business interests a better idea of what they had gained in the U.S.-Mexico War, articles about Mexico in J.D.B. DeBow’s journal turned its attention to what the nation might do with its new possessions. Correspondents for *DeBow’s Review* published eight articles from 1855 to 1870 that delved deeply into the people and resources that had been brought into the Union. From an industrialist’s perspective, it was critical to know something about the character of the people to determine whether they could be harnessed as a workforce. Religion, customs, and demeanor would provide clues to this. *DeBow’s Review* did not focus on whether these people would be good citizens; the assumption implicit in its articles was that they would not. Nor did the review ask whether they could be

subordinated. The war had already proven this. Rather, the question was whether they could be broken in as a disciplined labor force.

Taking over Mexican land

When Mexico opened its mines to foreign investment partners in 1821, the move attracted English, German, and American companies. By 1854, their investment had shown little payoff.²⁰² *DeBow's* speculated that this failure was not due to lack of ore in the mines, "for they are immensely rich, and probably capable of being worked to an unlimited extent without becoming exhausted." The claim had little foundation, given that the United States did not yet understand the value of its own holdings or else it would not have hired J. Ross Browne to inventory them in the early 1850s. The article implied that the Europeans simply did not know what they were doing and should give way to American mining interests – an argument that was only natural, given *DeBow's* mission of boosting American business. Europeans, according to *DeBow's*, spread their investment over too many mines rather than putting all their expensive machinery into a few promising mines. It did not explain why this would be an improvement, given its assertion that the mines were inexhaustible.²⁰³ Nonetheless, *DeBow's* assumed Americans knew better. "The conquest of Mexico by the Americans – and this is certain to follow ere long – will make Mexico as much richer in silver production as the conquest of California has made it richer, than before, in gold production," the magazine crowed. "Mexico is now all that the genius of the Spanish race is capable of making it. It now

²⁰² "The Mineral Wealth of the World, No. 3," *DeBow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (March 1855), 385-388.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 386.

requires the Anglo-Saxons to make it what it is capable of being, and what it ought to be.”²⁰⁴

If Spaniards had no place in developing Mexico, *DeBow's* thought they had no place north of the border, either. *DeBow's* promoted the myth that the Southwest was an empty frontier that just lay waiting for white settlers to move in.²⁰⁵ “The Territory of Arizona is not only capable of attracting emigration and settlement, but it is now being rapidly settled,” *DeBow's Review* explained in November 1857.²⁰⁶ The article left unmentioned the Apache marauders that J. Ross Browne described in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, implying the land was safe for even the most defenseless settlers. “Families, women and children, are already moving from California into the new purchase, and many fine claims are already located in the numerous valleys of the middle portion of the territory.” and some of the lands in the Southwest were practically turnkey operations, thanks to their former Mexican owners. “Old ranches, long deserted by the Mexicans, who had neither strength nor spirit to resist Indian attacks, are being re-occupied, and will this year yield large and paying crops.”²⁰⁷

But what could be made of abandoned ranches and other land pried from Mexican possession? A. W. Roysdown cataloged the natural resources of Mexico and Anglo-American attempts to profit from them in the years immediately following the Civil War.²⁰⁸ Civil disorder continued to complicate American attempts at colonialism in

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 387.

²⁰⁵ “The New Territory of Arizona,” *DeBow's Review*, November 1857, 543-544.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 543.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 544.

²⁰⁸ A. W. Roysdon, “Mexico,” *DeBow's Review*, January 1869, 160-67.

Mexico, but this disorder was not random. Reading with an understanding of the struggle between American industrial interests who unleashed the Apaches on the Sonorans, and reading Roysdon's article between the lines, it is reasonable to suggest that Mexican crimes against Americans were not just impulsive, immoral actions; they were acts of resistance against foreign capitalism. "The banditti capture trains wherever cupidity suggests or need stimulates," he wrote.²⁰⁹ By itself, this description emphasizes criminality. But Roysdon also acknowledged the purpose behind acts of sabotage committed against the infrastructure of Yankee commerce. He just disagreed with the rationale:

The ignorant Mexican tears up the railroad track, destroys the bridges, and preaches an eternal hostility to such enterprises, because they will interfere with the pack mule and banditti business. They are as loathe to see improvements in facilities of locomotion and communication as the priests to see information diffused among them. Here it may be remarked that in the whole of Mexico there is not a road for fifty continuous miles over which the strongest carriage can pass without danger of breaking down, unless it be the road from Matamoras to Monterey, or the one from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico; in other words, those built by our army during the invasion of '46-7.²¹⁰

To Roysdon, the first order of business for American colonial enterprise in Mexico was to overpower Mexican criminals and saboteurs and awe the rest of the people into obedience. Then, "by the prompt execution of just, though severe laws, their lawless character will be curbed, and the laudable purpose effected."²¹¹

Labor in formerly Mexican territories: The problem of miscegenation

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 166.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Once resistance to American development was quashed, capitalists required a reliable labor force. Understanding Mexican people and culture was critical if Southerners were to bring them under American rule and put them to work in plantation and mining operations. *DeBow's* provided any information it deemed useful, regardless of whether it came from the South or the North. Thus, it served as a vehicle for disseminating information from section to section. A report presented to the Geographical Society of New York by Lt. Egbert L. Viele, a native New Yorker, provided contradictory information about the character and resourcefulness of the Mexicans along the Texas border.²¹² "The Mexican peasant of the Rio Grande" made his own clothing and shoes, raised corn crops, constructed his own carts and chiseled the wheels out of solid wood, lassoed wild horses and cattle. Yet Viele called Mexicans lazy. "These peasants are, naturally, a good and innocent race, although at present their ideas of morality are rather in a confused state," Viele pronounced, though *DeBow's* provided little detail on their morality.²¹³ "In describing the character of the inhabitants he distinguished them as Indian, Mexican and Anglo-Saxon. The lazy Mexicans, he said, lying in the sun with their naked children, give anything but a brisk or business-like air to the place." He chose more charitable words for people from the Southern states occupying Texas. "In the Texan is combined the raciness of the Kentuckian, the Creole impetuosity of the Louisianian and the reckless heart-and-hand spirit of the south-west," *DeBow's* reported.²¹⁴

²¹² "Topography of the Rio Grande," *DeBow's Review*, June 1855, 705-710.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 709.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

By quoting from Frederick Law Olmstead's writing about Texas, *DeBow's* further exposed Southerners to Northern thinking about Mexicans.²¹⁵ An abolitionist from Connecticut, Olmstead wrote that Mexicans in Texas were backward, but he was also shocked at their racial intermarriage. "Their tools are of the rudest sort," he wrote. "The old Mexican wheel of hewn blocks of wood is still constantly in use, though supplanted, to some extent, by Yankee wheels, sent in pairs from New York. The carts are always hewn of heavy wood, and are covered with white cotton, stretched over hoops. In these they live, on the road, as independently as in their own houses." He seemed shocked by Mexicans' racial intermarriage, writing, "They consort freely with the negroes, making no distinction from pride of race." Still, he approved of their disdain for the use of slaves, observing, "A few, of old Spanish blood, have purchased negro servants, but most of them regard slavery with abhorrence."²¹⁶

Miscegenation as an explanation for Mexican "degeneracy"

The notion that Mexico's races had degenerated through miscegenation provided Southern writers who favored the extension of slavery one of their key arguments. George Fitzhugh, writing in 1858, contended that Mexicans had proven they were incapable of running their country, so Anglo-Saxons should take it over.²¹⁷ "For nearly forty years Mexico has been in a state of continually recurring revolution, of misrule, and almost of anarchy," he observed. "She has shown that, left to herself, she is wholly

²¹⁵ J. D. B. DeBow, "Texas," *DeBow's Review*, August 1857, 113-132.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

²¹⁷ George Fitzhugh, "Acquisition of Mexico – Filibustering," *DeBow's Review*, December 1858, 613-626.

incapable of organizing and sustaining any permanent form of government.”²¹⁸ Robbers infested the nation’s highways and Indians from Arizona Territory preyed on Mexicans in Sonora with impunity.²¹⁹ This weakness, Fitzhugh claimed, was due to the mixed nature of the population, which he wrote had “all the vices of civilization, with none of its virtues; all the ignorance of barbarism, with none of its hardihood, enterprise, and self-reliance. It is enervate, effeminate, treacherous, false and fickle.”²²⁰ With such weakness, Fitzhugh argued, Mexico must be “annexed to our Union, and become a group of free and independent States, with all the rights, liberties, and privileges of the now existing States.”²²¹

As proof that American rule could regenerate Mexico, he pointed to the territories acquired in the U.S.-Mexico War. “A large portion of her territory, Texas, New-Mexico, and California, were but the other day acquired by us,” he wrote. “Under Mexican and Spanish mis-rule they had retrograded, rather than improved, for three centuries; for the Indians in those States were far more numerous and less savage, when first discovered and occupied by the Spaniards, than now; and the very few indolent whites, scattered here and there, did nothing to develop the resources of the country.”²²² The bonanza of gold mining and agricultural production sparked by American rule proved that the U.S. was capable of doing the same in Mexico, Fitzhugh contended.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 613.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., 614.

²²² Ibid., 615.

That was not to say the results would be easily repeated in Mexico. The mixed blood of that land posed potential problems. “The inhabitants of Mexico consist of Indians, negroes, mixed-breeds, and people of pure Spanish descent. The last mentioned are equal in native abilities, in moral character, and susceptibility of improvement, to any of the white race.”²²³ W. W. Wright claimed in an 1860 *DeBow’s* article that “The Spaniards have amalgamated freely with all the inferior races of the country, so that now the hybrid population of that country is double that of the white.” According to Wright, this was Mexico’s population breakdown by race: “Negroes: 6,600. Indians: 4,354,886. Whites: 1,100,000. Mulattoes, Mestizos, Zamboes, and other half-breeds: 2,165,845.”²²⁴

These people could be annexed, but Fitzhugh warned since pure-blooded Spaniards were less than a sixth of the population and were politically divided, “it is idle to hope or expect that, unaided, they can ever establish an efficient and permanent government that shall heal their own dissensions, and control, govern, and civilize the other semi-barbarous five sixths of their heterogeneous population.”²²⁵ Worse yet, from the Southern perspective, Mexico saw fit to free its slaves, “her only laborers, who at once become idlers and vagabonds, and all to the nuisances of a society which, since then, has been little better than a congeries of nuisances.”²²⁶ With these reasons in mind, Fitzhugh proposed that America take over Mexico and legalize slavery there.²²⁷ “This new population, added to the present inhabitants, of pure Spanish blood, would suffice to

²²³ *Ibid.*, 623.

²²⁴ Wright, “Amalgamation,” 7.

²²⁵ Fitzhugh, “Filibustering,” 624.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 626.

keep in check the cowardly negroes, Indians, and mixed breeds,” he argued. “Stringent poor laws and vagrant laws, such as those adopted by England, after liberating her serfs, with an efficient police, would suffice to keep this now worthless population at work and at home.”²²⁸

If racial science vilified the Meztisos of Mexico, it exonerated their religion. From the point of view of white Southern elites, miscegenation, and not Catholicism, was the cause of Mexico’s problems. George Fitzhugh gave the Catholics credit for acquiring the Mexican Indians’ territory and gold; doing so placed the Church in a position to civilize and Christianize the Indians.²²⁹ Therefore, Fitzhugh wrote, “We should be doing great injustice to the pious priesthood of Spain, and other Catholic countries, if we did not mention their conduct in dealing with the Indians as an exception to the general rule.”²³⁰ His fellow *DeBow’s* correspondent, Amicus Featherman, rebuffed those who blamed the Catholic Church for political disorder in Latin America.²³¹ Indeed, he pointed out, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and Father José María Morelos, two Catholic priests, who were the pioneers of Mexican independence.”²³² Instead of blaming these men, Fitzhugh and Featherman blamed miscegenation for breaking down the racial order of Mexican society. Featherman outlined what made Mexico a desirable target for acquisition – “a salubrious climate, a fertile soil, and unequalled ... natural resources” – and the reason Americans must take it over: it “is this day the poorest and worst-governed country in the

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 620.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Amicus Featherman, “Catholicism,” *DeBow’s Review*, November 1860, 583-598.

²³² Ibid., 588.

world.”²³³ New leadership was required, he wrote, because “the Spanish or master race is demoralized and physically broken down by injudicious intermixture and amalgamation with Indians and negroes.”²³⁴ Watered-down blood, he argued, made Mexico’s leaders “incapable of exerting that degree of mental energy so necessary to call into existence the lofty monuments by which the higher Caucasian civilization is distinguished.”²³⁵

Lest his fear of racial mixing be deemed mere superstition, J. D. B. DeBow drew from the work of scientific racists to reinforce the taboo. Ethnologists provided *DeBow’s* readers with arguments against miscegenation.²³⁶ Citing Josiah Nott and George Morton, W. W. Wright contended that mulattos become infertile in just a few generations; that mulattoes were the shortest-lived race of humanity; that they endure hardship worse than pure-blooded blacks and whites; that “they are bad breeders, bad nurses, liable to abortions, and their children generally die young;” and that “when mulattoes intermarry, they are less prolific than when crossed on the parent stock.”²³⁷ Mixed blood, Wright argued, led to a litany of social ills:

Can any one feel at all surprised to learn that a population so composed, is in the last stages of decay; that disease makes the most frightful ravages among them; that anarchy is the rule; that the country is overrun with robbers; that every one goes armed; and that it is dangerous to leave the walls of a city? Even among those who have never devoted a single thought to the subject, does not the words ‘*mixed breeds*’ convey an instant idea of *weakness*? The evidences daily multiply, that the poor Mexicans are a prey to enemies of all kinds, and on all sides. Indians, highwaymen, dissolute priests, avaricious rulers, ambitious but weak revolutionists, cholera, disease in every form, idleness, and immorality,

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ W. W. Wright, “Amalgamation,” *DeBow’s Review*, July 1860, 1-20.

²³⁷ Ibid., 3.

are all sapping the vitality of the state. When the cholera first visited Mexico, says a recent traveler, its passage through the country was like the ravages of the Angel of Death *among the Mestizos, and the fragments of decaying races.*²³⁸

Wright detailed a racial order, based on ability to lead, reason and work reliably, that placed white masters at the top, black slaves in the middle, and Mexicans at the bottom: “Runaway negroes, trained to labor, and disciplined by mild, but firm, and superior intelligences in the Southern States, having been surrounded, too, from infancy by a healthy and vigorous civilization, on arriving among the effeminate hybrids of Mexico, where everything is tumbling into decay, immediately perceive their own superiority.”²³⁹ Because the Spaniards “lived in idleness, and lazily amalgamated with whatever chance has offered” blacks who once were controlled by the Spanish “now stand side by side, the negro erect, lofty, and intelligent, and the hybrid descendant of the once glorious Spanish conquerors a slavish, effeminate, and ignorant being. The sculptor now places the heel of the negro upon the neck of the Spaniard!”²⁴⁰

With all of the problems posed by native labor, Southerners with designs on Mexican land naturally argued that the logical solution was Negro slaves. But if slavery was to be extended to lands once governed under Mexican law, the territories required new laws that acknowledged the legality of human bondage. *DeBow's* noted in 1859 that New Mexico's territorial legislature voted without dissent to recognize slavery by establishing prison sentences and fines for stealing slaves, fraudulently furnishing free papers to slaves, inciting slave insurrection, giving them deadly weapons, or gambling

²³⁸ Ibid., 7. Italics in original.

²³⁹ Ibid., 18.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 19.

with them.²⁴¹ Though the act was practically useless to any New Mexican who did not have domestic slaves, since peonage was much cheaper than slave ownership, *DeBow's* saw this virtue in it: "The present act simply gives an undeniable legal recognition to slaveholding there."²⁴² Marriage between whites and negroes or mulattoes was also prohibited, an attempt to maintain racial purity.²⁴³

As J. D. B. DeBow saw it, Mexico belonged to the United States. It was just a matter of time before demographics and racial impurity brought down the walls of resistance to American rule and industrial domination. Before the Compromise of 1850 turned slavery's future into an uncertainty, Southern propagandists such as DeBow could afford to portray all Mexicans – whether of Spanish, Mestizo, or Indian blood – as inferior to Americans by virtue of a combination of racial inferiority and the decadence of a government dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Doing so rationalized American seizure of Mexican land and justified the extension of slavery into it. But the whiteness of Spaniards, who also belonged to the Catholic Church, complicated Southern claims of the inferiority of all in Mexico. If Spaniards were inferior, then that meant some whites were inferior. The argument lacked consistency. So *DeBow's* changed its arguments about the church, which it claimed from the late 1840s to the early 1850s was responsible for Mexico's failure to succeed as a republic. The problem in Mexico was not the church, but miscegenation that exposed the Spaniards who brought order to Mexico to the rule of an ignorant population that was unready for self-governance. American whites had to join Spanish whites to impose order on an Indian and Mestizo mob bent on destroying any

²⁴¹ "Slavery in New Mexico," *DeBow's Review*, May 1859, 601.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

semblance of American progress. Progress, naturally, came in the form of American transportation technology that would promote colonial exploitation of Mexican mining and agricultural resources.

Brewerton, Browne, and DeBow: Promoters of Southern capitalism

G. Douglas Brewerton, J. Ross Browne, and J. D. B. DeBow were united in their belief that America must dominate the American West, Southwest, and Mexico. Too, they believed they must dominate the non-Anglo Saxon races that occupied it. The underpinnings of this belief diverged for reasons dictated by their own social identities. All embraced Southern identity, and all identified to varying degrees with Protestant religion and the American free-enterprise system. The degree to which they identified with these aspects of American culture dictated which aspects of Mexican culture were most prominent in their work.

Brewerton, a volunteer officer from a military family, might have been expected to revel in the cowardice of Mexican soldiers. But his hatred for Mexicans fell more along lines of a general belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority and hatred of the Roman Catholic Church. His view of Mexicans was strongly dictated by class consciousness, as evidenced by his distinction between Mexican peons, whom he distrusted, and wealthy Spanish Californians, whom he favored. His short-lived Know-Nothing journal *Young America, or, The Child of the Order* provides the strongest evidence of the brew of ideologically and religiously fueled hatred of Catholics and foreigners. Clearly, Brewerton believed Americans must bring all foreigners under their dominion.

Browne's Catholic roots steered him away from Browne's anti-Catholic path. But entrepreneurialism and a dependence on clients in the mining industry for lucrative

contract work documenting and sketching gold, silver, and copper mining operations gave him a clear social identification with capitalists who required a rationale for divesting Mexicans of their land and resources. DeBow, too, depended on men of industry and commerce for his livelihood, given his journal's readership of planters and industrialists.

By 1870, America's acquisition of Mexican territory was long complete and its businessmen had set about the task of extending American power into Latin America through economic rather than military means. The abolition of slavery meant that planters no longer had expansion as a rationale for acquiring Mexico. And anyway, as correspondents in *DeBow's Review* observed, the political situation there was too chaotic and the mixed-race population too unruly to make acquisition desirable. The next stage of the American imperial mission was to consolidate its gains in California and the Southwest and bring the nation's of Latin America under closer control. The symbolic mechanisms for justifying the subordination of Mexicans had done much of their job already. What remained to be done was the extension of railroads across the Southwest to Los Angeles. At that stage, when capitalists had laid the infrastructure to deliver hundreds of thousands of whites from the South and Midwest to Los Angeles and the Inland Empire, the racialization of Mexicans would be complete.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION: INTERTEXTUALITY, CULTURAL IDENTITY,
AND THE SCAFFOLDING OF MEXICAN OTHERING
IN THE POPULAR PRESS

This dissertation set out to understand the popular press' role in the othering of Mexicans from the 1840s through the 1860s by examining seminal works by Eastern correspondents who wrote about Mexican life and culture. To understand the phenomenon of Mexican othering, three elements were examined: media messages about Mexicans, the correspondents who formulated these messages, and the cultural influences that shaped and were shaped by the correspondents. Auxiliary to these questions was an exploration of the correspondents' participation in American print culture as writers, readers, and orators. This chapter addresses each of these questions and relates each of the previous four chapters to one another. First, however, it will address the question of significance. Why did it matter how Mexicans were portrayed in the popular press? Because Anglo-Americans' depictions of Mexicans as culturally, racially, and religiously different had material consequences for Mexicans who became American under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexico insisted on protection of its citizens' rights in the territories that it ceded in the agreement that ended the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848. Mexico tried to ensure this by attaching the caveat that statehood would be granted

quickly to conquered territories that ceased to be Mexican states. Article IX of the treaty, as ratified by the Congress of Mexico, pledged:

The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic, conformably with what is stipulated in the preceding article, shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States.¹

The Senate changed “as soon as possible” to “at the proper time,” which was subsequently amended to read, “at the proper time (to be judged by the Congress of the United States).” As events played out, the “proper time” was determined by whether Congress deemed New Mexico to have become “American” enough. New Mexico was turned down for statehood fifteen times in its sixty years as a territory. On the three occasions when New Mexico drew up constitutions, 1850, 1872, and, 1899, Congress turned down the territory. Lawmakers repeatedly questioned the loyalty of New Mexico’s Roman Catholic, Spanish-speaking Hispanic majority and frequently cited New Mexico’s inadequate public schools and high illiteracy rate.² It was not until 1912 that Congress admitted New Mexico as a state, and from the 1840s to 1912 stereotypes of New Mexicans abounded in congressional documents, such as committee reports, speeches, bills, and memorials. These documents showed that most of these stereotypes came not from direct experience, but through descriptions of Mexicans in the popular press. Loathing of racial intermarriage, suspicion of Roman Catholicism, and belief in Anglo

¹ Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). Page 13 of the original treaty signed by U.S. and Mexican negotiators at the city of Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Mexico, is available online at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/ghtreaty/61348.jpg>.

² Calvin A. Roberts and Susan A. Roberts, *New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 148.

racial superiority were common themes in both media discourse and congressional documents surrounding the question of New Mexican statehood.

It was not until the turn of the twentieth century, after New Mexican volunteers proved their gallantry in the Spanish-American War, that Congress decided that New Mexico was “American” enough. Governor Miguel A. Otero, eager to prove New Mexicans’ worthiness for statehood, had set the stage for this by rallying massive numbers of volunteers to go fight in Cuba. Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt was determined that Western cowboys would make the best fighters, and he took 340 New Mexicans, constituting about a third of his Rough Riders.³ When New Mexico was admitted to the Union in 1912, it was under a state constitution drawn up by Old Guard Republicans who composed the document to protect their business and political interests. At the same time, they protected the rights of Hispanic New Mexicans – also solidly Republican – by guaranteeing their right to vote and their right to an education. New Mexico’s struggle to attain its people the full rights of American citizenship, including full and equal representation in Washington, resembles the African American civil rights struggle and reflects legal scholar and historian Derrick Bell’s argument that the legal interests of blacks were only advanced when they coincided with the interests of whites.⁴

In 1876, Congress denied New Mexico’s application for statehood because it had too few whites and too many Mexicans and Indians. Perhaps the most damning points in one House report came from Albert Deane Richardson’s *Beyond the Mississippi*, which

³ Roberts and Roberts, *New Mexico*, 149.

⁴ Derrick Bell, *Race, Racism and American Law* (New York: Austin Publishers, 2008), 24-25.

had sold 100,000 copies in its two press runs in 1867 and 1869. In Richardson's eyes, New Mexico was beyond redemption as a state:

Of the civilized inhabitants two thousand are Americans, and sixty-six thousand Mexicans. Fierce Indians rove the mountain-ranges and number about forty-four thousand. Twice or thrice New Mexico has suffered from the frontier epidemic of constitution-making, but until new gold discoveries bring in thousands of immigrants to develop its wide and varied mineral resources, and revolutionize its industries and social life, it will not and should not be admitted to the Union as a sovereign state.⁵

Although the Senate passed S. Bill 220, granting statehood, the House postponed action, effectively killing the bill.⁶ When New Mexico went up for statehood again in 1888, Congress also considered the territories of Dakota, Montana, and Washington. The Committee on Territories objected to New Mexico and Dakota statehood for curiously different reasons. The committee deemed it unfair to admit Dakota, with an overwhelmingly white population spread across the present-day states of North Dakota and South Dakota, because committee members favored giving its people even more representation by splitting it into separate states, thus providing them a total of four senators and two representatives rather than the two senators and one representative they would get if admitted as a single state. The representation they would receive as a single territory, the reasoning went, would deny them their full rights as Americans.⁷ This contrasts with the reasons for opposing New Mexico statehood. The people there did not deserve representation at all because "The large majority of the people are uneducated,

⁵ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Territories, *New Mexico*, 44th Cong., 1st sess., House rep. 503, part 2, 1876, 13, quoting from Albert Deane Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1867 and 1869).

⁶ *New York Tribune*, June 29, 1876, 1.

⁷ U.S. Congress, House, *Admission of Dakota, Montana, Washington, and New Mexico into the Union*, 50th Cong., 1st sess., House rep. 1025, 1888, 27-30.

and unfamiliar with either our language, customs, or system of government.”⁸ The minority report cited a thirty-year-old book by W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo*, as evidence of New Mexican backwardness. The Davis excerpt itself cited information from Josiah Gregg’s 1848 book about Santa Fe, meaning that images cemented in the public consciousness forty years before were used as weapons to shoot down New Mexico statehood. In Davis’ mind, New Mexicans were addicted to gambling, adultery, and prostitution, going so far as to “sell their own daughters for money to gratify the lust of the purchaser.”⁹ To Davis, simply being Catholic made New Mexicans suspect, and he wrote disdainfully of the faithful’s veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe.¹⁰

Works by Richardson, Davis, and Gregg reached beyond their times and influenced the fate of New Mexicans decades after they were written. Though out of date, the thoughts contained in them were still called as witnesses for the argument that New Mexico remained alien to the rest of the republic and was therefore unworthy for statehood. Press depictions mattered deeply because they played a role in depriving Mexican Americans of the rights of full citizenship and shaping American thinking about Mexican Americans’ character. The othering of Mexicans built over time. Beginning with a recognition of difference, Mexican identity was constructed like a scaffold, detail upon detail and layer upon layer, reinforced with the steel of religious, class, and racial prejudice and designs of American political and economic dominance over colonized Mexican Americans.

⁸ Ibid., 39-40.

⁹ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰ Ibid., 43.

Unearthing the prehistory of stereotypes about Mexicans

Othering – a recognition of one group’s difference by members of another group – is a precursor to stereotyping, yet scholarship about Latino representations in American media has ignored the prehistory of stereotypes about Latinos. The present study contributes to the literature by addressing this gap in research. Othering served as a precursor to stereotyping about Mexicans in American media. This project surveyed the materials that were available to Anglo-American journalists preparing to embark for the West in the 1840s. These works included reports by military explorers and traders who journeyed from Missouri to Santa Fe after Mexico opened itself to trade in the 1820s. The characteristics of the Mexican as Other in Anglo-American writing largely consisted of generalizations that did not distinguish one Mexican’s socioeconomic status from another’s. Characteristics were applied to all Mexicans or to all people from a specific Mexican town or state. Some observations were positive, as when Pike praised their sobriety, hospitality, generosity, physical strength, enterprise, and intellect. Some were negative, such as Pike’s declaration that Mexicans lacked patriotism, “national energy,” enterprise, and individualism. And some were mere observations that lacked value judgment but promoted American values, as when Pike recommended that the United States help Mexico overthrow Spanish rule. Though suspicion of Roman Catholicism was present from the beginning of American observations of Mexicans, it subsided as Anglo-American elites realized Spanish elites’ value as political and economic allies.

Folding Mexican power into the American nation required American and Mexican elites to find common ground. To a degree, they had European ancestry and fair-skinned appearances in common, but Anglo men’s desire for Mexican land and

women made race tenuous ground on which to construct a basis for maintaining the status quo of wealth concentration. Nor did religion provide such ground. Despite the tendency of open-minded Protestant elites such as Early Northern correspondent W. W. H. Davis who found Christian commonalities with Catholicism, suspicion that the Roman Catholic Church would undermine American democracy lingered. By bringing together the upper classes of each nationality under the banner of American democracy, however, the status quo of power could be preserved. During the late antebellum period and early Reconstruction, from 1856 to 1870, Northern and Southern journalists such as Late Southerners J. Ross Browne and G. Douglas Brewerton and Late Northerner Bayard Taylor privileged the wealthy, conferring honorary whiteness on Californios who possessed land, money, and power by characterizing them as genteel Spaniards whose ancestors had imposed civilization and Christianity on the Far West. Those who were not Spaniards were Mexicans and Indians and relegated to the status of cowboys and laborers. This was the beginning of a phenomenon that historian Carey McWilliams called “the Fantasy Heritage,” a past celebrated in modern Southern California that embraces all that is white and European about the state’s history and discards all that is brown and Mexican or Indian. “By a definition provided by the Californios themselves,” McWilliams wrote of rich Mexican-Americans who embraced the Fantasy Heritage, “one who achieves success in the borderlands is ‘Spanish’; one who doesn’t is ‘Mexican.’”¹¹

¹¹ Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 45.

Culture as reflector and director of the othering of Mexicans

Cultural identity affected the way individual correspondents saw and wrote about Mexicans. This has profound implications for scholars' understanding of news workers in the present as well as the past. More profound, however, are the consequences of such depictions refracted through the kaleidoscopic lens of cultural identity. Identification as Northerner or Southerner, Quaker or Baptist, Republican or Democrat, trader or soldier, natural-born citizen or immigrant, urban or rural, colored the depictions of Mexicans in ways that shifted depending on which aspect of identity was most prominent at the time of writing. Internal cultural bias constrained Anglo correspondents' descriptions of Mexicans in a manner consistent with Edward Said's notion of Orientalism. The authors' position in relation to the Mexicans they observed overwhelmingly determined the ways they represented Mexicans. With some inconsistencies that can be explained by the personal trajectory of the correspondents, Mexicans were described as having characteristics opposite those of their Eastern Anglo-American observers.

Sectional identity, national beliefs, and othering across generations

Examined in terms of the four schema examined throughout the study – Early Northerners, Early Southerners, Late Northerners, and Late Southerners – patterns within these observations become more distinct. Journalistic products reflected the culture of the writers, and the early generation provided seeds of prejudice against the Mexican Other that germinated into justifications for conquest and exploitation. All went to the West with varying degrees of antipathy toward Catholics and their church, and all were fueled by the belief that America had a unique destiny that it must fulfill: spreading democracy

and freedom across the continent and to the entire world. Manifest Destiny demanded that they replace the ways of other peoples and nations with American ways.

The Southerners started from the standpoint of citizens of a slaveholding, economically stratified society that asserted white superiority to maintain social, political, and economic order. Southerners made sense of Mexicans in terms of whether they were able to own slaves, and therefore masters, or unworthy, and therefore suitable for enslavement. This unworthiness was associated with immutable racial characteristics. Early Southerner Josiah Gregg railed against the tariffs imposed by the Mexican government, calling them an example of corruption. He and his counterpart, George Wilkins Kendall of the *New Orleans Picayune*, went into New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico believing in the *leyenda negra*, or “black legend” of Spanish cruelty. When they discovered that not all Mexicans were as perversely cruel, wicked, and fanatical as they first believed, they made sense of the discrepancy in ways that promoted America’s mission of takeover: They assigned the characteristic of cruelty to men, whom they would defeat and dominate, and the characteristic of kindness to women, whom Americans would marry to gain land and political power. They chipped away at Mexicans’ power by criticizing those who held it: Roman Catholic priests and bishops. Whereas the Early Southerners argued against the Catholic clergy because clerics were implicated in Mexican government — a violation of their belief in the separation of church and state — Late Southerners J. Ross Browne and G. Douglas Brewerton extended the argument to include personal attacks that supported the notion that Mexicans were degenerate because of miscegenation and, possibly, the climate.

As Americans discovered commonalities with Mexico's economic and political elites, they sought ways to rationalize the necessity of ingratiating themselves with these powerful men to gain and consolidate power. Here, the category of class comes into play. Browne and Brewerton promoted the notion that Mexicans of European descent were like them, conferring honorary whiteness by referring to them as Spanish while racializing those of the lower classes by casting them as treacherous, thieving, indolent Mexican peons. These people could be ignored as harmless or put to work for low pay that amounted to virtual slavery. To keep Mexican workers in line, the Late Southerners portrayed them as they would African slaves: hard workers who had to be supervised closely because they would steal if the overseer allowed it.

The Early Northerners approached the Mexican West as highly educated promoters of American progress. Northerners approached Mexicans with a view toward whether they were at all like Americans. Early Northerner Richard Henry Dana Jr. pointed to Mexican character flaws as justification for taking advantage of them in the marketplace, while his counterpart of a dozen years later in New Mexico, W. W. H. Davis, insisted that Mexicans were indeed backward but could be remade. This notion set the stage for the demands of Late Northerner Albert Deane Richardson, who insisted that the only way to redeem New Mexico was a flood of Yankees to harness the economic potential of the territory's fertile valleys and mineral-rich mountains. The American mission demanded that Mexicans be made American in their language, technology, dress, manners, economy, politics, religion, and customs. Those who lacked modern farm implements must be sold them. A religious system that did not tolerate Protestant worship and had too much power must be replaced. The rustic must be made modern.

Southern and Northern correspondents in the present study – Protestants all – agreed on the faults of Catholicism. To them, its reliance on ritual and sacramental objects indicated superstition and spiritual emptiness. Early Southerner Josiah Gregg’s Quaker faith predisposed him to notice these aspects, which clashed with Quakers’ resistance to theological formulas and outward signs of faith. The Spirit, they held, was supposed to speak to believers from within.¹² George Wilkins Kendall, the Early Southern editor of the *New Orleans Picayune*, too decried Mexican Catholic faith for its blend of “superstitious” belief in saintly intervention and elements of indigenous Mexican ritual. All agreed that Catholicism’s strict, hierarchical organization and implication in Mexican government as the official state religion were antithetical to American democratic principles. Early correspondents focused on the religious difference of the padres to socially construct them as threats to America through the mid-1850s. But the Roman Catholic Church sent Western European clerics to force New Mexican priests to conform with the church’s standards of morality: no mistresses, no tolerance for Penitente rituals, a return to the standard liturgy.¹³ With a Catholic Church that seemed less foreign due to these reforms, it may have been easier for correspondents to create an image of Spanish (and not Mexican) padres replacing a savage wilderness with European-style civilization. Constructing Spanish identity as white and amenable to American goals was crucial if a distinction was to be created between wealthy Spaniards and laboring Mexicans. The Late Southern and Late Northern correspondents disagreed

¹² Melvin B. Endy Jr., “The Society of Friends,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* eds. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 604.

¹³ Calvin A. Roberts and Susan A. Roberts, *New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 112.

about the character of Catholic priests, perhaps indicating the start of a shift in American attitudes about Catholics.

Late Southern journalist G. Douglas Brewerton, a Baptist Democrat who supported Negro slavery, found fault with New Mexican priests for precisely the same reasons Bishop Jean Baptiste Lamy, the French cleric installed to lead the Diocese of Santa Fe, instituted reform. Brewerton found them to be drunkards, gamblers, gluttons, and womanizers, and his disregard for Catholics deepened after he embraced the Know-Nothing program of denying immigrants and Catholics the right to vote and run for political office. His Late Southern counterpart, J. Ross Browne, said little about the church, perhaps owing to his childhood in heavily Catholic Ireland and the cosmopolitan life of travel that he led.

The first generation of Americans to reach the Mexican West were government explorers who provided raw data about the region's resources and people. The first generation of correspondents, the Early Northerners and Early Southerners, extended this mission by interpreting the differences between Americans and Mexicans. The late generation of correspondents, the Late Northerners and Late Southerners, extended this further by categorizing Mexicans into useful allies, on the one hand, and commoners to be subdued, controlled, and dominated on the other. The courtly California dons who helped form the California Constitution and lent their power to Yankee newcomers were labeled "Spanish;" their kind, beautiful, light-skinned, marriageable daughters were labeled señoritas. Troublemakers were characterized as "Mexican" peons, corrupt padres, murderous "half-breed" harlots, and banditos.

Cross-sectional and cross-generational intertextuality

Chapters Four through Seven have explained how Anglo correspondents from the Eastern United States portrayed Mexicans in the antebellum period and early Reconstruction, and how cultural practices shaped the way each of the principal correspondents in the study saw and wrote about Mexicans. They also addressed a broader question that bears explication here. What did the ways in which these correspondents engaged in mass communication culture say and show about print culture in mid-nineteenth-century America? The answer is complex. Their participation in mass communication culture demonstrated, first, that journalists kept track of what other journalists had found out. The intertextuality promoted by the communication system of their time ensured that even as North and South grew apart in the late antebellum period, many sectional values and ideas were shared across regions and time.

The nineteenth-century press gave writers the power to spread ideas across space and time. Journalists in the nineteenth century fed off the work of other journalists, just as they do in the present. Sometimes the press carried ideas across regions and eras simultaneously. Josiah Gregg's observation that "every man, woman, and child" in New Mexico loved to gamble allowed W. W. H. Davis to generalize his own limited observations of the practice to the entire territory.¹⁴ Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s *Two Years Before the Mast* influenced future writers in ways Dana could not have anticipated. It must have astonished Dana to receive J. Ross Browne's praise-filled letter from Africa, where Browne discovered Dana's book in a sailor's hut. Although Dana's goal was to raise an outcry against the abuse of merchant seamen, the book carried prejudicial notions

¹⁴ Davis, *El Gringo*, 187, quoting Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*.

of Mexican indolence, superstition, and immorality from his experience in California to presses in New York and London and to the far corners of the globe via trade vessels. Late Northerner Albert Deane Richardson used Early Northerner W. W. H. Davis' *El Gringo* as a reference work, though he did not tell his readers which information and anecdotes informed his dispatches.

The nation's growing communication network created an environment in which the othering of Mexicans could develop in isolated regions of the West, be transmitted to the publishing centers of the East, and spread from spoke to hub and out to the rest of the spokes in the communication network. Improving printing and transportation technology accelerated the spread of ideas throughout the United States. Once the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869, the time it took to reach California from New York shrank from six months to just six days, speeding not only travel, but information. Even with the development of the railroads, it was too expensive for most Eastern newspapers and magazines to commission their own correspondents to travel in the West. The exchange system allowed them to economically repeat original content from other publications that could afford to do so. It also made them responsible for filtering others' dispatches to provide the material they deemed most salient or interesting to their readers. A paper in South Carolina or a magazine in New York could choose information about people and events in the East from many publications. But Western correspondents were comparatively rare, and most Americans could afford neither the time nor expense of traveling to the Borderlands, where they would have personal contact with Mexicans. Thus, a small group of writers had disproportionate potential to shape the Mexican image in the Eastern American mind.

The transfer of information from one publishing office to another was only one part of the equation in the transmission of cultural values. It was up to the editors of newspapers and magazines that received exchange publications to determine which parts to print. Their perceptions of what would best inform, entertain, and persuade readers is evident in their excerpts. When *The Ladies' Repository* brought G. Douglas Brewerton's "Incidents of Travels in New Mexico" to readers' attention in 1854, it could have excerpted his hero-worshipping description of Kit Carson or his breathless admiration of the landscape. Instead, it offered Brewerton's description of a drunken, gambling friar who "sinned not from exuberance of spirits, but from the evil workings of the sin-blacked soul within" yet "who held, according to his creed, the power to absolve and to baptize, to shrive the dying and intercede for the dead."¹⁵ This was also the case with Early Southern correspondent Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*. *The Highlands Messenger* of Ashville, N.C., selected a particularly inflammatory description of Holy Week rituals of a Roman Catholic lay order called the Penitentes. In an account printed on the front page of the *Messenger* in January 1845 during the run-up to the Mexican-American War, Gregg mischaracterized a re-enactment of the Passion of Jesus Christ as having been carried out by "great malefactors" "and the most notorious rascals in the country" who hoped to earn absolution for their sins.¹⁶

Journalists prepared themselves for the frontier by reading the work of those who went before them, and they did not limit themselves to what was available in other newspapers and magazines. They read government reports as well as popular literature

¹⁵ "The Mexican Priesthood," *The Ladies' Repository: A Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Arts, and Religion*, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 1854, 280.

¹⁶ *Highlands Messenger*, Ashville, N.C., Jan. 17, 1845), 1.

and sometimes informed readers where they could learn more. Albert Deane Richardson, the Late Northern correspondent for the *Boston Journal* and *New York Tribune*, told readers that if they wanted to understand New Mexico, they should read the Pacific Railroad Reports and Early Northern correspondent W. W. H. Davis's book *El Gringo*. Davis, in turn, quoted from *DeBow's Review*, the South's preeminent journal of agriculture and commerce, to back up his claims about the fertility of New Mexican soil – as well as his argument that the territory needed white American farmers to unleash the soil's potential.¹⁷ Correspondents informed readers and attempted to shape their ideas about how best to pursue the nation's future in the Borderlands.

Newspapers, magazines, and books were not their only venue. The lyceum lecture circuit provided an outlet for the oral spread of ideas about Mexican otherness and American cultural superiority. Late Northern correspondent Bayard Taylor of the *New York Tribune* exploited this avenue of expression the most, lecturing about his travels several hundred times throughout his career and earning the bulk of his living from it. Lectures provided him the opportunity to speculate about the nature of humanity and promote notions of Anglo-Saxon greatness. Fellow Late Northerner Albert Deane Richardson wrote approvingly of Taylor's talks and aspired to join him in the ranks of lecturers, which he did when he returned to New England from Colorado in the winter of 1860 to speak about life in the West. J. Ross Browne, too, participated in this oral print culture. It can be argued that the lyceum lecture was a form of mass communication with power equal to that of periodicals, and perhaps more powerful in two ways. First, the physical presence of an orator potentially created greater confidence in the reality of his

¹⁷ W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo, or, New Mexico and Her People* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1854), 379.

or her message. Second, lectures were newsworthy events that editors deemed worthy of covering. Their messages were not only heard hundreds of times by audiences in the thousands, to take Taylor's lectures as an example, but those who did not attend were also exposed to the gist of the performance through local papers and exchanges. The lyceum and, later, the Chautauqua, are overlooked topics in mass communication study whose significance has been underestimated.

Directions for future research

This study provides a foundation for understanding the development of American media stereotypes about Latinos. The heuristics developed in it may be applied in a number of future studies. Analyzing the relationship between correspondents' sectional origins, political and religious beliefs, and their representation of others can be expanded to include more diverse social groups and examine the representations of more writers across time. The modified version of Edward Said's contrapuntal reading method employed in this project took into account not only the culture surrounding the authors, but evidence of the authors' beliefs and career trajectories in the form of letters, memoirs, financial records, and other manuscripts. Examination of work by correspondents who left behind artifacts of thought and belief provides a full picture of journalists' mentality as Americans, as professionals, and as individuals. In addition, this dissertation examined the work and lives of writers from the first two generations of correspondents who had direct experience of Mexican life and culture. This covers a broad swath of time in the era of Manifest Destiny, but America's mission of hemispheric dominance was not complete by 1870, where the present study ends. Nor was its campaign to dominate all of America's holdings in California, Arizona, and New Mexico and the lands controlled by

American capitalists in Latin America. Extending the study through the early twentieth century would fill out the understanding of the development of stereotypes about Latinos, the roots of which are explored in the present project.

The preceding chapters illustrate the ways the othering of Mexicans changed over time and challenge previous understanding of the racialization of Mexican Americans.

Victor M. Rodríguez Domínguez offers this explanation of racialization:

Racialization is the social and historical process of assigning individuals and groups a socially constructed racial identity and status. As populations compete for land, status and resources they build hierarchies based on clusters of phenotypical biological factors which are then assumed to represent archetypes for members of a particular racial group. Those who become the dominant group interpret those presumed phenotypical biological differences as indicators of essential differences and assign a negative meaning to them, subordinating the contending group and limiting their access to those things their society values. The process of racialization in modern societies is historically specific, and is carried out by its basic social institutions: economy, education, family, religion, government, criminal justice system, media, etc.¹⁸

Rodríguez and Tomás Almaguer argued that in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, this process was qualitatively distinct from the way it worked during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁹ In the earlier phase, Rodríguez contended, Mexicans “became an ethnic group akin to European immigrants, in the sense that the basic process of differentiation was rooted in culture, not race. During this period, the otherness of Mexicans was rooted in culture rather than in some assumed biological difference. This more biological difference begins to occur at the end of the

¹⁸ Víctor M. Rodríguez Domínguez, “The Racialization of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans,” *Centro Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 74. He cited Víctor M. Rodríguez, “Internalized Racist Oppression and Racialization in Latino Politics in the United States.” Unpublished manuscript (California State University, Long Beach), 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71-105; Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Faultlines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 45.

19th century and is particularly powerful during the 20th century.”²⁰ While that assessment is accurate when applied to the Northern correspondents in the present study, the Southern correspondents employed race as a means of othering Mexicans as early as the late 1840s.

For these reasons, extending this research will require cultural contrapuntal reading and assessment of correspondents from the third and fourth generational cohorts of journalists who wrote about Latinos as the nation embarked on the consolidation of Anglo-American control and internal colonization of Texas and California and the territories of New Mexico and Arizona. Researching these cohorts would fill in blanks concerning the othering and evolution of Mexican stereotyping from 1870 to 1885 and from 1885 to 1900, a time of escalating conflict between the United States, Spain, and the nations of Latin America.

²⁰ Rodríguez, “Racialization,” 76.

APPENDIX

Fig. 1: Comparison of Correspondents' Backgrounds and the Elements of Mexican Othering in Their Writing

Writer attributes <i>Early Northern</i>	Religion	Politics	Fields	Attributes emphasized
Richard Henry Dana Jr.	Calvinist	Whig	Maritime Law, literature	Laziness. Lack of enterprise. Corruption of Catholic Church. Requirement that immigrants convert to Catholicism called "religious tyranny." Comfortable weather, not race, blamed for poorly developed moral character. Backwardness. Thriftlessness. Inefficient labor. Wastefulness. Loose sexual morals. Extravagance. Vanity. Hot-tempered men and loose women. Inability of the people to self-govern.
W. W. H. Davis	Baptist	Democrat	Govt., journalism military, land speculation	Agricultural backwardness. Catholic "superstition" relating to church ritual and praying through saints. Technological inferiority. "Spanish superiority" and "Mexican inferiority" rooted in class differences. Mexican rusticity vs. American modernity. Pure Catholic faith but corrupt Catholic Church. Church involvement in Mexican government as violation of church-state separation. Brave soldiers led by cowardly officers. Mexicans incapable of solving own problems because of poor leadership, not race, and therefore in need of American leadership.

Writers' backgrounds

Early Southern

Josiah Gregg	<i>Religion</i> Rural Quaker	<i>Politics</i> Democrat	<i>Fields</i> Trade, journalism military	Attributes emphasized Backwardness. Catholic superstition and idolatry. Catholicism as spiritually empty. Sympathy for Mexicans victimized by U.S. volunteers during U.S.-Mexico War. Immorality of gambling on cock fights, cards. High tariffs. Corrupt church implicated in bad government. Rustic tools. Primitive ranching. Illiteracy. Brave militiamen and cowardly officers. <i>Leyenda negra</i> : Myth of Spanish cruelty, wickedness, and fanaticism. Racial intermarriage as a curiosity, not a mark of inferiority. Beauty of Mexican women.
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George W. Kendall

Presbyterian
but married
a French Catholic

Democrat
Journalism, military
ranching

Brave soldiers and cowardly officers.
Modified *leyenda negra*: Cruel men and kind women. Primitive adobe buildings. Catholic priests' political power. Saw Roman Catholicism blended with indigenous Mexican religion as impure faith.

Late Northern

Bayard Taylor

Religion
Urban
Quaker

Politics
Republican
Journalism,
literature
higher
education

Emphasis on class with race as heuristic: Upper-class Californians with light skin called "Spanish," but lower-class ones with dark skin were called "Mexican."
Mexicans inferior, but educable. "Spanish" priests credited for civilizing Indians of California and Mexico.

Albert D. Richardson Congregationalist Free Soil Journalism, Republican farming, Abolitionist literature, real estate government, Peon system equated with slavery that degenerated morals of laborers by inducing them to kill to pay debt. Swarthy. Filthy. All called Mexicans or “Greasers”; none called “Spanish.” Generous. Patient. Hospitable. Superstitious followers of Catholicism with Indian rituals. Racial impurity. Hard-working.

Late Southern

	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Fields</i>
G. D. Brewerton	Baptist	Democrat	Military, journalism, literature, painting

Emphasis on class mixed with race: Upper-class Californians with light skin called “Spanish” but dark-skinned ones called “Mexican” and portrayed as inferior half-breeds. Mexican men “cruel,” but Mexican women “kind.” Mexicans as hard workers who have to be closely supervised. Inferior weapons. Mexican Catholic priests portrayed as drinkers, gamblers, gluttons, and womanizers. Lazy and indolent.

J. Ross Browne	Catholic boyhood Presbyterian adulthood	Democrat	Journalism, mining, sketching, technical drawing, government
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Backward housing and technology. Indolent. Unenterprising. Spanish as promoters of civilization and Mexicans as obstacles to progress. Need for American leadership. Men as laborers and women as sexual partners for Anglo men. Intermarriage as the source of moral degeneracy. Poverty blamed on laziness. Spanish señoritas and half-breed murderesses.

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Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston)

The Farmers' Cabinet, Amherst, N.H

The Independent, Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies,

Harper's New Monthly Magazine

History, Literature, and the Arts

The Jeffersonian, New Orleans

The Ladies' Repository: A Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Arts, and Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio

Lawrence (Kan.) Republican

Leavenworth (Kan.) Times

Littell's Living Age, Boston

Macon, Ga., Weekly Telegraph

The Methodist Quarterly Review, Nashville, Tenn.

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