

# GILLESPIE AND THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

*From Letters Dated February 11, 1846, to July 8, 1848,  
to the Secretary of the Navy*

*With an Introduction by* GEORGE WALCOTT AMES, JR.

## INTRODUCTION

FROM THE disturbed events which culminated in the acquisition of California by the United States, two enigmatical characters emerged to plague the historian. As the years have passed, the two men and their champions among the later authors have effectively beclouded the issue. These two men were John C. Frémont and Archibald H. Gillespie. One of the most controversial points has been: Why did Frémont return from the Oregon border whither he had gone in the early part of 1846? It may well have been a result of despatches or information given him by Gillespie. The latter set off after Frémont almost immediately upon his arrival in California, pursued him for mile after mile, and after an arduous and perilous chase finally caught up with him. Both turned back to California, although Frémont declared, and Gillespie supported his contention, that the Explorer was returning to refit for the journey back to the United States. Yet within a few days after the arrival of the party at Sutter's Fort, Frémont identified himself with the Bear Flag movement. Did Gillespie have secret orders for Frémont, or did he not? Many people have drawn up arguments for both views from the material at hand, but no conclusive evidence—conclusive for adherents to both sides of the question—has ever been presented.

Archibald H. Gillespie was sent west as a confidential secret agent of the United States Government to observe affairs in California. A lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, he left Washington early in November, 1845, and crossed Mexico in civilian garb. Journeying from Mazatlán to Monterey via Honolulu in a United States sloop of war, he continued in his assumed civilian character until, as he says, the officers of the United States fleet disclosed his official connections. However, according to his own word, he took no part in Californian affairs, other than as an adviser, until the news of the war between Mexico and the United States became known. Then he helped organize the famed California Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Frémont.

After Commodore Stockton relieved Sloat as commander of the United States forces in California, and the conquest was pushed vigorously, Gillespie became an active participant in events. He was left in command of Los Angeles, when the south was thought to have been pacified and the bulk of the

United States troops returned north. Whether he, by injudicious acts, lighted the flames of hostility anew, does not concern this sketch, but he was the American leader who was forced to evacuate the city and embark with his men at San Pedro. The reinforcements sent him, together with his own forces, were defeated in an attempt to reestablish control of the town, and incidentally control of the whole southern area, since Los Angeles served as a rallying point for that district. While the United States forces were based at San Diego, recovering from defeat and recruiting for another effort, word arrived that a United States Army contingent under Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny had entered the country from the east. Gillespie was despatched with a small command to make contact with the General and to describe the situation to him. After making the juncture, Gillespie fought and was wounded in the skirmish at San Pascual. When the American flag was raised in Los Angeles in January, 1847, as a result of the two battles of La Mesa and San Gabriel, Gillespie had the honor and satisfaction of rehoisting it.

Thus it will be seen that Gillespie played an important rôle in the conquest. Not only did he have a conspicuous place because of his governmental position, but also because he took part in all the important campaigns. However, the little that is known of the man himself comes from the few, very few, letters, which have been published, and the one or two newspaper articles written by him in after life. The file of documents—eight letters—hitherto unpublished, depict his entire service from the time he left Mexico City in January, 1846, until the surrender of the California forces at Cahuenga, January 12, 1847. (Gillespie indicates that he wrote three more letters describing his departure from the United States and arrival in Mexico, but they have not been found, nor does the Navy Department have any record of having received them.) The eight letters here printed were written as reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy, and contain a mass of detail about matters as Gillespie saw them. Since he was writing confidentially, he was not afraid to state facts baldly. As to substance, the documents do not shed any new light on the burning question of secret instructions; the two indications given in the letters of July 25, 1846, and July 8, 1848, support first one side and then the other. The complete story of the conquest is told here by an active participant who until this time has been almost silent, a participant who was able to view events from a favored position. Although it is apparent that details concerning himself must be scanned with care, yet he was a trained observer and his descriptions are exceedingly well done. His account of the skirmish at San Pascual is one of the best ever written. The letters also tell of the character of the man, his energy and his egotism, something which has long needed explanation.

The publication of the documents, so long delayed, has been made possible by the forward looking policy of the United States Navy Department, expressed through the officer in charge of the Naval library and records, Captain Knox, retired. Scholars are now invited to work in the archives, and every as-

sistance is rendered them to facilitate research. The letters in question, which have been in the regular file for many years, seem to have been overlooked and have not even been used for footnote materials. When the Native Sons of the Golden West sent the present researcher to Washington, D. C., among the first documents he saw were those of Gillespie, and it was his high privilege to bring them west once more.

The letters speak for themselves, they need little editing; in fact, any persistent attempt to annotate them would destroy much of their charm, for they carry their own footnotes. No spelling or punctuation has been altered, although modern spelling has been suggested in a few cases. Archi H. Gillespie himself speaks:

Masatlan February 11 1846

To the Honorable  
the Secretary of the Navy  
Washington  
Sir

The mail goes out tonight, I hasten to send you a few lines to announce my arrival at this place on the 9th instant, hoping they may reach Vera Cruz in time for the packet of the 1st prox.

I have traveled with all despatch from Tepic, and made journies of sixty and forty five miles per day on horseback, arriving here the afternoon of the sixth day.

I find here the Savannah, Constitution, Levant, Cyane, Portsmouth, Shark, and Store Ship Erie. the two last arrived on the 9th inst from Callao direct—The Warren is daily expected from Panama, having been sent for the mail of December—The HBM Razee America and Brig Frolic are also here—the Talbot is still at San Blas and the Modeste is daily expected from the North Coast. The English Admiral was bound to California, but received despatches at Honolulu, which caused him to return again to Tahite.

Yesterday I had an interview with Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat, and gave him your instructions—a vessel will immediatly be put in readiness to convey me to my place of destination, but having given out that I am on my way to China, it is better no particular haste should be evinced, as the British Cruisers very closely watch the movements of our Squadron.

The Squadron is in good health, and anxiously looking [for] definite news from the United States in relation to the present position of affairs.

Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat informed me that there is a sheet of Copper off of his ship below the water line, which he intends to have replaced as soon as the Erie is discharged.

From the North I hear anything that is favorable—not one word said, which is opposed to the views of those who wish well to the country—

The English Government send all its communications by Express across the country—The President's Message was sent express from Mexico to the

Commanding officer of the British Men of War in port.

There have been three Revolutions in this place within the last ten days but they were confined principally to the office seekers. The place is very quiet now and is the only town in a thriving condition in Mexico.

Begetting you to excuse the haste in which this is written as I am obliged to select a time to escape observation.

I am, Sir

Very Respectfully

Your Mo. Obt. Serv't

ARCHI H. GILLESPIE

Masatlan February 18 1846

To the Honorable  
the Secretary of the Navy  
Washington  
Sir

I addressed the Department from Tepic and also from this place, in haste, on the 11th instant. The object of the present communication, is to give the Department information of the travel across the country from Mexico, as also, some account of the feeling of the people of the interior toward the United States.

I left Mexico by the Diligence for Guadalajara, which place I reached on the afternoon of the seventh day. The greatest part of the road is pretty good, and mostly over the open country, without any labour or money having been expended to improve it. During the whole journey I was taken for a Mexican, and I entered into conversation with the people on the road and at different towns upon the topics which appear to occupy their minds almost entirely, those of the usurpation of General Paredes, and the War with the United States—I found them without exception, opposed to the rule of the Army and are very desirous, that a Treaty should be made that they might have peace—They say, “Our country is being destroyed by these selfish aspirants for power, and we wish for a government which will, like the United States, give us security and protection for our person and property”—The feeling is very strong against General Paredes, and force alone has placed his party in power; yet whilst these people are so opposed to the Army and the frequent changes of government, and are really very desirous to have peace, they have not energy to rise and put an end to this unfortunate state of the Country, which has resources almost beyond calculation—From Tepic to this place the country is very beautiful, and but a very small proportion is under cultivation—The Indian population however, is perhaps, the most miserable in the world. They live in a most degraded condition, and are satisfied with the meanest kind of fare—On the road from Guadalajara, I slept in mud huts, and at some of the places, I could procure nothing to eat, but the Tortilla cake made of

corn and water, baked on the ashes. They are almost without clothing, and present an appearance of less civilization than some of the Islanders of the Pacific.

Of all the numerous towns through which I passed, there is but one where there exists the least energy or industry. Leon is quite an industrious manufacturing town, and contains some 70,000 inhabitants. Serapes, Rebozos, Saddles, Bridles, Stirrups, Spurs and articles used in the interior of the country, are made at this place. The Serape made of wollen is the principal dress of the men of the Indian population, whilst the Rebozo is that of the women—The former is used as a shirt, blanket and protection against the weather—the latter is made of cotton and is used by every woman in the country, as a covering for the head and shoulders. The Departments of the North and interior are very generally supplied with these articles by Leon, where the noise of the Loom and Anvil is constantly heard, presenting an astonishing contrast to the rest of the country. A very rich capitalist was a passenger in the Coach as far as Leon, whither he went to make purchases to fill the return waggons, which had made the journey from St. Louis M<sup>o</sup>. to the fair of San Juan, held on the 8th of December last, a distance of 900 leagues. I afterwards passed one of the waggons, and I assure you Sir, it was flattering to my feelings to meet with a familiar acquaintance like the Pennsylvania waggon so distant from my native land. One hundred and eighty of these waggons were at the fair loaded with American and foreign manufactures—When the goods are sold the waggons are disposed of at very high rates, being considered notwithstanding their long travel superior to anything of the kind made in Mexico—The fair of San Juan was very great this year, over 150,000 persons and 16,000 mules and horses were assembled there—Many goods were sold, but there was less money than usual; but to show the superstition of the people and the influence the priests have over them, the Church of San Juan during the eight days, which is the time allotted for its continuance, received in alms and gratuities fifty eight thousand dollars.

At Irapuato a small town between Queretaro and Guanahuato, we came up with the Infantry of the division of the Army on its march for the frontiers of Texas, and which left Mexico on the 8th January, 2700 strong, instead of 4000, as reported in the City. It was a cold rainy day, and there never were human beings in a more pitiable condition, than these poor Indians, who suffer without a murmur. They were dressed in summer Uniforms, without shoes, without blankets, and were even without provisions. They had actually begged their way from the City, and the officers had great difficulty in persuading the people to give their men, wherewith to sustain them on the March. In consequence of the heavy rains, which have been quite out of season this year, the Troops made very short marches, the men not being able to endure the fatigue, from actual scarcity of provisions—After leaving Guanahuato we came up with the Artillery 200 strong, and 1000 Cavalry—They had

halted at Celao, a small town, like the generality of these small places, falling to ruins. These last named troops were so very poorly appointed, that the men were obliged to lead their horses and keep two days in advance of the Infantry. At Celao, I conversed with some of the officers, who informed me that their fellows of the Division are very generally dissatisfied, and are quite unfavorable to the service upon which they have been ordered. In the first place, they were selected for this service from having been the last to hold out for the legitimate government, upon the approach of General Paredes to Mexico, and in the next, the want of money and provisions, have created general disaffection throughout the Division. General Ampudia who goes to command upon the frontier, is the only person who reaps any benefit from the service. General Arista has retired to private life, yet the general impression is, that he is ready to head a movement against the new government, and the arrival of the troops now on the march for the frontier, will no doubt hasten his declaration.

Guanahuato, at which place I passed the night, is one of the principal mining districts—it was so late when I arrived, that I could not visit any of the mines or the mint, yet I was enabled to collect some little information in relation to the operations of the past year. During 1845 there was coined at this Mint but \$2,100,000, whilst the Mines of Zacatecas yielded \$6,000,000. There is a population of 10,000 Indians, who subsist by the Mines, great numbers dying every year. In the mine "De la luz" 700 men died in two years, yet such is the infatuation of the people, their places are immediatly supplied, there being more applicants for work than are required—There are a great many English at Guanahuato who are principally engaged in Mining—I am informed that the English Company at Rio del Monte have almost failed, and that every dollar that they have gotten from the mine has cost them nine reals (\$1.12½). At Guadalajara orders were recieved by mail which arrived with myself, that every retired officer should immediatly repair to the frontier of Texas, or be considered as inimical to the government. The City was very quiet and I am told, the people give themselves very little trouble about the Government of the Capital.

From Tepic I sent a communication to the Department, written in haste, in relation to Don José Maria Castaños who holds the appointment of Consul—Since then I have learned, that he holds the appointment of Alcalde, and takes an active part in all the political affairs of the country—His contempt of Americans generally, and the disrespectful language he has used towards the government of the United States, are subjects of comment even in this place. I stated in the letter referred to, that there was a Mr Whiting at Tepic an American, and a very worthy person, who had said he would refuse the appointment were it offered to him, and that he has a Cotton Factory near Tepic—The Factory is owned by Barron, Forbes and Company, an English house of much reputation, and which has shown the greatest attention to Americans, though having the interest of its own nation close at heart.—Mr Forbes has

written a work upon California, and has strongly urged upon his government the possession of that province in exchange for claims against Mexico—Mr Barron H.B.M Consul having gone to England, Mr Forbes has charge of the Consulate, consequently Mr Whiting would not be a proper person to hold that of our nation. I visited the factory mentioned above, and was very much gratified to find all the Machinery from Newton, Mass; and all the foreigners employed, seven in number, to be Americans. There are 4500 spindles in operation, which employ 250 persons at 37½ per day—The Factory is in beautiful order, and reflects great credit upon the Superintendent Mr Whiting, who from his character and worth occupies a highly respectable position.

As the Department might wish to send a Messenger across the country, which can be done without any fear of molestation, an accurate account of the mode of travelling, will not be unimportant. From having entirely escaped observation, notwithstanding my annoying detention in Mexico, I feel fully satisfied no difficulty or interruption would be met with, if the Messenger were to speak Spanish and follow the following directions.

On leaving the United States a passport should be taken out from a Mexican Consul for Masatlan, as a Merchant. On arriving at Vera Cruz it will be countersigned, and receives the seal of the Prefect, and will then only be shown when required, which did not happen to me once after landing in the country—The Diligence leaves for the City of Mexico three times a week, and arrives on the afternoon of the fourth day—At all the different towns where the Coach stops over night, a Custom House officer is in waiting to search the luggage, yet rarely looks at the baggage of a respectable looking person, particularly if he shows himself ready to have it searched—Only twenty five pounds of luggage can be put upon the Coach by each passenger, consequently for dispatch a portmanteau can only be used. In Mexico the Coach stops at the “Hotel de las Diligencias” from which place, the Coach for Guadalajara also starts three times a week—Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays—so that arriving the evening previous to any of those days, there is but a detention of one night. Arriving at Guadalajara the afternoon of the seventh day, it is necessary to procure a Horse and Mule for Tepic, where you arrive the evening of the fourth day, by travelling at good speed—Should there not be any vessel sailing for Masatlan from San Blas, one day’s ride from Tepic, it is advisable to proceed immediatly by land, and by travelling steadily the journey can be performed in six days. It is necessary to be well armed, and to show the pistols at all stopping places, for the Robbers, having spies in every Meson, do not think of attacking a traveller who is prepared to meet them. Twenty one days from Vera Cruz is the shortest time the journey can be performed in, without riding express.

The English Government are constantly sending expresses across the coun-

try—The Commanding officer of HBM America, a brother of Lord Aberdeen's, recieved the President's message several days before Commodore Sloat knew it was here. Our countrymen are constantly traveling throughout the Republic, without the least molestation, no questions being asked or notice being taken of them. The trade of Masatlan has increased so much, that travelling through Mexico has become a matter of every day occurrence. Commodore Sloat is very much in want of information from the Department, and is looking daily for the arrival of the Warren Sloop of War from Panama with the December mail. I hope to announce her arrival before I close this communication. Yesterday the Bando or decree to hold the elections for the Congress under the new government was published throughout this place. Very little notice was paid to it the people caring very little for the affairs of the City. General Urrea has arrived entirely without a party and having even but few private friends—he keeps himself very secluded never leaving his house; however the general impression appears to be, that he has come here for the purpose of pronouncing against the Government—Last night reports were circulated that another revolution would take place, but this morning every thing is quiet and nothing more said upon the subject. The Court Martial now holding on board of the Sloop of War Cyane, for the trial of Acting Midshipman Hobson of the Constitution, will probably adjourn on Friday or Saturday next, when I hope Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat will send that ship to sea. She will be despatched for the Sandwich Islands, to prevent the British Cruisers knowing anything about my movements—They are constantly on the watch, and suspect that the object of the Squadron being on this Coast, is to take the Californias, in the event of a war.

I find that the trade between this place and Monterey is very limited, and carried on in very small vessels—There is rarely one vessel in six months—the merchants here will no longer trust the people of Monterey, whose credit is entirely destroyed. Should the Department wish to communicate with the Squadron, a letter sent under cover to Mott, Talbot & Co at this place will, I think, arrive in perfect safety—There is little or any attention paid to correspondence, unless it be, of the different parties in the country, and it being generally understood that our government will not send correspondence across Mexico, I am fully persuaded there would be no danger of its being intercepted, particularly if it should appear upon its face to be a private letter.

Hoping to date my next letter from my place of destination.

I am, Sir

Very Respectfully etc.

A. H. GILLESPIE



To the Honorable  
the Secretary of the Navy  
Washington

At Sea April 15 1846

Sir

As I am now approaching my port of destination, I hasten to prepare a communication for the mail to be carried by this Ship to Masatlan.

Agreeably with the arrangements of Commodore Sloat, we sailed from Masatlan for the Sandwich Islands on 22<sup>d</sup> February, and arrived there on 13th March, after a very pleasant passage of eighteen days. Captain Mervine had orders to remain at Honolulu but forty-eight hours, yet at the same time recieved orders to perform duty, take in Stores, and procure supplies for the Squadron which occupied him Six days, the officers making every exertion to hasten our departure. We finally sailed on the 19th, and have had one of the most disagreeable and stormy passages I have ever experienced—Constant headwind, blowing a gale from the East—hard for fourteen days, when the wind became very light, still blowing from E.S. E. and South East, accompanied with a very thick fog, the temperature cold and damp. We ran as far north as 45.23 yet did not meet with a Westerly wind, until 11th instant when the weather became clear and bright.

From the experience of this voyage, I am convinced that I was correct in supposing the voyage could be made much quicker along the Coast, than by going such an immense distance. It is considered by those with whom I have conversed, a passage of twenty days, but Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat insisted that it was a mistake, and would certainly take at least forty perhaps fifty days. As I considered his knowledge of such matters to be superior to my own I, of course was obliged to be governed by it, but I am now fully satisfied that my information was correct. The Commodore has also, perhaps, another object in view in causing this vessel to make so long a voyage; he did not wish to lessen his force more than was absolutely necessary, and as Supplies from the Islands are very much required, he made this Ship perform two duties, as upon the return passage it is necessary to run well to the North. It, also, somewhat served my purposes by drawing observation from my movements—

At Honolulu I found everything in relation to the Government in a worse state, than when I was there one year since in the Frigate Brandywine. Mr [George] Brown [U. S. Commissioner] was still suspended from all official intercourse, and fears of the British Government, alone prevented the English Consul General, Gen'l [William] Miller, from recieving similar treatment. The Americans generally are constantly in expectation of some unjustifiable attack from the Attorney General John Ricord, who is without doubt one of the veriest knaves who ever escaped from civilized society to become a Kanaka. All the trouble and difficulty under which the Americans have laboured for the last two years, has originated with this man, who was driven

from the settlement at the Willamette Falls, in consequence of his being a common disturber of the public peace; and when he landed at Honolulu he announced himself as "an adventurer, ready for anything"; which was the only recommendation he offered to our Consul when seeking employment, and that the Settlers did well to drive him from Oregon, has been satisfactorily proved by his conduct towards his countrymen at the Islands.

Among the most arbitrary acts of Mr Ricord, is the imprisonment of honest Seamen who may be awaiting on shore, the opportunity to ship in a new vessel; they having been discharged from the one in which they arrived, according to law.

All the arguments used and representations made by our Consul, Mr Abell, have not obtained the release of the Americans, who are confined in miserable dungeons, filled with filth and vermin, for no other reason, than that they will not take the oath of Allegiance to His Hawaiian Majesty; yet, the mere demand from General Miller, obtains the release of English Seamen imprisoned for the same alleged offence.

Whenever, in the course of discussion of the different questions which have arisen, the Authorities find that their opponents have justice and reason on their side, they descend to low abuse and ribaldry, the only mode by which they endeavor to extricate themselves from the unjustifiable and illegal positions they assume.

Justice, however, must be done the Natives, who know very little about the proceedings of Messrs Wylie, Judd [Robert Crichton Wyllie, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Gerrit P. Judd, Minister of Finance], and Ricord; or if they are informed of the acts of the Ministers, the latter have so completely gotten possession of the Authority of the Chiefs, it will be only from apprehension of danger to the Kingdom, they will be awakened to a sense of the wrong done them by these foreigners, who are not actuated by motives of philanthropy, but solely with a view to their own interests.

The Department may be assured, that this is not a hastily formed opinion, or prejudice upon my part. The men who have control of the King of Hawaii, cannot be correctly judged but upon the scene of their malicious and wicked acts; for I cannot conceive of an act of greater cruelty, than to immure in an unwholesome filthy dungeon, the receptacle of the most degraded Indians, an honest Sailor, who is awaiting on shore the opportunity to get employment in another Ship, and that too, because he will not forswear his allegiance to his country and his home. A circumstance of this nature, presented itself when this Ship was at Honolulu. A Sailor had then been imprisoned several months, without any attention having been paid to the protest of the Consul, or any remonstrance having been made by the Captains of any of our Men of War, to effect his release. which had induced Mr Ricord to go about the town, jeering at the Government of the United States, and ridiculing the authority of our Naval Commanders. If this person were dispossessed of the position he

now occupies, and the influence he has obtained over his Hawaiian Majesty, any similar conduct would be unworthy of notice; but occupying as he does a respectable post under the Government, it gives might to his remarks, which under other circumstances would not receive the least attention.

Our countrymen were looking for the arrival of the New Commissioner with great anxiety, hoping to find in him, a person of dignity, talents, and decision of character, which may enable him, to arrange the existing difficulties. The Americans are highly respectable and very peaceably disposed. They make no objection to the Hawaiian laws, they only wish justice to be dispensed according to them, and not according to the construction of them or ipse dixit of Mr Ricord; who has such control and influence over Messrs Wylie and Judd, that his opinion is law; in consequence of which, some of the most arbitrary acts have emanated from them, such as would disgrace an Eastern despotism—Illegal proceedings have been carried to such an extent, it is impossible to say how far they will allow their passions and prejudices to carry them, for the Hawaiian Code is now translated by them to suit their own purposes. The Missionaries, those worthy men, who have done so much to advance the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Islanders, and to whom in connexion with the Whalemens, the King of Hawaii is indebted for the position he now holds among the nations of earth, view with sorrow the present state of affairs; and say, they little thought they would ever see this day, when their own countrymen or any other, would suffer injustice from one who was formerly one of their members. They censure in the most decided manner Dr Judd, who being entirely ignorant of diplomatic affairs and of the practice of law, is governed in everything by Mr Ricord. That this person should have obtained such an ascendancy is singularly strange, as he is ignorant of even the forms of polite society; it is impossible for him to speak a few words in public; he cannot address a jury, and is obliged to reduce upon paper every idea he wishes to convey.

The present state of affairs cannot last much longer, and the greatest fear now entertained there is, that the English Agents will receive some insult, which will call forth the interference of the English Squadron, Admiral Seymour having asserted most positively, that he will immediately notice any insult to the flag, or any tampering with the Allegiance of English Subjects.

It is evidently the intention of the English Government to make a depot at the Islands. By an understanding with the Authorities, Mr Pelley, the Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company is building a large Store House, which is no doubt intended for the Naval Forces, in connexion with the Company; which already has a Store and Sheds, sufficiently large for any moderate supply; particularly as the amount of English Stores sold at the Islands, is small compared with the receipt of Flour Salmon, and lumber from the Oregon Settlements; which supplies are so soon disposed of, that under the existing state of affairs, I view with well founded suspicion any preparations which may be

made, at this day, by British Agents to secure a foothold in this most flourishing region of Polynesia. and besides, it appears somewhat singular, that the Hudson's Bay Company should erect their Stores at the present moment, when the question of permanence of its authority in Oregon is being discussed. Mr Pelley is a man of much influence at home, is a shrewd politic man, and by paying court to Mr Ricord is enabled to obtain anything he wishes. He has a great hatred of the American people generally; which sometimes shows itself in a plain manner, and whilst he may be upon terms of intimacy and apparent good feeling with our Countrymen, is ever ready to turn to his own and the advantage of his Government, any difficulties which may arise. Mr Ricord is flattered by the court and high opinion of Mr Pelley, who throughout his intercourse with the foreign officials, has been governed by selfish motives.

The American residents at Honolulu are well aware of the intimacy and good understanding existing between these persons, yet appear to have lost sight of the object, the Agent has in view; their attention being drawn to the difficulties existing with the Consular Agents, whilst the quiet intrigue in another quarter escapes unnoticed. My impressions may be erroneous, but I know Mr Pelley so well both from observation and reputation, that I am fully satisfied he is a person who should be closely watched, if it be the interest of our Government, that the Independence of the Sandwich Islands should be maintained.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and annoyances our Countrymen have had to contend against, they continue to arrive at the Islands, which are increasing in wealth, quite beyond the expectations of the most sanguine settlers. The Imports the last year were very large, amounting to \$706,102.78, being an increase upon former years of \$196,594.69; and 'tis estimated that there is about \$150,000 of goods on hand. The Exports show a flattering increase of agriculture, towards which the attention of the Settlers is now principally drawn. The total amount of Exports for the year 1845 was \$706,102.78, of which Sugar and Molasses made the greatest proportion. Of the former there were 302,114 pounds; of the latter, 19,353 Gallons. There was also exported \$55,000 in Specie, the largest proportion of which is left at the Islands by the Vessels of War. I should have noticed above under the head of Imports, that \$59,666.06 was from Columbia River and California, in Lumber, flour, fish, furs, hides, tallow and horses. The sum total of the revenue for the year 1845 amounted to \$30,000, a very large proportion of which, was paid by our countrymen; Men of War, Whalemens and Merchant traders. showing very plainly, that it is to the Americans the King of Hawaii is indebted for the great prosperity of his Kingdom, yet they are those who are constantly being injured in their persons and property, by the advice of an adventurer, who neither from his public or private character, would receive the notice of honest men in any other part of the world.

At Honolulu I met with a Mr Ricker who had just returned from a trading voyage to Kamtchatka and Columbia River—He gave me much interesting information, and related one circumstance respecting Oregon, which it is highly important should be known to the Department. Mr Ricker was in Oregon some six weeks, and while at Astoria, one of the Agents of the Hudson's Bay Company, after considerable negotiation, induced a Negro, who had been one of the Crew of the Peacock, and had settled upon the point of land known as "Cape Disappointment," to dispose of it to the Company for \$400. A Fort at Cape Disappointment will command the entrance to the River, and that this purchase was made with a view to such defence, was generally understood, and was not doubted by any one. This movement was looked upon by the Settlers, as showing a decidedly hostile feeling; at all events, a determination to be prepared in the event of war.

H.B.M Sloop of War Modeste was at Columbia River at the last accounts, and had been there sometime. The Settlers shew much feeling upon her entrance, and most heartily wished that they could sieze their rifles and rake her decks as she passed. They look with great anxiety and hope for the arrival of an Agent of our Government, if not to take immediate jurisdiction, at least, to have an eye upon the movements of British Agents. They fear that our vessels of war will not visit them, and hope the day is not far distant, when they will recieve the protection of the Star Spangled Banner.

The above is almost in the words of Mr Ricker, who is a very intelligent person, and also stated, that the enthusiasm and patriotism of our Countrymen is very great, and that they will be ready at a moments warning, to rally around the Standard of our Country's Union, in defence of the principles and liberties handed down to us by our forefathers, and which are now maintained by the President of the United States.

I am, Sir

Very Respectfully  
Your M<sup>o</sup> Obt Serv,t.  
ARCHI H. GILLESPIE.

To the Honorable  
Secretary of the Navy  
Washington  
Sir

Monterey April 18th 1846

I have the pleasure to announce my arrival at this place, after a passage of 29 days from the Sandwich Islands. Although I have been so long reaching the end of my journey, I find that I bring the latest dates from U States, as also, from Mexico; and under every circumstance, it was much better that I went to Oahu. The passage was made from Honolulu a few weeks since in twelve days—

I regret very much that I cannot give as favorable an account of the state of the Country, as I anticipated I would be able to send you; however, I do not look upon the present feeling against the settlers as indicative of any honest patriotism towards the Government of Mexico. Should the letters from the gentlemen to whom you *gave me letters of introduction* have arrived, you will have been informed of the unwarranted attempt made to drive Capt Fremont from the country, and of the bold and chivalrous manner in which he entrenched his small party, and defied the approach of some two hundred of the people of the country to attack him; and of his having left this section, without any molestation. The whole affair on the part of these people, was a demonstration to make Capital at the city of Mexico; from whence they have been fearful an expedition would be sent, to compel them to subject themselves to the Central Government.

Don José Castro, the Commandant General, is a man devoid of principal, and is now endeavoring to get up a revolution to depose the Governor of California, Don Pio Pico, who resides some four hundred miles south of this, at the Pueblo de los Angeles; and has asserted, "that if the Government of Mexico should send a force against California, he will immediatly join the Emigrants, rally as many as he can to defeat the Expedition; but on the other hand, should they be satisfied with the present state of affairs, and not endeavor to compel him to subject himself to the Central Government, he will do his utmost to keep the Americans out of the Country," which is no more in his power, than it is for him to command the Sun to stand still, or to shine no more. General Castro has no force, say, some twenty five men, called Soldiers, composed principally of degenerated Indians; but he can gather some two or three hundred Californians of Spanish blood, who have a holy horror of the American rifle, and will never expose themselves to make an attack—Whilst there are, at least, three hundred riflemen, whom the honest intention of settling a new country has drawn from their Native land; and are ready at a moments warning to rally in defence of their new homes and firesides. There are now some thousand emigrants in California, who respect the laws of the land, such as they are—It is very true, that they are left very much to their own Government; the Authority of the Mexican Republic, being scarcely felt in this far distant region; yet they have never violated any laws, which would authorise any warfare being made upon them. Three hundred Riflemen offered their services to Cap't Fremont, who, had he pleased, might have taken the country; but as he has written to my friend, he "had done no wrong either to the people or the Authorities, and as he intended to keep good faith with the Mexican Republic, he could not accept the Services of his Countrymen.—"

Cap't Frémont has gone to the North, whither I shall proceed immediatly, and will no doubt overtake him in four days, & will be able to return here in time for the next ship; which I expect will reach this in the course of a few days or two weeks; and should I obtain from him any thing of importance, will

send a Courier across the Southern country as you directed. I am now writing in very great haste for this Ship, Cap't Mervine being in such haste, that it was with difficulty the Consul and myself could persuade him to remain to give an opportunity, to write even short letters, much less collect any information. My friend here, complains very much that this has always been the case, whenever our men of War have been here, thus losing the very best opportunity for sending despatches.—In consequence of which, I beg leave to advise, that some instructions be sent to the Squadron in relation to the necessity of waiting at this port a sufficient time to prepare correspondence for the Mail—I would not mention this fact, did I not know, that there is no reason why this ship should not remain here at least forty eight hours—

The Country in this vicinity is beautiful, and presents to the sea one of the most beautiful landscapes I have ever seen. The verdure is very rich, and the hills are covered with groves of pines, free from undergrowth, giving the ensemble an appearance of an extensive park. The town of Monterey is small, containing not over one hundred houses, built upon streets running back from the beach, but are in some cases far apart. Everything about the town has a primitive appearance, and nothing is to be met with, that will remind the traveller of the refinements of long settled countries. But I am happy to inform the Department, that I find our Consul, a gentleman entirely different from what I anticipated and every way worthy of the confidence reposed in him; and occupies a position here, which has enabled him to protect the interest of our Countrymen with all the zeal his patriotism inspires, and his good judgement would dictate. I am sorry however to learn, that he thought of resigning the Consulship, in consequence of his bills having been protested, and the allowance made to him by the Department being so small, as to subject him to serious loss, & from what I have been able to gather from him, to much mortification; for the fact of his having drawn for the amount of the actual expenses incurred, induced the impression that the Department thought, he had increased the amount beyond the expenditure; however, the instructions I have brought him and the explanations I have made, have removed all unpleasant feelings—Expenses here are very much greater than I had any idea they would be—To give an example, Mr Larkin wished to send a Courier to the North, which would have cost some \$150 to \$200, and which service I intend to perform myself, thus obtaining much information by personal observation, and which will enable me to give early advice; but I will at the same time have to suffer much fatigue and hardship with much privation; however, I feel quite equal to it, and I mention the circumstance solely to assure the Department, it need have no fears for my safety or the good success of the undertaking. To return however to the subject of Expenses and the protested Bills of the Consulate, I will as soon as possible, make enquiry into the matter, and give the Department early information of the same.

I find the English Vic Consul [James Alexander Forbes] and French Consul

[Louis Gasquet, Acting French Consul] have scarcely any standing here. The English Consul is now at Yerba Buena at San Francisco, and the Frenchman has nothing what ever to occupy him, nor has he the least influence with the people.

The last accounts from Oregon are not so late as I obtained at Honolulu yet they are somewhat different. It is said that all the Government Agents and also those of the Hudson's Bay Company have put themselves under the authority of the local Government and pay every respect to the laws. Mr Rea [William Glen Rae], who is mentioned in your despatch, shot himself not long since and has been succeeded by a Mr [Dugald] McTavish who has orders to dispose of the property of the Company in California and return to Oregon. This person was here a short time since and has stated that Dr McLaughlin the H.B. Company's Superintendent finding that Settlers were making such rapid progress towards forming a Government wrote to England for instructions what course to pursue and recieved for reply "to act toward the settlers in such a manner as to him might seem best" consequently he immediatly put himself under the protection of the local authorities.

Since writing the foregoing the Consul has recieved a note from Cap't Mervine in reply to one addressed to him by Mr Larkin, stating that he could not possibly prepare his correspondence in the short time Capt M proposed remaining, wherein Capt M consents to remain until tomorrow forenoon.

Since my arrival there has been so much excitement, and such enquiry made about who I am, and what brings me to this part of the world, I have not been able to converse with but one gentleman in relation to the Country. He is a very worthy Scotchman, and has been in the Country some twenty one years. Mr Spence speaks of California as the garden spot of the world, and not to be equalled by any other. He told me, that in September last a Mine of quicksilver was discovered near Santa Clara, situated eighteen leagues south of San Francisco, which produced eight ounces of silver from fifteen of earth. The mode of obtaining the Silver was very primitive. The Indians procured an old Musket barrel, stopped the touch hole & placed the Muzzle in a bucket of water, having first rammed the earth into the barrel as hard as possible. They then made a fire under it and the quicksilver flowed into the water in a stream. Mr Spence assured me that there is no doubt of the truth of the story—Near the same place large pieces of lead have been found upon the surface of the earth—In the south, near San Diego, there is a Copper mine, so near the sea that vessels can load without any difficulty, in a very short time. There is also plenty of Coal well calculated for household purposes. I have mentioned above, that the hills in this vicinity are beautifully green—Much to my surprise, Mr Spence informed me that they are covered with Wild Oats, the spontaneous growth of the soil, and that to the North of this, whole sections are covered in like manner; and as this gentleman remarked "We only want a Government which will secure our property to us to be the richest people in the



world"—So little attention is paid to the commission of crime, that there is scarcely any security for property—The Indians have now become so troublesome and bold, that they come into the towns at night and plunder all horses and cattle they can find; however they are careful not to molest any settlement of American Emmigrants, whom they fear and respect. They have discernment to discover that the Californians are cowardly and inert, and that the Americans will punish them without mercy if they should be caught stealing. The Government of California must soon fall into the hands of a very different set of men, than those who direct its destinies at present; and as this last movement will no doubt satisfy General Paredes of the Patriotism of the officials here, no interference need be looked for from that quarter—The tide of Emmigration will continue to flow on rapidly, and will place beyond doubt or fear any European interference. It would be perfectly impossible for any European Power to take possession of the country, unless it were over run by an Armed force; in the event of which, the prognostication of the Department would be too truly verified.

I have just seen the Original Correspondence, which passed between the Commandant General and Our Consul, in relation to Captain Frémont. The translations made of them, and forwarded a few days since by the Consul to the Department, (duplicates of which accompany this in another packet) are quite correct—One or two words might be altered, but would not change the sense of the letters. I enclose a Copy of the letter written from the Camp by Cap't Frémont, when the force sent to compel him to leave the country could be seen with the Glass from the Entrenchment; & upon the same sheet I write the version of the affair as given to me by Mr Spence.

This moment Mr Melless [Henry Mellus], the gentleman to whom my Boston friends gave me letters, has stepped into my room and informs me, that Don José Castro shew[ed] him an order from Tornel, who was Minister of War under Gen'l Herrera, wherein, he reprimands the Commandant General for permitting Cap't Fremont to enter the territory on his first expedition, and directing in case he should return to the country, to drive him from its limits. Castro remarked at the same time "You see I had good authority for what I have done, but do you suppose I would have injured that man or made an attack upon him? No, indeed! I made use of the circumstance to suit my purposes, and to insure my position at Mexico"—A friend of Castro's, Don Juan B. Alvarado was present at the time the above remarks were made, and approved of the measures which had been taken. Alvarado is a man of much influence here, but has intemperate habits and is not to be relied upon. Mr Melless assures me, that the people generally are very indignant, that Cap't Fremont has been treated in this manner; that they all speak in warm praise of his conduct, and of the course he pursued being so different from the officers of Mexico, who never pay for what they get and use the people harshly and with great contempt. My friend also states, that he has just heard that there is

a representation in town from the peoples of the country (Spanish Californians) wishing to know from Don José Castro, what becomes of the duties of the Custom House at this place amounting to near \$90,000—They also wish to know “why they are taxed to pay for raising bodies of Armed men, & why a number of vagabond idle officers are kept here, drawing pay without rendering any service to the Country”. From the same person I learned that a new law is being enforced or attempted, to prevent Emmigrants from settling upon lands, requiring from every stranger, letters of Citizenship, which must be taken out in Mexico and cannot be obtained short of two or three years and much doubt is entertained if they would be granted at all. Castro published an advertisement, which he posted up in the Billiard Room and Café upon his return from his demonstration before the small band of the gallant Frémont, wherein he stated, that he had driven the gang of Bandoleros commanded by an officer of the U.S. Army from the Country and has wiped out the stain upon “the honor Nacional”—This Bando has given great offence to the Majority of the people, who say, it was an unmerited insult; and even Castro himself told Mr Melles, that “so far from Cap’t Fremont having done anything wrong, he turned an old horse out of his camp which had strayed with those of the party and using strong language he remarked “se ha portado como un buen caballero y un honrado official”—“he has conducted himself as a worthy gentleman and an honorable officer.”

From the above I trust the Department will be able to gather that Cap’t Fremont has pursued a highminded honorable course, and that Don Jose Castro is a treacherous cowardly knave—and I assure the Department his looks do not belie his character.

That the Department may know if all my letters come to hand, I commence this as number *one*, it being the first I have written in the country, which I send in haste, and pray the Department to read with a lenient eye, pardoning all errors as I have had to write as I could get an opportunity, and mostly written since ten o'clock 'tis now near one AM. I give the Department the dates of all letters written up to this time. From Vera Cruz 13th Dec'r 1845

“ Mexico 17th Jan'y 1846

“ Tepic 3<sup>d</sup> Feb'y “

“ Masatlan 12th “ “

“ “ 21<sup>st</sup> “ “

At sea 16th April “

The precautions I have taken, warrent me in writing so fully and distinctly, and I feel quite certain of my letter reaching the Department from 10th to 15th June, should there be no change in the affairs of Mexico.

I am, Sir,

Very Respectfully

Your Obt Serv,t

ARCHI H. GILLESPIE

(To be continued)

# GILLESPIE AND THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

*From Letters Dated February 11, 1846, to July 8, 1848,  
to the Secretary of the Navy*

*With an Introduction by* GEORGE WALCOTT AMES, JR.

(Continued)

Monterey July 25th 1846\*

To the Honorable  
The Secretary of the Navy  
Washington  
Sir

Since my arrival in this country, I have been so constantly in the Saddle and been so far distant from any opportunity to send letters to the United States, it has been out of my power to communicate to the Department the events which have taken place; and at this moment the time allowed me to write is so short and every moment of it so much occupied, I am unable to give the Department a full relation of the important occurrences which have succeeded each other so rapidly since my landing in California; however, it affords me great satisfaction to inform the Department that my time has been employed profitably, and that I have not lost sight for one moment of the great object which brought me to this Country, and that although Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat raised the American Flag at Monterey on the 7th inst; the whole of the Northern part of California was in possession of the American Settlers, who had declared the Independence of California at Sonoma on the 17th June last; and that had Commodore Sloat waited but a few short weeks, the Country from the [North] to the South would have been under a well organised Government, free and independent from Mexican tyranny and Military despotism.

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\*A letter from Gillespie headed "Headquarters U. S. Troops, San Diego, November 25th 1846," indicates that the above letter was not sent until that date because "I was so much occupied that I could not conclude it before I embarked on board of the Cyane Sloop of War, for passage to this place with the force under the Command of Lieut Colonel Fremont," and that since then he had been "employed upon service in the field, at places distant from the point from whence the Couriers were sent." He referred the Department to Commodore Stockton's dispatches for "an account of my movements and the duty I have performed, since the commencement of the War, with the hope, that the Honorable Secretary will be fully assured that I have not been idle but on the contrary have been constantly laboring in the cause for the success of which I was sent to this Country."

To give the Department a relation of every circumstance which so suddenly brought about this happy event, would require more time than is allowed me to communicate them, I will therefore state, that upon landing from the Cyane Sloop of War, I proceeded North to overtake Cap't Fremont; that upon my road I found all the Settlers very much incensed against the officers of the Government, who were treating them with the greatest tyranny and breaking every promise made when they were invited to this Country, to occupy the lands offered to them by the Mexican Authorities. The Settlers were threatened with extermination, did they not leave their new homes and retire beyond the limits of California. Wherever I stopped for a night or even a few hours, the news of my arrival spread far distant, and many came to see and enquire of me the news from their Native land; many asked if the U. S. Government would look quietly on and allow them to be thus treated, and as some observed to be hunted like wild beasts by a mercenary Soldiery. They stated, that they had broken no laws, they had violated no pledges, they had asked but the peaceful occupancy of the lands they had cultivated with so much labour, and wished only for such wholesome laws for the security of thier persons and property, as would guaranty to every man equity and justice— These hardy men asked me for advice, and begged me to give them a word of comfort in their peculiar and trying position, as they did not wish to sieze their rifles, until positive necessity should compel them to defend themselves. I did my best endeavors to quiet their worst fears— I begged them to submit to the present and allow the current of events, to bring forward the happy period when they would obtain all their wishes, and that justice which was now denied them by the Authorities of California; yet I told them, they must be prepared to resist as one man and with stout hearts, any attempt which might be made by General Castro to enforce the threat already published, that, of driving them from the Country. I made them understand that they owed it to the name they bore as Americans, and to the land from which they came to protect their firesides from the attack of the Usurper and despot, and that in resisting such oppression they would receive the sympathies of their fellow countrymen and obtain the praise of the Civilized world. At Lassen's Ranche three hundred miles up the valley of the Sacramento, I found a large party of Emmigrants about starting for Oregon, in consequence of the unsettled state of affairs in the Country, the want of security and the uncertainty of being permitted to remain upon the lands which they might occupy— I endeavored to persuade them to delay a short time their departure, and to hope for a change in the policy of the Authorities of the Country; but my advice was lost, upon reading the President's late message; the inducements there held out to the pioneer, only made them more eager to return within the limits of the President's Authority, and where his protection could be felt, yet at the same time, it made the Settlers of the valley more determined to obtain for themselves, the same protection and the freedom of our institutions.

After remaining twelve hours at Lassen's, I hastened on my road to overtake Cap't Fremont's camp which it was supposed I could reach in three days, but which having traveled much faster than had been expected, was so far in advance, that I did not come up with any of the Party until the ninth day, when I met Cap't Fremont three hundred miles north of Lassen's, and upon the borders of Clamet [Klamath] Lake— The incidents of that adventurous journey, I will hope to relate at some future period; yet I will here state, that I passed through some hardships and dangers, but having the one object in view, I found myself quite equal to the fatigue of the hardest mountaineer of my party, and my only regret when looking back upon that journey is, that on the night I met Cap't Fremont, three of his men were killed by Indians, who had followed my trail some thirty miles— Two were killed while sleeping, and one, a Delaware, was shot with arrows whilst defending himself from the attack of the Clamet Chief, a Brave, who did not fall until the third rifle ball had entered his body— Hearing of my approach Cap't Fremont had very kindly rode back fifty miles with but a small party, which attention no doubt saved the lives of myself & party consisting [of] three persons.

Joining the Camp, we traveled round the Northern end of Clamet Lake, and took a Southern Course once more for the valley of the Sacramento. About twenty miles from the Southern end of the lake, our hunters came upon the Wigwam of the Clamets [Klamaths], and destroyed it, killing, I think, nine of them— Many articles of steel and tomahawks with the brand of the Northwest Company were found in their huts—

Arriving at Lassen's Ranche, we learned that General Castro had already issued his proclamation ordering all persons, not citizens, out of the territory; and also, that he really did intend to resist the entrance of the Emmigrants from the United States, expected to arrive in September next.

On our road down the valley, we found that General Castro was fast hurrying the crisis, which time would soon have brought about. The Indians of the valley formerly so peaceful, had become hostile, and had deserted their Rancheries or Wigwams for the Mountains, and killed some servants of the Settlers, and had threatened the lives of many whites. Arriving within sixty miles of New Helvetia (Sutter's), we were informed, that the Indians threatened to burn the wheat then advancing towards the harvest, promising a very rich and abundant crop— On the 29th May I left the Camp and hastened forward to Yerba Buena, Bay of San Francisco, to obtain supplies for the party, then almost destitute of the necessaries of life; indeed, many of the men had not salt for their beef, and were wanting in clothing to cover their nakedness, a large number having already substituted skins for cotton and cloth. On reaching Sutter's Fort, I was informed, that Castro was already organising his force, had engaged the Indians to burn the wheat when dry and ready for the Sickles, had given a Musket to an Indian of some note to shoot Mr Sutter, and was preparing every measure and making every effort to cut off the

Emmigration, and to leave the way worn traveler, as also the Settlers, without one Morsel of Bread. The Department can readily imagine the State of feeling among the people. It would have given pain to the hardest heart, to have witnessed the supplications of the hardy Settler and his wife, when begging aid and protection of Cap't Fremont on his road down the valley; who, true to his position and the strict neutrality required by the delicate situation which he occupied under the existing state of affairs; could only give them advice, and begged them to wait a positive demonstration on the part of Gen'l Castro. My advice to them was the same, adding that a short time would determine for them, what might be almost then foretold.

At Yerba Buena I was informed of Castro's having made preparations at Sonoma, as he said, to march against Pio Pico, the elected Governor of California, whom it was rumored, was proceeding North to put down General Castro's usurped Military Authority— Castro was collecting horses from different quarters, gathering, arming and otherwise preparing a large force for the field. Fortunately for Cap't Fremont's party, I found the Portsmouth Sloop of War at Sauzalito, Bay of San Francisco. Having made known to Cap't [John Berrien] Montgomery the wants of Cap't Fremont's party, he supplied the Camp as far as it was in his power, with a promptness and decision which does him great honour, and reflects credit upon his command— Cap't Montgomery gave me every assistance I desired, with a zeal and good feeling, which has won not only my esteem and respect, but also, the regard of Cap't Fremont and his grateful party.

In Yerba Buena spies beset me at every turn but they only saw, that I came for Supplies for Cap't Fremont, in consequence of the bad treatment that gentleman had received in March last; and that I, as a private person had undertaken his business, to prevent any difficulty which might arise by his presence in the settlements. Some few knew me to be an officer, but retired in bad health; and when I passed up the country I traveled so rapidly, I gave but little opportunity for enquiry where I did not wish to be known; however, on the arrival of the Portsmouth at Monterey the officers of that ship being surprised at finding me [in] the country, and not knowing my position, made known my being an officer, which information at that time was of little importance. The Launch of the Portsmouth under command of Lieut [Benjamin F.] Hunter was despatched to carry the supplies to the Camp, which I expected to find on the Sacramento near Feather River; but had moved down to the American Fork, a small stream which enters the Sacramento about three hundred yards above Sutter's landing—

During my absence of eight days the blow had been struck— General Castro having had the temerity to drive a Band of 150 horses from Sonoma across the Sacramento, on their road to the Pueblo of San José, which were soon to return each bearing a well armed Soldier— A party of 20 Settlers under the Command of Ezekiel Merritt siezed upon the Horses and drove

them up the valley. Certain information having reached the Settlers, that plans had been formed at Sonoma, the principal depot of arms and ammunition in the country, and the residence of the Military Commandant General Guadalupe Vallejo, Don Salvador Vallejo, Colonel Victor Prudon, (a frenchman) and Jacob P. Leese an American and wholly in the interest of the Californians, Mr Merritt and his small band determined to take the place and sieze upon the persons of the principal planners of their destruction. Mr Merritt was successfull in every way— The Californians were taken by surprise at night, having made no resistance— They were treated kindly and brought to Sutter's Fort, where they were confined in Mr Sutter's private apartments, where they still remain.

After obtaining his Supplies, Cap't Fremont moved his Camp up the American Fork to a pleasant spot, where there was good grass to recruit his travel worn Animals, and the men, also though resting from fatigue, would repair pack saddles, equipage for the road, and make all the necessary preparations for the journey homeward.

On the 20th June two gentlemen Messr's P. [Pierson] B. Reading and Samuel Hensley who had been sent to Marsh's landing on the river San Joaquin, to obtain information returned, and stated that General Castro had declared his intention to commence hostilities immediately, and that he would drive Cap't Fremont and his party of Bandoleros (highwaymen) from the country; and was organizing a force to proceed against him, thus making a second attack upon the expedition— Cap't Fremont deeming that it was due to the Country and to the position he holds in the army, determined to assume the offensive, not only to prevent any further organization on the part of Gen'l Castro, but to lend his aid to his fellow countrymen, and thereby prevent if possible, the horrible bloodshed and rapine which would succeed, should the honest settlers be overcome by a superior force, for the Spaniards had not only threatened the lives of the men, and engaged the Indians to destroy the Grain by fire, but had promised their miserable soldiery the ravishing of the women, and the destruction of the children.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June information was recieved at Sutter's Fort (now called Fort Sacramento) that a party of Californians, under the command of a great villain by the name of [Joaquin] De la torre, had landed at San Raphael with the intention of attacking Sonoma— A Party of one hundred riflemen preceeded immediatly to the assistance of the place, and the people from all parts of the Country hastened to join the party in Arms, and to support the Proclamation issued at Sonoma on the 17th June by William Ide, a Settler from Illinois, which after stating the ills under which they had been suffering, declared California Free and Independent— This paper although authorized by only a small party, was recieved throughout the Country as the voice of the people, and will be maintained at all hazards, and now that the flag of the United States has been raised, the foreign residents never will permit it to be

hauled down whatever may be the cost. About the 23<sup>d</sup> June De la torre having effected a landing at San Raphael with a party of 70 men, Henry Ford and a small party of fourteen men, sallied out from the Garrison at Sonoma to endeavor to liberate two of their countrymen, who had been taken prisoners on the plains of Santa Rosa, when on their road to Bodega, to convey intelligence to the Settlers in that quarter, and whom, it was supposed were with the main body of the Spanish force— About 8 o'clock on the morning of the 24th, Mr Ford came up with De la torre some fifteen miles from San Raphael, the latter having encamped on a stream of water near the house of an old Indian, which is thickly covered with brush and a very good shelter for sharp shooters. Firing instantly commenced, and the report of fifteen shots had scarcely been heard before De la Torre, and his boasting party of seventy were in full flight leaving three dead, and two wounded upon the field— Mr Ford had the good fortune to release one of his countrymen, but not one of those of whom he was in pursuit—they, alas!, had been most brutally butchered in a manner almost too revolting to relate— The Californians first shot the two Americans, tied them to trees, cut off their privates, scored their breasts on either side, broke their jaws, and disjointing them with knives, stuffed pocket handkerchiefs into the mutilated faces. They then threw the bodies into a ditch, where they were found in the condition mentioned.

De la torre was driven from that part of the country, and fled to Santa Clara, where General Castro, had his Headquarters, and had been collecting his forces to proceed against the foriegners— Every falsehood and slanderous report which could possibly be thought of, was circulated by Gen'l Castro and his friends to injure the Settlers— They were accused of rapine and murder, of violating every woman they met with on the road, of desecrating churches, in fact of having given themselves up to pillage and cruel bloodshed— However such reports only served to alarm the unprotected for a short time. The defenseless women and children, the aged and infirm, soon found that security from the Settlers for their lives and property, they had so long sought for in vain from the Authorities of California, and the Spanish residents of the plain of Sonoma, of the Valley of Napa; indeed, the whole region of country north of the Bay of San Francisco, now boast of more security than they have ever had before.

Until the flag was raised and the news of hostilities with Mexico having commenced reached me, I had assumed no positive position among the Settlers in Arms; but followed and was with them giving advice and rendered them every assistance in my power, yet was ready to lend them a helping hand where any opportunity might offer or my services be useful— I had made many friends, my opinions were of weight, and to continue in thier esteem, I was obliged to be more conspicuous among them, than I otherwise would under different circumstances. Upon the news of war with Mexico, and the flag having been sent and hoisted upon the different Military Posts already



in the possession of the Settlers, Cap't Fremont and myself immediatly organised the Settlers in connexion with his own force, into a Battalion, and hastened South to intercept General Castro, who fled upon learning that we were making preparations to attack him at the Mission of Santa Clara. Upon the day he commenced his retreat towards the Mission of St John, the Proclamation published by Commodore Sloat, met him at the Pueblo of San José; as also, he recieved a letter from Commodore Sloat, desiring him to give up the Country, promising him the usual terms in such cases— General Castro refused to capitulate or submit to the new order of affairs, and swore he would carry on the war hasta la Muerto (until death).

As it was necessary to obtain certain information of the Movement of the Enemy, and also to communicate with Commodore Sloat at Monterey, I hastened in advance of the Battalion with a small party, and arrived at that place on the 16th July, having been absent three months. Commodore Sloat was very much pleased to see me, but I am sorry to say my interview was not satisfactory— Comm Sloat was evidently displeased with Cap't Fremont and myself having been before him in our operations in the North, and frequently spoke of his want of knowledge of the Authority under which we had acted— He informed me, that he had approved of the course pursued by Commander Montgomery, of his having rendered us assistance and furnished supplies to Cap't Fremont's party; yet, I had been told by good authority, that Commodore Sloat had disapproved (at first) in strong terms of Commander Montgomery's action, and had expressed himself decidedly opposed to what had been done— He even had said, he did not know Cap't Fremont and would not recognize the force under his command.— During this interview, Commodore Sloat expressed a strong desire that Major Fremont should address him a letter, giving him his authority for holding his present position; and hinted at the necessity of the whole force being place at his (Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat's) disposal— Fortunately for us, at this Crisis, the Congress Frigate had arrived, and as I was not authorised to make any communications touching the operations in the Country to Commodore Sloat, I listened to what he had to say without comment or remark—

From Commodore Sloat's Cabin I went to the Congress, and paying my respects to Commodore Stockton, I had the pleasure to find him, well prepared to understand all the Movements Cap't Fremont and myself had made, and anxiously waiting for the moment when Commodore Sloat would give up the command of the Squadron, that he might assist in bringing to an early conclusion, the operations, which he was pleased to say, had been so happily commenced in the North by Cap't Fremont and myself— My interview with Commodore Stockton was highly satisfactory, and as nothing could be done until Commodore Sloat should retire, I hastened on my return to join Cap,t Fremont, whom I met at the Mission of St John on his way to Monterey, where he had recovered nine large guns, nineteen kegs and a half barrel of

powder, three kegs of Musket Cartridges, two tons of shot and one hundred and sixty stand of Muskets; all of which had been buried and secreted by the force under General Castro, when he retreated from the Mission. Leaving a small party of volunteers to protect the Mission, Cap't Fremont marched to Monterey where we arrived on the 19th instant, at the head of three Companies of a well organised Battalion, one hundred and seventy strong, with one piece of Artillery, a brass Gun of Six pounds calibre, taken at Sonoma, myself in the position of Captain and Adjutant. One of these Companies was the force brought into the country by Cap't Fremont, the other two, were composed of the Settlers, volunteers for the Service of the United States, with the understanding, that they are securing the Independence of California, by uniting their destinies with those of their Native land.

Since our arrival, we have been preparing for a march to the Capital of California, El Pueblo de los Angeles; where, it is said, Castro, who has joined the Governor Pio Pico, will make a stand. As also, we have been awaiting with much anxiety for the moment, when Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton would assume the Command of the forces, as the half way measures of Commodore Sloat are entirely opposed to the interests of the Settlers, and far from insuring a Speedy termination of the War. Occupying Monterey and the posts of the North, the latter taken by the Settlers before he raised our flag in the Country, Commodore Sloat considers, that he holds entire possession of the Country; and although he has raised a small party of Mounted Men, say forty in number, composed of Sailors, Marines, and newly enlisted recruits, under the Command of Purser [Daingerfield] Fauntleroy, (who has recieved the appointment of Captain) and has a large force of Sailors on shore in Monterey, he does not think it necessary to follow up the movements so successfully commenced in the north. In addition to this, Commodore Sloat, at an interview held with Cap't Fremont and myself on board of the Savannah, did not express himself as satisfied with either of us, and appeared extremely distressed at the thought of responsibility in any way connected with ourselves. Commodore Sloat up to this moment has not recognised the operations or the command of Cap't Fremont, and at our late interview, required that a letter should be addressed to him by Cap't Fremont, showing by what authority we were in the country, and under what orders we had been acting. This letter has not been written, and very fortunately and to save all difficulty, Commodore Sloat gave the command of all operations on shore to Commodore Stockton, which circumstance has inspired confidence in the volunteers, and already given a new aspect to the position of affairs in this quarter. We are to embark tomorrow morning with the whole force for the South, intending to land at San Diego, so as to be upon the road to Sonora, if possible, to prevent the escape of General Castro to Mexico. Should our operations be successful, of which no doubt can be entertained, the affairs of the country will soon be arranged upon such a firm basis, that California will be termed American Territory.—

Commodore Stockton, no doubt, has given the Department a fuller statement of the affairs of the Country, than either Cap't Fremont or myself have been able to do, every moment of our time being so much occupied, as to prevent our writing but short communications. The Troops under our Command, though officered by men of superior character, and well worthy of the positions they occupy, are as yet unacquainted with the details of their new duties, consequently, the greater part of the labour devolves upon Cap't Fremont and myself, thus giving us but little opportunity to attend to correspondence.—

It is a source of great gratification to me, to be able to inform the Department, that the movements in the North, accelerated by arousing in the minds of the Settlers, their love of Country and republican institutions, were the principal means of defeating the efforts of the British Agents to induce the Government of California, to put itself under the protection of England. A Junta or Convention was ordered to assemble at Santa Barbara on the 15th June last, at which time, it was intended to have declared the Independence of California from the Mother Country; which Junta was gotten up through the influence of Mr James Forbes, the British Vice Consul, who, of course, was acting under instructions. Our Consul, Mr Larkin, sent me a Courier [from] the Pueblo of San José (where he was attending to some private business, connected with the Quicksilver mines) when I was at Yerba Buena early in June, procuring Supplies for Capt Fremont's party; informing me, of what was taking place, and of his having made preparations to proceed immediately to Santa Barbara, yet, expressing himself favorably towards Mr Forbes, and his perfect confidence, that the English Vice Consul was quite indifferent, under which flag California might choose to be governed. This I considered a very singular position for Mr Larkin to assume, and accordingly wrote him, urging his early journey to Santa Barbara, to watch the proceedings of the Junta, and more particularly those of Mr Forbes— I stated to Mr Larkin, that the indifference he attributed to the English V. Consul was contrary to the character of an Englishman, and particularly, one like Mr Forbes, who is indebted to his Government for raising him from the dregs of life, and giving him the position he now occupies in Society. From what I had heard of Mr Larkin's conduct in the country, and every act of his life either public or private being so entirely governed by his own Selfish views, my confidence in his patriotism was very much shaken, and I did not feel satisfied that he would go to Santa Barbara, where by his own showing, there was, and he thought there was, a necessity for his presence— I was well satisfied however, that no harm would happen to our interest; many of the Deputies appointed to the Convention refused to act, particularly those of the North; and as neither Mr Larkin nor the English Vice Consul were informed of my movements, it was less important the former should comply with my request, although there is not the least doubt, his duty called him there, and he knew it. Mr Larkin did

not go to Santa Barbara— A Cargo arrived at Monterey at the moment he had informed me he had no private business to detain him from attending to his public duties, and finding it to his benefit, Mr Larkin purchased the Cargo, thus plainly showing that even at a moment so interesting and important to the United States, he preferred his private to public interests, and to all appearance, was willing to allow the Country to pass into other hands, notwithstanding he had warned Our Government of the danger of European interference. Fortunately Gen'l Castro's plans were so far advanced, that quick action was demanded, his horses were taken, Sonoma surprised, and the Independence of California declared.

Upon this news reaching Santa Barbara, such of the Deputies to the Convention as were present, dispersed, and the Governor, Don Pio Pico, issued a proclamation, insulting the American people, abusive of the foriegners in the Country, and declaring, that the Californians would die every man, before they [would] live under American laws or submit to the Government of the people from the United States— At this time, Don Pio Pico had arrived at Santa Barbara with a small force, which had been raised by the foriegners resident in the vicinity of the Pueblo de los Angeles, for the purpose of opposing General Castro, who to disguise his movements against the Settlers, had declared his intention to prevent the assembly of the Convention— The foriegners, also, intended to take the field with the Governor, and had contributed the sum of two thousand dollars toward defraying the expenses of the Campaign, as every such movement in this Country is called. Upon the arrival of the Proclamation at the Pueblo de los Angeles, it was discredited by everyone— The foriegners sent a person to the Governor, to know from him personally, if he had signed such a paper; and upon recieving his acknowledgment of the Proclamation, they immediatly withdrew to their Ranchos and homes, from that moment ceasing all connexion or intercourse with him. Throughout the country this Proclamation was recieved as mere bombast, and the Governor considered as out of his senses when he issued it; as it was well known, he would not recieve the support of even the Californians themselves, many of whose families are closely connected to the United States by marriages and commercial interests. The better classes throughout the country, desire to unite their destiny with ours; they care not for the Mother Country. They feel and know they will never recieve any assistance from Mexico, and that ground down by odious taxation, obliged to pay enormously for every article of necessity, that the mass of the people are deprived of the common comforts by the very high duties demanded upon every article imported into the Country, which only serve to sustain a set of unworthy idle officers, who pass their time in gambling and other dissipation, they are satisfied that their only hope of benefiting their unhappy land, is by joining the United States; thereby, at once rendering themselves free and independent of the yoke they have borne with great distress for so many years.

Whilst there is much friendship entertained by a large proportion towards the United States, it is, also, true, that there is much feeling in the Country against the Settlers, who declared its independence in the North; but this has been excited by the Agents of General Castro, who have had no other means of accomplishing their ends, than by working upon the fears of weak women and children, by circulating among them tales of horrid outrages, and barbarous acts committed by the people in arms, and making them believe, that their sole aim was rapine and murder. But as the Settlers have progressed in their march through the country, the people have become satisfied of the falsity of the rumors and stories told by their boasting countrymen; and now they assert, that in Sonoma and its environs, there never was so much security for their persons and property, nor such just and equitable law as at the present moment.

In the foregoing hasty despatch, I have endeavored to give the Department some idea of the State of Affairs in this Country up to this moment; and I hope the Department will feel, that I have not been idle, nor my Mission to California been conducted without good results.

I have the honor to be,  
 Sir, Very Respectfully  
 Your M,<sup>o</sup> Ob,t Serv,t  
 ARCHI H. GILLESPIE

Hon. George Bancroft  
 Washington City  
 My dear Sir

Cuidad de los Angeles  
 Upper California  
 February 16th 1847

The second campaign in this Country having been brought to a successful issue, and my position having been changed, I feel that I can now address you a private letter, to give you an account of the events which have transpired in this country, since the commencement of hostile operations against the Californians.

The news of Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloats having hoisted "Our Flag" at Monterey reached Col Fremont, while encamped upon the American Fork in the valley of the Sacramento on the 12th of July, where he had one hundred and seventy men under arms. At this time I had assumed no position with the force, yet I had accompanied it, and rendered him all the aid in my power, giving him the assistance of my military knowledge, which led to the formation of the Battalion of Mounted Riflemen, and rendered his command efficient and respectable. Upon the receipt of Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat's Proclamation, I immediately entered upon the duties of Captain and Adjutant of the Battalion, and the Force being in readiness we marched for Monterey. After proceeding down the valley as far as the Mukelemní [Mokelumne] River, we considered it advisable, to

communicate with Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat as soon as possible, for which purpose, I went in advance with a small escort to Monterey, where I arrived upon the 16th— Having had an interview with Comm<sup>drs</sup> Sloat and Stockton, I returned to San Juan to meet the Battalion, accompanied by a Company of Mounted Men, under the Command of Purser Fauntleroy of the Savannah; where I informed Col Fremont, that his arrival at Monterey was anxiously looked for. At San Juan we found several pieces of Artillery, arms and much ammunition, which had been buried by General Castro upon his retreating for the South— We arrived at Monterey July 19th— Upon entering the town we were met by a large party of officers and citizens, yet the Marines who were under arms and parading about the streets in full uniform, did not interchange the customary salute, Capt Mervine who was in command of the force on shore, having recieved orders from Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat not to notice the arrival of Colonel Fremont's force, as he (Sloat) knew nothing about it. We encamped upon a hill to the back of the town, where all the officers of all the vessels at the Anchorage were constant visitors. The Savannah, Congress, Levant, Cyane and Colingwood 80, Sir George Seymour [Admiral in command of the British Pacific Squadron] were lying in the Roads— Almost every officer without reference to rank visited Col Fremont and myself, even Sir George Seymour made the first call, yet much to the regret of every person the feeling on the part of Comm<sup>r</sup> Sloat was not such as we had a right to expect. However, matters were soon arranged with Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, and orders given for our embarcation on board of the Cyane for passage to San Diego, to commence operations in the South, the Enemy being in possession of all the lower Country, and encamped at and near the Capital of the Country— We sailed from Monterey on the morning of 27th July, and arrived at San Diego upon the 30th, where we landed without opposition and hoisted the Flag. Here much delay was occasioned by the difficulty in procuring horses to mount our force— The people appeared friendly, yet seemed unwilling to dispose of their animals— It had been arranged that Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton should land at San Pedro, (24 miles from Los Angeles) encamp and send an express to Col Fremont, who had recieved the appointment of Major (I recieved at the same time one as Captain and Adjutant) upon the receipt of which we were to march upon the Angeles and form a junction— The Enemy occupying the country between us, prevented an express being sent, and finding that it would very much retard operations, Col Fremont marched from San Diego with one hundred and twenty men, leaving me at San Diego for the protection and defence of the place in command of forty eight— Fremont endeavored to meet General Castro's force, which retired toward la Puente, upon the road to the frontier, upon the approach of Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, but was unsuccessful; for Gen'l Castro finding they were pursued very closely, fled in the most shameful manner with a small party to Sonora, leaving his countrymen to take care of themselves; which they did, by dispersing and flying to their homes as quick as possible.

Sending a party in pursuit of Gen'l Castro, Col Fremont marched for the Capital, where he had the good fortune to arrive the same day with the force under Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton— The two Commands met upon the plain below the City, where the most cordial interchange of salutes and congratulations took place, and the united force took possession of the Ciudad, and hoisted the U. S. Flag. During this time, my small party was very much upon the *qui vive*, and I myself in great anxiety; for it was very generally supposed Gen'l Castro would avoid Col Fremont and take the road to Lower California, and in passing, strike a blow upon San Diego— I knew he had fine artillery— We had none—however, there were Guns lying upon the ground, which proved to be in good condition. I had them mounted upon cart wheels and prepared for service. I organized the people of the town into a Company of Militia, and soon had everything ready for a stout defence— Gen'l Castro took the Mountain road and escaped even the party sent in pursuit. Governor Pico was still in the Country, and as it was important his person should be secured, parties were sent in various directions to search for him. They were unsuccessful, the friends of the Governor were too numerous—he eluded his pursuers, and finally fled into Lower California. Col Fremont returned to San Diego upon the 18th August, having left a part of his force at the Mission of San Luis Rey— The object of this visit was to communicate with me in relation to the course I intended to pursue, relative to the offer which had been made to him, Governor of the Territory and myself the Secretary. I made known my determination by stating, that the appointment could be only temporary, and I much doubted the propriety of the appointment of Military men holding Commissions in the Service; that I did not feel myself competent for so responsible a position; that my tastes were entirely in my profession, in which I anxiously desired advancement; however, that having commenced the work with him, I would continue to the end and accept the appointment. My force being mounted in a few days, I marched for the Angeles and arrived upon 31<sup>st</sup> August, but unfortunately, too late for the Express sent overland, it having left that morning. I was consoled in my disappointment however, by the kind assurances of Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton & Col Fremont, that every thing had been written to the President and Departments in my behalf, and that my silence would be accounted for by the report of my being upon service distant from the place of departure of the Express. At this moment for the first time, I was informed of its having been recommended to the Government to establish a permanent Corps in the Country, but it was then too late—my name had gone forward for the Civil appointment, and I contented myself with the hope that the representations made might cause me to be remembered in its formation.

A Commission as Military Commandant of the Southern Department of the Territory, was handed to me with the information, that Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton's force only waited my arrival to return afloat; that Col Fremont would imme-

diatly proceed North, recruit and organize the New Battalion. I was informed by Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, that ten Mexican Officers had signed a Parole; that the people of the Country had been treated with the greatest kindness and lenity, which he desired me to continue to do, but at the same time to be very vigilant, firm and strict in my Government of the Department committed to my care; and by no means to permit any one to escape, who might violate his proclamation relative to the peace of the country, which was declared under Martial Law. The force from the Congress marched out of the Ciudad on the 2<sup>d</sup> September. Col Fremont's Camp was at this time about ten miles distant— My command took possession of the Government Quarters—

Upon the 4th Sept I visited the Congress for the purpose of recieving funds, which had been required for the Military Expenditures of the Territory— I returned to town upon the 5th with \$20,000 accompanied by an Escort. Rumors of a General rising of the people now began to be circulated, and a night attack upon my quarters threatened, for the purpose of robbing the money just brought up, which had excited the cupidity of a set of Sonoreño Gamblers, who supposed they could overcome my small force, seize the money and escape to Sonora— A reinforcement came in from Col Fremont's Camp after the night of the 6th, and no doubt prevented the attempt.

*(To be continued)*

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# GILLESPIE AND THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

*From Letters Dated February 11, 1846, to July 8, 1848  
to the Secretary of the Navy*

*With an Introduction by* GEORGE WALCOTT AMES, JR.

(Concluded)

INFORMATION was received the following day, that two hundred Californians had risen in arms and had assembled at a rancho (farmhouse) near San Juan de Capistrano. Col Fremont, who was in the town at the time immediately joined his Camp and sent parties in search of the reported insurgents. They could not be found, although there was positive information of a party existing. Col Fremont left for the North upon the 11th Sept, at which time the strength of my Command was forty eight. Some very good men, but many very bad, & discontented from having been obliged to remain in the South until a relief could arrive. They were men unaccustomed to control, perfect drunkards whilst in this Ciudad of wine & Aguadiente, but servicable Riflemen in the field. They were men for whom the Californians could have no respect, & whom, from the spirit of insubordination they constantly evinced, the Californians thought they could overcome— Every means in my power were tried to enforce discipline, but the men whom I depended upon would not do the Soldier's duty, when brought in contact with their fellows— Liquor was the cause of all the difficulty, to prevent its sale was perfectly impossible— This was the state of the Garrison of this place, when the Election for the Alcaldes or Magistrates ordered by Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton was held upon 15th Sept— Few people were present, only one of the Country— The people began to leave the town— My spies brought me positive information of a gathering of the Californians, I made several arrests, and finally captured the chief of the party which contemplated the night attack. This party still supposed, that I had in my possession the whole amount of the money I brought from the Congress, but they were mistaken. Col Fremont took with him to the North \$10,000, and I had paid Bills amounting to nearly \$5000 more, which left me but a small ballance for current expenses; nevertheless, rumors were daily spread, that they determined to attack me; consequently I put the quarters in a state for defense, and had every thing ready to receive them. Some ten of my men having conducted themselves so very badly, I determined to send them to Warner's Pass the last rancho upon the road to Sonora, for the purpose of getting them out of the town, and, also, to obtain information in

relation to the arrival of a force from Mexico, a report of which had at that moment reached me. At the same time, I sent Despatches to Col Fremont and Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, reporting the state of the Garrison; & stating, that without a regular force it were impossible to enforce discipline, without producing an open mutiny, disgraceful to our arms, & in this newly acquired Territory, would be productive of the worst results. This was upon the 20th September. The Despatches were delivered to a man whom I had treated with the greatest kindness whilst a prisoner, and who promised with his life to be faithful upon being permitted to return to his home, which was in the North. From the door of my quarters, the Traitor went to a new chief of the Enemy's party and delivered the Despatches. On the 21<sup>st</sup> seven of my men were placed in close confinement, I having at length brought the respectable men to a sense of their position, and induced them to act like soldiers and do their duty.

This was my condition when upon the morning of the 23<sup>d</sup> at 3 o'clock I was suddenly aroused by the sharp report of firearms upon the front and rear of the quarters. Our small force was soon under arms & upon the roof, replying to the fire. We only numbered twenty one. The Enemy was soon driven off, and as we discovered in the morning, with the loss of two killed or wounded— As soon as daylight appeared, I sent out a small party in pursuit of the Enemy, who were seen upon the outskirts of the town some fifty strong— They fled upon the approach of the Riflemen, yet the latter overtook and made prisoners several Californians. The foriegners of the town now rallied to my assistance, I released the men confined upon promises of future good conduct, and before night of the 23<sup>d</sup> I mustered the respectable force of 59 men— Upon the 24th we discovered that the Enemy had taken a position upon the Mesa or tableland, in line from my quarters; and distant about a mile and a half and numbered over one hundred and fifty men. My supply of Ammunition was very small, and learning that there was a considerable quantity of powder in the town, I siezed all I could find to keep it from falling into the hands of the Enemy, which in the end was my salvation. Having no artillery, all the fine artillery taken from Gen'l Castro's force (or I should say, found where that force had secreted it) having been taken North by Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, my attention was drawn towards four very old Iron guns which were lying in the yard of the Quarters, and had been pronounced by the officers of the Congress as being unfit for Service. I had two good Armorers in the Command, whom I immediatly employed in drilling the Spikes, which had been in the Guns for several years, and had the satisfaction of seeing one Gun clear by 3 pm of the 24th, at which time there was considerable movement amongst the Enemy, and shortly afterwards a field piece was brought to view. I hastened the Mounting of my Gun upon the Axels of an Ox Cart, and to prepare ammunition— I had neither ball or grape— Mrs Howard, the wife of an American merchant made my cylinders, while the Carpenters fitted the Gun upon the trail, and to have something for one discharge at least, in

the event of an attack I had the scrapings of the Blacksmith Shops collected to answer for grape. Just as my Gun was completed, Mr [Nathaniel Miguel] Pryor an American gentleman, who owns a fine vineyard in the town, came to inform me, that at his house there was a thousand pounds of pipe lead for distilling, which the Enemy might take— I never felt more grateful for information in my life, for I saw my round shot and stand of Grape supplied as if by magic— As this lead was brought into Garrison, and the blacksmith was finishing the priming wire, for the Gun, my lookouts informed us, that the Enemy was moving with their field piece towards the heights which command the town and overlooked my quarters within Rifle distance. Lieut Hensley (Volunteer California Battalion) was instantly despatched to the hill with 16 men, to maintain it 'til the Gun could be sent up— Hensley reached the hill as the Enemy was approaching it upon the rear. They halted upon seeing it occupied, and the Gun being ready for action with a load of old Iron, nails hoops etc was soon upon the hill supported by determined men— At the sight of our 6 pounder the Enemy retired, and we heard nothing from them that night— On the 25th my little Garrison was all activity, every one engaged in making the works strong, pounding grape of the pipe lead, running Shot from moulds made of wood, filling Cylinders, repairing old Arms, all in high spirits and certain of success, in which feeling Dr [Edward] Gilchrist of the Navy (who has been on duty as Surgeon of the Battalion since July last) assisted me to encourage the men, and rendered me service, which have placed me under great obligation, and which, I trust, will be rewarded by the applause of his countrymen— At 11 o'clock I sent to the heights a second 6 pounder, which had been drilled and mounted, with a good supply of shot and grape— Breastworks were completed upon the roof, and the Bastions built of Adobes (mud bricks) were in a forward state of completion, everything around the quarters had the appearance of a determination to remain where we were, to fight, or die upon the spot.

At 3 PM of this day (25th) Messrs [Eulogio] Celis and Figaroa [Francisco Figueroa] residents of the city waited upon and informed me, that “they came as a Deputation of the Citizens of the Ciudad, to propose a cessation of hostilities for four hours, to give them an opportunity to make some arrangement, whereby the property in the city might be saved from destruction, and the country spared the great effusion of blood, which must necessarily follow the present state of affairs.” I replied, “I would be willing to hear what they had to say, but that the proposition for the cessation of hostilities must come from the Enemy, & which I would grant”— The Californians in arms now numbered (as near as we could calculate from viewing them from our works with the Glass) over three hundred. The proposition was made accordingly— About Sunset Messrs Celis & Figaroa, returned with proposition from the Enemy signed by, José M. Flores, a Captain in the Mexican Service, who had given his Parole to Commodore Stockton. Mr Celis stated, that the

Enemy was certainly over four hundred strong and pretty well armed; that Flores had been elected their Commander that morning; and to show how much feeling was general in the country, he informed me, that on the 23<sup>d</sup> just before they came on to the attack, the Californians counted off in line sixty five men, well armed with carbines and lances, headed by one Cerbulo Barrela (a notorious Gambler and Scoundrel) for the purpose of assassinating the inmates of the quarters, robbing the money and leaving the country; that the news of the attack had spread throughout the Country, and every one was ready, and willingly joined the Robbers (whom it has since been ascertained Flores encouraged and showed in what to make the attack). "More people were joining every hour, and Flores confidently expected to number six hundred men in a very short time." I then read the propositions, which enraged me to such a degree, that but for a good deal of self possession and respect for Mr Celis, whom I had every reason [to believe] was actuated by proper motives, I would have torn the paper in pieces. The propositions were, an unconditional surrender, to relieve everyone from his parole, in short, they were insulting, and allowed me 'til Sunrise of the next morning to deliberate, and if they were entertained at all, I was to fire a piece of Artillery at 8 o'clock that evening. Of course, the Gun was not fired, and I informed Messrs Celis and Figaroa, that I hoped they would not again be the medium of insulting an officer of the United States, whose education had taught him to die at post rather than permit his country's arms to be disgraced. These gentlemen assured me that they had no such intention, they had told Flores the proposition would not be accepted, and had advised him to make propositions of a different character.

The night of the 25th passed without anything taking place. Now and then perhaps, a shot from drunken Californians in the town would whistle over our heads, but we were not disturbed. At 8 am of the 26th the main body of the Enemy descended into the valley, until hid by the gardens upon the lower part of the town— Nothing was seen of them until about ten o'clock when a reconnoitering party about forty strong, was seen upon the hills, about a mile in rear of our position upon the heights above the town. Since arriving here at this time I have learned, that the Californians excited by a worthless fellow by the name of Seguro [José Mariá Segura], who had also given his Parole to Commodore Stockton, had induced Flores to make the movement stated above, for the purpose of coming to attack us, but having arrived at the Gardens he halted, and addressed them, saying, "that in their then unprepared condition, it were worse than useless to attack us; they could do nothing, we would fight; that we intended to die where we were, they would sacrifice themselves, and after an ineffectual attack they would in all probability leave some forty or fifty upon the field."

I should have stated above, that on the night of the 24th I despatched a Courier to Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton and Colonel Fremont, who undertook the service

at great risk of life, and had to pass the Enemy's Videttes who were very vigilant, and to ride through a Country entirely in their possession until near Monterey. Brown [Juan Flaco] did well, he performed the distance of over five hundred miles in four days, and delivered my despatch (which was a paper segar with my seal upon the inside, and written in a very small hand "Believe the Bearer") upon the morning of the 29th on board of the Congress then lying at Yerba Buena.

But to resume my narrative— During the day of the 26th there was the same activity and high spirits— The men who had conducted themselves badly, were amongst the first when any duty was ordered, and showed most conclusively, that when not idle and restrained from drinking, good service could be performed by them. The noise of the Smith's hammer, was answered by the loud laugh at the merry joke; the leaden Shot were moulded with the cry of success as each one rolled upon the ground, and a cheer announced that the third Gun had been cleared by the drill; everything about us inspiring confidence and hopes of success. At one o'clock a flag of truce was seen approaching. It proved to be borne by Messrs Celis and Figaroa who came from the Enemy proposing a conference that day at 4 o'clock.— As I had strong hopes that Brown would get through with my information to the Commodore, I considered it would be good policy to consent to the Conference to gain time; for I had no idea it were possible for the Enemy to make any propositions, which I could accept; they having such an overwhelming superiority of numbers. I permitted the Conference to take place. Dr Gilchrist and Mr Pryor, whom I had appointed a Lieutenant for the purpose, met Capt Seguro and Lieut [Leonardo] Cota of the Enemy's force at a Mill halfway between the two forces. Dr Gilchrist who speaks Spanish very fluently, conducted the business upon my part, and very soon found, he could do nothing with Seguro; whose manner was almost insulting, and his propositions of such a nature, no officer could listen to. Dr Gilchrist asked to see Capt Flores, who has the manners and address of a gentleman, hoping to at least obtain some information, if nothing more. Flores soon came, very much agitated, made apologies for the position he was in, said it had been forced upon him, and begged Dr Gilchrist to use his best endeavors to make terms which I would accept, and induce me to leave the Angeles— Dr Gilchrist replied that he had not come there for that purpose, but simply because they had requested the Conference, and to learn why they were in arms, and to tell them they would consult their own interests by going quietly to their homes. Night coming on Dr Gilchrist & Mr Pryor returned stating, they had adjourned the Conference until the following morning 27th at 9 o'clock, and that a cessation of hostilities had been agreed upon 'til the conclusion of the Conference of the day following. This night our position was very strong. We were more alert than ever, not putting faith in the Californians, whose treacherous character had been fully proved, our sentinels saw everything that moved. I had taken two positions

in addition to my quarters—one in front, the other in rear, so as to bring the Enemy between two fires upon the street, as they would always be below us. My quarters in the centre occupying a square, was manned front and rear by twenty two in the works I had erected, and could deliver a fire of seventy five shots without a reload— A small swivel, which had been drilled, was mounted upon the front bastion loaded with Musket balls, the windows were barricaded and every man slept upon his blanket at his station—I never slept 'til after daylight, when I would take a little rest. Notwithstanding the cessation of hostilities, four shots were fired over us about 12 o'clock, evidently from some spies returning to their Camp disappointed by finding us so vigilant. At daylight of the 27th the Enemy was discovered in the old position upon the Mesa. Dr Gilchrist & Mr Pryor left the Quarters to continue the conference at 9 o'clock— At 11 o'clock they returned with propositions which were inadmissible— They proposed, that I should march out of the town with the honors of war, divide my force and embark in two separate parties at different times. thus placing my force entirely at their mercy— Dr Gilchrist returned to the Enemy's Camp at 4 o'clock with my answer, telling them it were impossible to negotiate upon any terms, other than their retiring to their homes, that I did not intend to leave the Angeles at that time, conse[quently] hostilities would be resumed. My reply enraged them very much, and indeed, Dr Gilchrist thought at one moment that the flag of truce would not protect him. At sunrise of the 28th a Woman brought me a note from Cap't Flores, enclosing one from a Cap't [Benjamin Davis] Wilson, who with a party of twenty five men endeavored to get in to my assistance, but having taken a very bad position in a house upon the road for the night, he was attacked by some two hundred Californians, was defeated and his whole party taken prisoners. Flores urged me to accept propositions to leave the Ciudad, his note is such as a Mexican only would write, and recieved no reply, other, than that, "if he had any communications to make, they must be, through the hands of an officer under a flag of truce."

This morning I was informed, that they had determined to attack the heights with their whole force, which now numbered over five hundred; and as I felt the force on the hill could not support the two field pieces, I determined to move my whole force upon the heights. At 12 M we commenced moving— At one I removed to the heights and took command, leaving Dr Gilchrist to superintend in the Quarters, until all the provisions and stores were sent to the heights, which being completed at 3 pm, he marched the Main body to the Camp, with a strong guard over the prisoners, twelve in number. Messrs Celis and Figaroa again presented themselves as Commissioners for the exchange of Prisoners. When Mr Celis asked me if I would consent to another conference, and stated, that ruin to the town must follow the existing state of affairs, that my three pieces of artillery would destroy a great deal of property. Judging it to be a matter of policy, I consented. Mr. Celis left and

returned at four o'clock saying that the conference was proposed, and that a piece of Artillery fired at that moment would announce my consent, and would be replied to from the Enemy's Camp— This was accordingly done; and Dr Gilchrist and Mr Pryor now went to the house of Don Luis Vigne, a french gentleman, where they met the same persons as before, as also, Capt Flores. I took advantage of this opportunity to fortify my position, which would have been one of the strongest, but for the want of water, there not being any upon the hill, and the nearest well being in a yard at its base under the cover of our guns by day, but which in a dark or foggy night, might be poisoned or filled up. I had provisions, for several days. I had secured dried beef & flour, anticipating any difficulty which might arise; I had thirty two rounds of ball and grape for each gun, with the same number of charges of Musket balls for the swivel; an abundance of Rifle powder and lead; the men were not the least disheartened by the defeat of Wilson, and nothing was wanting to insure us a victory, but the want of water. At Sunset Dr Gilchrist returned with the basis of the terms proposed, which were very respectable and highly honorable to both parties— I held a council of my officers, all very respectable men and of good judgement— I shew to them the basis of the terms proposed, and stated the great danger we were in from the water being so distant, to obtain which without endangering the men, I had to throw down an Adobe wall— It was decided to accept the propositions upon the terms proposed, and that Dr Gilchrist should have full powers to treat upon an honorable Evacuation of the place, with our Arms, private property and every article belonging to each individual— of Public property there was none, save some twenty five hundred dollars, which I very soon made private & eventually saw safely deposited on board the Savannah. I forget the horses— I had a few which were fit to carry us to San Pedro, but sixteen were so very much broken from want of grass and having been shut up so long without exercise, as to be almost unable to move. Up to this time the weather had been very fine, the new moon shone brightly and as we watched its increase, we thought it appeared the presage of success, and that our relief was sure to arrive in time to assist us. But this night a thick fog and mist came in perfectly enveloping the heights in a cloud, and wetting our arms and blankets as if twere rain. With all the precautions we could take, the Rifles were so wet upon the morning of the 29th, that scarcely two in three would discharge at the first attempt. Dr Gilchrist & Mr Pryor returned at 9 o'clock of this morning to the conference, where, after rejecting much that was offered and insisting upon what I required, propositions were settled, and at One PM W.D.M Howard Esq<sup>r</sup> of Boston brought to my Camp, the terms for my signature of approval. I enclose herewith a translated copy of the treaty, which I trust will be well recieved, having been made in front of Six hundred men (as they then numbered) by a small force of fifty five; effective men, deducting servants, being fifty. And at a place, distant nearly six hundred miles from any succour

or relief; but it speaks for itself, and should the Treaty meet the approval of my kind friends who ordered me to this Country, I will be fully repaid by their applause, and the satisfaction, that I have maintained the honor of "Our Country's Flag".

On the afternoon of the 29th we made preparations for our march to San Pedro the next morning. Just at dark the exchange of Prisoners was effected which added twelve to our strength— The thick fog covered the hill as upon the night previous, and our arms were found wet as before— On the 30th at 10 o'clock, we were ready to march, every Rifle being in the best condition possible, our guns were carefully loaded, our Matches lit and everything prepared for action, each man determined to do his duty in the event of treachery upon the part of the Californians. We finally marched through the town, and a United States force of Seventy three including servants & Camp followers, marched past the Californians Six hundred strong with its Flags flying, without leaving behind any property of any value to its insulting Enemy. At Sunset we arrived within sight of the Anchorage of San Pedro, where we finally encamped at about 8 o'clock, when I was informed that the Californians had said, they would not respect the Treaty, and only wished to get me from my strong positions to cut me to pieces upon the plains. Seeing me prepared their courage failed them, and my small force encamped in safety.

It is one of the articles of the Treaty, that I should embark for Monterey on board of a vessel (the Vandalia) then in port for Monterey, but should have everything prepared before embarking. The Vandalia had only a small supply of water and provisions for her crew, consequently it was necessary to procure more water and to obtain a good supply of Beef. The water is distant from San Pedro three miles, and had to be brought in small boats, they taking advantage of the tides to enter the creek into which, the Springs from which they take the water empty. But one load of water would be procured daily, and that but two or three hundred gallons; the boat would leave the ship early and return very late—one night it was detained so long, that I feared the Crew had been made Prisoners. It was necessary to build ranges for my men to cook their provisions, the Ships galley being very small and not calculated for so large a number of souls. Not putting any confidence in the Californians, I took a strong position at the house of David Alexander Esq<sup>r</sup> which I made almost impregnable by loop holes, barricades etc to await the conclusion of the preparations to enable me to embark, fully intending to keep good faith with the Enemy, should they observe the treaty; although I felt, that my only justification in treating with dishonoured men who had broken their Paroles, could be found in saving my party from defeat, and our arms from an ignoble surrender.

Upon the morning of the 2<sup>d</sup> October I recieved an insulting letter from Capt Flores stating, "that he had moved to Palo Verde, three miles distant



from San Pedro, in consequence of my having broken the Stipulations and having refused to deliver up the Carts and Oxen; as also, the horses, which had been hired to me for the transportation of my men and baggage; and had in like manner, declined paying the owners the freight agreed upon; and demanded to know what I meant by such conduct"— This was a mere subterfuge which was plain to every one, for no person whomsoever had been to San Pedro. An officer had met me at the Ciudad de los Angeles upon leaving the heights, and had made an arrangement with me to be at San Pedro for the Oxen, Carts & horses hired, and the few public horses which remained fit for service— This person had not presented himself, consequently there was no excuse for the insulting demand of Flores— I replied in a proper manner to his letter, which brought from him a kind of apology for his error. The Horses etc were delivered on the morning of the 3<sup>d</sup> to an officer sent for them. In the afternoon of this day, the Enemy took possession of the Cart and Oxen employed in bringing water in a pipe (there being no wells at San Pedro) for our daily use, as also, they stopped our supply of Beef, thus in the most open manner breaking the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Treaty.

Several letters passed between Flores and myself in relation to my embarkation. In all my replies I stated, I would embark as soon as the Ship was ready to receive my force— Upon the 4<sup>th</sup> at about 12 M, I received a long letter from Flores of but little import, but that he demanded to know in the space of an hour, when I would embark & giving me to understand that it must be immediatly. I held a council of the officers, which was of the opinion, that no confidence whatever could be placed in the Enemy, and we could not feel justified in letting the Artillery fall into their hands, as we had every reason to believe, it would be turned upon us whilst embarking, it was therefore decided, that we should quietly embark that night, spike the Guns upon the beach, and quietly go on board of the *Vandalia*, Cap't [John C.] Everett having informed me, that we could get water and bullocks at the Island of Catalia [Catalina], 30 miles distant in front of San Pedro. I sent a note in reply to Flores, saying I would embark by sunrise the next morning.

At about sunset the Enemy about three hundred strong, moved down upon the plain to within half a mile of my line of Sentinels. During the afternoon I had sent on board of ship all the baggage, and at 8 o'clock at night the boats were at the beach to take off my small party, which, however, were found too numerous for the boats, three in number, to embark at once, consequently I determined to send to a small Island of rocks half a mile distant from the beach, twenty of the party including servants and Camp followers, the ship lying too far out, to risk the delay of putting them on board and returning. We stood by our guns half an hour, when the boats returned—my men were soon in them, I saw the spikes pointed and descended the hill to regulate the boats, leaving Dr Gilchrist with the blacksmith to drive them home— The Sentinels were withdrawn, the Smith's hammer fell silently upon the Guns,

every man was in the boats, I stepped in and pushed off, & by 10 o'clock our whole force was in safety on board of the *Vandalia*, my men thankful for the opportunity to obtain sleep and rest, as this was the eleventh night since we had been attacked in the quarters at the *Cuidad*.

Hoping that my *Courier* might have reached *Commodore Stockton*, I determined to remain a few days at *San Pedro Roads*, for the arrival of one of the ships from the North. On the morning of the 5th the whole force of the *Enemy* moved to *San Pedro*, where they found the *Artillery* upon the brow of the hill perfectly useless. *W. D. M Howard Esq<sup>r</sup>* having much influence with the people, supposed that he might induce *Capt Flores* to permit the adobe bricks to be brought off to build the ranges for cooking; up to this time the boat having been employed in carrying water. He went to the beach with *Captain Everett*. *Flores* was very much enraged that he had been beaten at his own game, yet treated *Messrs Howard & Everett* civilly and promised to permit the bricks to be taken off. The Boat was sent for them, but was not allowed to land, and threats were made, that if they came again, they would be fired upon. My men made their breakfast this morning upon hard biscuit and cold water. Stone ballast was afterwards arranged to stand the *Camp Kettles* upon, which would answer very well whilst lying at anchor.

At about 2 pm of the 6th we were all startled by the cry of *Sail ho!* A large ship coming round the North point, proved to be the *Frigate Savannah*, which we saluted with three hearty cheers upon her anchoring near to us. *Dr Gilchrist* and myself went immediatly on board of the *Frigate*— We were met at the *Gangway* by *Capt. Mervine*, who was surprised to find us afloat, and said he had intended to land that night and march upon the *Angeles* to my relief— I went to *Capt Mervine's Cabin* and gave him a full narration of all that had happened, the strength and condition of the *Enemy* and stated, that they had one piece of *Artillery* 4 pdr. *Capt Mervine* still thought of landing that night. I advised him to wait 'til morning, and even then, to remain at *San Pedro* a few days to make every necessary preparation before marching, and then not to move without 2 pieces of *Artillery*. He said, he had none— I informed him, that there were two pieces 6 pdrs on board of the *Vandalia*, which could be mounted very easily— However, he was determined to march at all hazards— *Dr Gilchrist* was now sent for by *Capt Mervine*, and gave him, perhaps, a fuller and more particular detailed account of affairs than I had done; and urged it upon *Cap't Mervine*, not to march from *San Pedro* for at least 24 hours, to take *Artillery* with him; as also, extra ammunition baggage etc. *Dr Gilchrist* stated to *Capt Mervine*, that by remaining a short time at *San Pedro*, a good many disaffected people, and those who might become alarmed, would have a rallying point and would procure the necessary supply of *Animals* for dragging *Guns*, baggage etc.— But, My dear Sir, no attention was paid to either our advice or information, the latter

obtain [ed] from experience and a perfect knowledge of the Enemy's position and character. Orders were given for the force to land at daylight.

A little after Sunrise of the 7th a force of 310 men, consisting of the Marines and Sailors of the Savannah, and the force I had embarked on the night of the 4th [went ashore]. I landed some little time after Cap't Mervine's men, and took with me a Keg of Rifle powder in Cannisters, which had been left on board of the Vandalia by H. Melless [Henry Mellus] Esq<sup>r</sup>, the agent for Messrs Appleton & Co, upon learning I was besieged, & knowing I was in want of powder, hoped there might be some means of communication— After depositing the powder as also some lead, Mr Meless sailed in the Barnstable to carry information to Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton— And now, whilst refering to this gentleman, it affords me very great pleasure to acknowledge the many kind acts of attention I have recieved from him, and I beg, that should opportunity offer in your intercourse with your friends Messrs Appleton & Co. of Boston, to mention to them, how much Mr Meless is respected and esteemed here for his gentlemanly bearing and manly qualities, I will be much obliged; as also, the obligations we are under to him for the services rendered the U S, which have always been offered with true patriotic feeling, whilst at the same time ever mindful of his employers. But to resume my narrative. When I opened the Keg of Powder, Capt. Mervine wished to know what I intended to do with it, and how I could carry it. I soon showed him by his seeing it rolled up in the blankets of the men and strapped upon their backs. Each of my men had at least sixty rounds (some had one hundred) of balls with a good supply of percussion Caps. Cap't Mervine had nothing, save what the Cartridge Boxes would hold, would make no preparations for carrying wounded, and scorned the idea of the necessity of taking a piece of artillery; indeed! he was without reason.

We marched, the Riflemen as Skirmishers on the right and left flanks in front, myself and my reserve in the Centre—the Marines under Capt [Ward] Marston occupied the front of the Main body, the Sailors following in rear. Lieut [Henry W.] Queen of Marines acting as Adjutant— Upon arriving at Palo Verde, a party of the Enemy occupied the heights upon the opposite side of the marsh; and as we descended to the narrow valley, they commenced throwing their lances about as if in defiance, and upon a nearer approach opened a fire upon us. I ordered the charge instantly, the skirmishers soon had possession of the hill, driving the Enemy far from us. The Main body soon joined us, Capt Mervine now began to hollar after me, "Capt Gillespie you are wasting ammunition— We can't spare the caps!" repeating this and a variety of like expressions of displeasure, discouraging to my men, and showing an entire want of the knowledge of Skirmishers duties. Had I not charged the hill, the shots from the Enemy would have fallen upon the Main Body, moving in solid Column, and no doubt killed or wounded some of the force. We moved on; the Enemy hovering round us, now and then discharging their

Carbines, which was answered by the Flankers— Capt Mervine again expressing his displeasure— I requested him to give me a positive order, not to permit firing and to call the Skirmishers in; he would not do it.

The road from Palo Verde is upon a plain, and at that time covered with wild Mustard; and in some places sandy and very heavy— Twelve miles from San Pedro it passed over a range of hills not very high, but making the ascent long and gradual. Crossing this we arrived at the Rancho of Pedro Domingui [Dominguez], where we halted at about 2 o'clock, pm, Our men quite fatigued from the very quick march of fourteen miles, not one man of us accustomed to walking any distance. At this house, which had been deserted by the family and its owners, we found a very good Camp; yet Cap't Mervine wished to march further, but finally, upon my representing the favorable position of the place where we then were, and the fatigue of the men, he consented to remain for the night— Sixty of the Enemy were now hovering around us for the purpose of driving off the cattle near us, they being mounted upon fine horses— My men had killed one beef, another was required— The Enemy rode down to another house, about six hundred Yards distant, to drive off some tame cows, the only Cattle then near to us. My men were instantly formed, and we started off at the trot, and charged the Enemy who ran, leaving the Cows, one of which was immediatly shot, as we passed following up the Enemy towards the hills in rear of our Camp, who retreated, our rifle shots wounding two of them. We then returned to Camp— the afternoon passed in quiet, altho' the Enemy still remained upon the hills— At about 5 o'clock a poor miserable idiotic old man came into Camp mounted upon a strong horse— The first impression was, that he had come from the Enemy, but it was soon discovered he was perfectly harmless. The arrival of this poor old man with the horse, was an act of Providence, which was soon fully impressed upon the mind of every thinking man.

Soon after night the Enemy commenced firing upon our sentinels. Capt Mervine acting more like an insane man, than aught else I can compare him to, beat to Arms; the rolling of drums and the sounding of bugles broke in upon the stillness of the clear beautiful night, Parties were ordered here, others there, the whole force was under arms, and for what purpose? To overtake and capture some of the best horsemen in the world mounted upon fleet horses. This was the Californians mode of fighting, to harrass and annoy us as much as possible; and I told Cap't Mervine, he was fatiguing his men for no purpose whatever; it was utterly impossible to overtake the Enemy, who fired upon our Sentinels, and his most wise plan would be to keep his men perfectly quiet— It was of no use to talk to him, Capt Mervine sent out patrols, until one party fired into another, & why there were not some killed or wounded appeared to be a miracle. The Camp again became quiet—

At about one o'clock we were aroused by the report of a field piece and a shot falling upon the porch of the house, in front of where some of the men

were lying. Capt Mervine screamed out, "Capt Gillespie, Capt Gillespie we must have that Gun, we must surround it, surround it" and immediately a party of Marines under Captain Marston, another of six shooting Rifles under Lieutenant Carter and my command were ordered to follow upon the trail of *that Gun* and to take it by all means. It was a light four pounder, drawn by swift horses and could be moved about as easily as a toy— We did follow the trail a short distance, but I told the gentleman with me, it was madness to take our men at night, so far away from the main force, with an Enemy near us certainly six hundred strong, and perhaps more; who had shown a determination to contest our march to the Ciudad, and if they could get us in an advantageous position would cut us to pieces. It was decided we should return to Camp.

Daylight of the 8th at length broke, our men, quite as much fatigued as when we arrived from San Pedro (for myself I was so stiff and lame I could scarcely walk) were soon making preparations for our onward march— The morning was clear and beautiful— A morning which will ever be celebrated by the Californians with rejoicings and memorable to us for "Mervine's ignoble defeat". By the time it was broad day we were on the march— We had not proceeded far before we discovered the Enemy about 200 strong posted upon the road— Some fifty fronting our approach stationed across the road, and as we afterwards discovered, upon the bank of a creek then dry; the remainder were in line in open order, their right resting upon the right of the party fronting us, and about fifty yards distant. We moved in the same order as the day before acting as Skirmishers on the right and left flanks in front and centre— The main body moving by a flank.

Still keeping in the road— When about 400 yards from the Enemy, they opened their fire from their field piece and small arms— the first shot from the former went over the main body, which made an attempt to form a square and failed; the Marines and Sailors now became a solid column moving by a flank in the road— the charge was ordered, on we went, my men in front, taking advantage of every obstacle had mostly gotten into the dry bed of the creek, and drove the Enemy from the right of the Gun. A Second shot from the field piece touched the tops of bayonets and pikes breaking some of the latter, but doing no other harm. The field piece was depressed, when shot after shot told upon the Marines and Sailors with dreadful havoc; but on they charged, not one order was given to bring them into line, or get them from the road or save the loss of life— The Enemy retired firing upon the line of the narrow road, dealing destruction to the brave Marines and Sailors at every fire, their Commander screaming after my men for taking advantage of obstacles and falling upon the ground to avoid the fire. Having nothing prepared to take care of the wounded, seven having fallen, Capt Mervine called a halt, when Capt Hensley of my command was within 200 yards of the Gun, and had hurried them so much, that the Enemy left their Cartridges

upon the road, and at one moment left the Gun entirely, but a man braver than the rest, road forward seized one of the drag ropes and run away with it. Capt Mervine now ordered a retreat— I should have stated, that the Riflemen, shot several men, killing one and wounding others.

We retreated back to the house we had left, where a Council was held and it was decided to retreat upon San Pedro immediatly— Capt Mervine being at a loss how to care for the wounded, who were terribly lacerated upon the legs and hips, I found a cart, upon the bottom of which raw hides were placed; the horse brought into camp by the old man the day previous, was attached to it by a Riata (raw hide plaited into a line) to the pole of the cart, which was kept upon a level by the men, who were relieved as soon as one party became tired. We remained about an hour at the Rancho making preparations— The Enemy now moved slowly towards us, and as I supposed intending to occupy the hill, and get between us and San Pedro. I induced Capt Mervine to despatch Capt Marston to take the hill. I did not go myself, as I had volunteered and desired to have the rear guard upon the retreat.

At 9 o'clock we commenced our March, as I had proposed in open order— My force of Riflemen in line on the right and left flanks, Myself in the centre with 20 Marines, Lieutenant Carter on the left flank with a party of Six shooting Rifles, Mid<sup>m</sup> [Robert C.] Duval on the right flank. The Musketeers and pikemen marching at a flank in open order in the centre, the Cart with the wounded in the front & centre, followed by the remaining force of the Marines. The Enemy made no attempt to interrupt our march over the hill but as we descended upon the long slope toward San Pedro, they posted themselves upon our right and opened a fire diagonally across our column; as we steadily marched down the hill, the ball and grape whistling over us. After firing four shots, the fourth striking a man a few feet from me, who died before we arrived at San Pedro, the fifth fell short, and had such a small quantity of powder, that it was plainly seen their ammunition was exhausted— During this part of the march Capt Mervine called to this officer and to that, gave so many orders in so loud a voice, that he rendered himself so hoarse he could scarcely speak. The Retreat was conducted in an orderly manner, and we arrived at San Pedro at about 3 o'clock on the afternoon, where we found Lieutenant [R. B.] Hitchcock and Purser Fantleroy [Faunteroy] with a party of men and two pieces of Artillery from the Vandalia ready to cover our retreat. There were nine wounded, two of whom died in the Cart before we arrived; a third died, I think, the next day. The boats were at the beach in a short time, and the embarcation took place immediatly—

A report reached me, that Cap't Mervine thought of abandoning San Pedro, and taking the whole force North— I went to him immediatly and asked him if it were true, and begged him not to think of such a step, and urged him, to send the Vandalia to the Commodore with despatches— He

said, "he had no authority." I told him I had, I would take the responsibility— He replied "I cannot decide now upon anything, my mind is in such a state, that I require rest"— With that answer I left him, hoping a force would be left on shore. I offered to remain, as also did Purser Fantleroy with a hundred men if it could be permitted, but to no purpose. By dark we had all embarked, and San Pedro again [was] left to the possession of the Enemy. My Command was now on board of the Savannah, where we recieved the greatest hospitality and kindness.

On the forenoon of the 9th, Capt Mervine held a Council of all the officers on board of the ship when it was decided, that San Pedro should be abandoned, the Savannah should remain in the roads to await the arrival of Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, to whom the Vandalia was sent with despatches. We now lay inactive awaiting the arrival of the Flag ship, & Spectators of the most disgraceful outrages committed by the Enemy, plundering the house of Mr David Alexander, who recieved the appointment of Collector from Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, and who had been taken prisoner with Wilson's party, and, also, that of a Mr [James?] Johnson who had sought refuge on board of the Savannah— Dry goods, tallow & hides were carted away in broad day; one or two round shot were fired at the Enemy, but the distance was so great from the Ship to the beach, that they laughed at us in mocking for the attempt.

This, Sir, is a detailed account of one of the most disgraceful defeats our arms have ever sustained, and of events connected with it, which have done us great injury in the country, [and] were the principal cause of prolonging the Campaign against the Insurgents, who had made every preparation for flying, at the moment Capt Mervine ordered a halt; showing incontestably, that had he made the necessary preparations to carry his wounded, extra ammunition etc this disgrace would have been spared, and on that day we would have had a victory, which the brave men, who charged that gun upon a deadly fire truly merited. I do not look upon those poor fellows as defeated. The Sailors and Marines are as brave a crew as ever trod the deck of a ship of War, but I do feel that their Commander truly merits the severest reproach of his Country. With such officers & such men as Cap't Mervine had that day, with the necessary precautions a soldier would take, and which he was begged to take, he could at that time have marched through the Country, but he would not listen to reason, & we have suffered the consequences.

On the 25th of October the Congress arrived. Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton having made arrangements with Col Fremont (whose force was embarked on board the Sterling) to cooperate with him, landed the force of the two ships at San Pedro on the 27th, where we formed a Camp of the strongest kind, intending to wait until we should hear from Col Fremont, who was to land at Santa Barbara and make a junction. Cap't Mervine was in Command on shore, and constantly in a state of excitement— Whenever any of the Enemy came in

sight, he desired parties to go out to drive them off— This continued until the night of the 28th. We suddenly embarked & returned to the Ships.

On the 30th I went on board of the Congress with my men, and landed at San Diego on the 31<sup>st</sup>— This place was at this time entirely without supplies— a small force of 30 Sailors under Lt Minor & a few volunteers under Mr Merritt had been closely besieged, all the Cattle had been driven off, and at some times they had no beef whatever— A few hundred sheep had fortunately been brought in by some friendly Indians a day or two before my arrival— Comm<sup>r</sup> S. having given me a fine field piece 4 pdr, I commenced preparations for taking the field. I sent Capt [Samuel] Gibson with forty men to the South by sea to bring up Cattle and horses by land— This service was well performed— The Expedition returned with 200 head of Cattle & 90 horses, many of the latter unfortunately in bad condition— Soon after landing my force, the Congress went to San Pedro to despatch the Savannah to Monterey, the “Sterling” having met the Vandalia at Sea, & Col Fremont learning Mervine’s defeat supposed he could not get horses at Santa Barbara, [and] went to Monterey to get a larger force and Artillery, & to march down by land. Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton returned again to San Diego upon the 18th November, sent his force on shore, and commenced preparations for marching upon Los Angeles.

My Command was constantly employed in marching about the Country, procuring the necessary supplies. Parties of 60 or 70 of the Enemy would show themselves, but they never dared attack me, although I would be encumbered on my march by Horses, Mules & Sheep; for they always saw me prepared to meet them. Things were in a forward state for our march upon the Angeles, when a Courier arrived from Warner’s pass bringing a letter from Gen’l Kearney [Kearny], who had arrived there, as it was stated, with a force of 300 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons. The Courier reached San Diego at Sunset. I was ordered to Saddle immediatly and proceed to meet him, to give General Kearney [Kearny] all the necessary information relative to the Country. Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, also, directed me to say to the General, that a force of the Enemy said to be 100 strong under Andres Pico, was at San Pascual, and that he thought it advisable he should beat up their Camp.

I marched at eight o’clock with 26 Volunteers under Capt Gibson, (Capt Hensley with the rest of my force being below upon a second expedition) 10 Carbineers, Passed Mid<sup>m</sup> [James M.] Duncan and my 4 pdr under Lieutenant [Edward F.] Beale of the Congress, making our strength thirty nine all told. Our march was uninterrupted. Our road was very difficult of ascent for my field piece but upon the 2<sup>d</sup> day I arrived at Santa Maria, where I encamped and and proceed[ed] the next morning (5th December) upon my march. It rained very hard, and ascending constantly, it became quite cold and uncomfortable, however, at about midday it cleared, and soon after, my advance reported Gen’l Kearney’s [Kearny’s] force in sight coming down the



Mountain. I rode forward and soon met the General, who received me with great cordiality and kindness. I made my reports to him and gave him an account of the State of the Country.

Upon learning that a force of the Enemy was so near; only six miles from Santa Maria, where he intended to encamp that night, he decided at once to attack it, and take away their horses. My animals not having fed that day, I halted upon some fine mountain grass by the General's permission, and joined him at Santa Maria at about Sunset. His rear, the force but one hundred instead of three, as had been reported, arrived as I reached the house, and was watering their animals in one of the most pelting rains— The General had moved forward to a valley about a mile and a half distant from the Rancho, where there was good grass— Many of the Dragoons were lying upon the wet ground, apparently perfectly exhausted by their long march. Their clothing torn, without shoes, their clothes soaked by the cold piercing rain, the poor Soldiers received the sympathy of every one of my Command, who though they had suffered much during this war, from want of food and supplies, felt their condition to be far better. Soon after Supper, it still raining, I despatched Lieut Beale and Lieut [Alexis] Godey (Volunteer) to the General's Camp to ascertain his intention respecting the attack upon the Enemy. They did not return until about 2 am of the 6th, when I received orders to saddle, my whole force being required. Lt Beale informed me that the General's Camp would be upon the road in a few minutes, and he expected to find me there. We were soon a Column and upon the road, where General Kearney [Kearny] joined me in some twenty minutes.

I should have stated, that I took with me from San Diego, a boy of the country as guide, who had been a day before with the Enemy. This boy I sent to the General's Camp under charge of Capt Johnson [Abraham R. Johnston, Capt. Co. C, 1st U. S. Dragoons], & was afterwards sent with Lieut [Thomas C.] Hammond to guide the reconnoitering party to San Pascual. He returned to my camp and narrated the following. The reconnoitering Party composed of Lt Hammond and Six Dragoons arrived at the base of the mountain, half a mile from the Indan Village where the Enemy were lying, halted & sent him forward to bring out an Indian to obtain the necessary information. Rafael went into the midst of the Enemy where they were sleeping, pulled out an Indian and ascertained, that Andres Pico was there with one hundred men. The Dragoons thinking he remained a long time dashed forward & passed the village, the clang of the heavy Dragoons swords awakening the sleepers, who came out, crying Viva California, abajo Los Americanos; and a great variety of abuse.

Immediately upon the return of the party, General Kearney [Kearny] ordered the Boot & Saddle & sent Lt Beale to communicate with me. Upon coming upon the road, General Kearney [Kearny] ordered my field piece to the rear, to take a position at the house to support the Baggage which I under-

stood him, was to be left there with a guard of Dragoons. I accordingly gave the order, but just as my men had unsaddled a countermand was brought me, and I ordered the gun to come up as close as possible.

We moved forward, and soon were in sight of the Valley of San Pascual. The road passes over a high mountain, is quite smooth and easily travelled. The weather had cleared, the moon shone bright, and the cold north wind from the mountains above us, covered with snow, reminded us of our winter morns in the East. After descending until within half a mile of the valley, General Kearney [Kearny], halted and addressed the Dragoons. He then came to my Command and told them, "their Country expected them to do their duty, and one point of the Sabre was worth any number of thrusts"—We moved on, leaving the two Howitzers belonging to his command, behind us upon the hill.

The Dragoons had all descended into the valley and a few of my men (we were moving by a flank) had come upon the level ground, when a shout and Indian Yell announced the charge, away went the leading files. Many of the Dragoons in rear being very badly mounted upon tired mules, could not keep pace with the head of [the] column. I remained behind as long as possible, keeping my men in check, but finding Capt [Benjamin D.] Moore was bringing his men into line, I dashed forward, and 'twas not 'til then, I could discover the Enemy, who was posted in a small ravine around the village. Before I could come up to the line, Cap't Moore made his second charge, the Enemy having delivered a fire, retreating before him— Seeing some of the Californians break to my left as if to get to my rear, I deployed my men in that direction. They soon fled precipitately, leaving one of their fellows behind; who was taken prisoner, and afterwards proved to be the 2<sup>d</sup> in Command. Our force became very much scattered.

Cap't Moore at the head of about thirty-five or forty men chased, at the top of speed, the Californians for more than a mile and a half, when they made a stand and received the charge of the Dragoons. Cap't Moore fell almost instantly pierced by eight lances. The Dragoons seeing their leader fall, and the overpowering number of the Enemy, turned. I came up just at this moment, attended by Capt Gibson and three of my men. I dashed forward sword in hand not seeing any officer near the Dragoons, Crying Rally men Rally, for God sake Rally, Show a front, don't turn your backs, face them, face them! but all to no purpose. They retired slowly, as if panic stricken, and passed me upon my left hand, and I fell in upon the Enemy Centre, where I was instantly recognised, and surrounded. Four lances were dashed at me quick as thought, & when leaning over the neck of my horse, to parry a lance coming full tilt at me, I recieved a blow from behind, which threw me from my saddle upon the ground. As I attempted to rise, another blow from behind struck me under the left arm upon the ribs, cutting through to the lungs, and as I looked for this last who struck me, another

scoundrel dashed forward and struck me, in the mouth, cutting my upper lip and breaking off a front tooth in the jaw, before I could disengage my sword arm from the ground. I now rose and cut my way to the rear, the blood gushing in a torrent from my wound—

After I passed the Dragoons, they became separated and it became a hand to hand fight, or they were surrounded & lanced in the back. The fight was very unequal even man to man. The Californians were on good horses [and] were warm and comfortable— The Dragoons were cold, chilled by their wet clothes, their limbs stiffened, and their horses tired and worn out— In passing to the rear, I came upon one of the Howitzers, without a person near it— I called to several as they passed to stand by me by the Gun, but no attention was paid [and] becoming more faint every moment, I left the Howitzer and moved towards the second, about which the force had begun to rally— On passing it, I heard the cry, Where is the Match? There is none, was the reply. I instantly struck fire to my segar match (Machero) and fired the gun, which decided the action. I could stand no longer. Lieutenant Beale took command of my men, Capt Gibson being also wounded; and Mid<sup>m</sup> Duncan now coming up, with the Carbineers and the Field piece, he fired a shot at the Enemy, which drove them from the field. We had thirty eight killed and wounded— Amongst the first were Capts Moore & Johnson [Johnston], of the latter were General Kearney, Lieut Hammond, Lieut [Wm. H.] Warner [Capt. U. S. topographical engineers], Capt Gibson and myself. Lt Hammond died in the course of a couple of hours. We have since learned, that the Enemy had 20 killed and wounded. We encamped for the day upon a hill near to the field of battle. Dr [John S.] Griffin [assistant Surgeon, with Kearny] U.S.A did not get through dressing the wounds when the sun went down. The fight began in the grey light of the morning, and at twilight of evening, nineteen brave men were laid in one grave.

I am obliged to conclude my long story upon a different class of stationary, having no more of the same kind of paper; and even that, I begged from the officers of the Congress. Indeed we have no supplies of any kind. But to bring my story to a close I will resume.

On the 7th Dec'r Ambulances having been prepared for the wounded, we marched for San Bernado [Bernardo] upon the road to San Diego. The Enemy were in sight at some distance, but did not appear as if intending to attack us. We arrived in the valley, and as we approached its centre the Enemy came dashing forward at the charge, from out of a ravine, more particularly for the purpose of driving off the Cattle we had collected.— We halted and faced to the rear, and finding that they aimed to get possession of a hill we wished to occupy, we moved by the right flank, and took the hill; forty of the Enemy showering down lead, upon the small party of Carbineers, headed by Capt Emery U.S.T. Corps [Wm. H. Emory, U. S. Topographical

Engineers] and Lt Beale. Three Rifle shots emptied three Saddles, and procured for us another mule. We encamped upon this hill.

On the 8th, three men who had been sent to San Diego with an account of the fight, were taken prisoners in sight of our Camp. The Enemy now offered to exchange prisoners, which was done— On the 9th we were ready to march, when a Council was held, and it was decided, we should not march, but that Lieutenant Beale & Kit Carson (Fremont's famous man) with an Indian, Andres, should go through the Enemy's lines into San Diego and get relief, as we knew we would have to cut our way without it, the Enemy now numbering 180 men— I should have stated that on the 8th, a great deal of valuable property was destroyed both public and private of great value in this country, where there is nothing. The Camp was living on Mule meat, yet each day the men appeared to improve, and gain strength and good spirits. Lieut Beale & his Companions, after great suffering reached San Diego on the eve of the 10th, just as a force of Marines & Sailors 200 strong were coming to our relief. This party was commanded by Lieut Grey [Andrew F. V. Gray] of the Congress, but the credit of the march is due to Capt [Jacob] Zeilin of the Marines, without whom the force would have been in a sad condition. We left San Bernado on the 11th and arrived at San Diego on the 12th very thankful for the kindness of our Escort.

Now, my dear Sir, I will change my story from reverses to Victories. Immediately after the return from San Pascual, preparations for the march were continued. Everything had to be made, harness, shoes for the men out of canvass, for nearly all the force was barefooted, and many things procured from the Southern Country. Capt Hensley at length returned bringing Mules, horses and cattle, fifty of the former in fine condition— At length came the day appointed for our march. I had so far recovered I would not be left behind— 29th December.— We marched at about 10 o'clock. The day was gloomy. Just before starting, General Kearney [Kearny] offered his services to Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton to command the Troops, which was accepted, the latter still retaining the position of Commander in Chief. Our marches were not very fatiguing, the longest & most so was 21 miles. The men appeared more like veteran infantry, than Sailors just ashore by accident—

On the 8th January we met the Enemy at the River San Gabriel, about seven miles from the Ciudad. They were about six hundred strong, divided into three parties & were in position upon a hill about 300 yards distant and commanded the ford of the River. We moved in a square, our packs, Baggage Carts & Cattle in the Centre. Capt [Henry S.] Turner of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons Commanded in front, Capt Zeilin of Marines the right flank, Lieut [Wm. B.] Renshaw [Lieut. U.S.N.] the left flank, myself the rear with two pieces of Artillery— As we approached the ford, the ball and grape fell thick amongst

us, but the men moved steadily forward. Lieut [Richard L.] Tilghman [Lt. on U. S. Congress] who had command of the Artillery, 2 pieces of nine, 2 of six, one of four and a Howitzer, now opened upon the Enemy. One gun was soon across the stream, dragged by men and officers under a very warm fire from the hill. A second gun was now in the water, Gen'l Kearney [Kearny] cried, "there is a quicksand", Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton jumped from his horse, instantly put his shoulder to the wheel and helped to push it across, the water more than knee deep, running quite rapid. Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton fired the 9 pdr in a few minutes, the firing on both sides was sharp— upon our rear the Grape fell very thick, but at length we got across the Stream without any injury happening to anyone. The Commodore's knowledge of gunnery was soon conspicuous. The Enemy's 9 pdr was silenced, and preparations were made to charge the hill. The order was given, the Enemy contested it a few moments, but gave way in front, and one division of them came round to charge the rear, where I gave them such a warm reception, the guard of the day delivering a beautiful fire, they turned and fled. We were masters of the field and obtained another glorious victory upon the 8th Jan'y with very slight loss, one killed and two wounded.

We encamped upon the brow of the hill farther down the stream and near the Water. On the 9th at 9 o'clock we marched for the Angeles, and when within about three miles of the Ciudad, the Enemy, stationed themselves across the road in front of us, and opened a a fire from their 9 pounder from the edge of a ravine upon our right flank— Our order of march was the same as the day previous. The Enemy also brought the Howitzer they had taken at San Pascual to the front, but Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton's precision in firing soon made them leave— We moved on, every now & then a halt would be ordered to return the fire of Artillery. At last they came down upon us at the charge, the heavy shower of lead from Lieut. Renshaws flank turned them, they came to the rear where I recieved them with grape, one discharge hurling four from their Saddles, killing one. When the firing first commenced the Enemy were inside of eighty yards, and the Muskets were pointed to the seat of the Saddle. This was our second victory. We had none killed and but two or three men, Lt [H.] Rowan and myself wounded. I was struck on the hip by a carbine ball. On the 10th we marched into the City.

Nothing could be heard from Col Fremont, when intelligence came to Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton, that he was treating with the Enemy at San Fernando 24 miles distant— The great force of the Enemy had dispersed, many had run with Flores to Mexico. Andres Pico commanding but 90 men, obtain[ed] the terms he wished from Col Fremont at the head of 400. So ended the Revolution.

I will here close my long narrative begging you to excuse its appearance

having been written in great haste. Hoping this may find you in the best health

I am, Dr Sir  
 Very truly Your  
 Your M<sup>o</sup> obt Servt  
 ARCHI H. GILLESPIE

P.S. The Enemy in the last two battles had 85 killed and wounded. 40 have died. G.

Washington July 8th 1848

Sir

I have the honor to enclose herewith a brief statement of my service in California, which Gen'l Henderson has just informed me, you desired I should send you for the purpose of showing the justice of awarding to me a Brevet Majority—

It is a source of regret, that I am thus obliged to refer to my own service, but I am compelled to notice it, as my name had been omitted in the official reports. However necessary this may be to my own position, it is far from my wish to take from the reputation, obtained by any officer in California, but simply to establish facts in my own case, which are well known in that Country, and are now the subject of comment and conversation of the officers lately employed in the Pacific.

In addition to the enclosed statement, I beg leave to inform you, that but for my perilious journey into the mountains of Oregon, in pursuit of Col Fremont to perform faithfully the duty entrusted to me by the Government, the early movements which frustrated British intrigue in California could not have been made.

Upon the formation of the Volunteer Corps the whole duty devolved upon myself. Their organization, Military instruction, the preparing of Artillery for the field etc was executed by myself, Col Fremont being entirely ignorant of Military matters, his attention having been always occupied with subjects of science.

Upon the arrival of the California Battalion at Monterey (previous to which I had made several journeys to San Francisco, upon important service; through a Country occupied by the Enemy) I was the medium of communication between Comm<sup>r</sup> Stockton and the Battalion, and through my efforts I succeeded in allaying discontent, and induced Col Fremont and the Battalion cheerfully to volunteer under the orders of Commodore Stockton, the Riflemen trusting to the justice of our Government for remuneration for their services— We proceeded immediatly South to attack Gen'l Castro where I was actively employed until left in Command of the Southern Department of California, and quartered with a small force in the Ciudad de los Angeles,

where a revolution which was threatened when Col Fremont left that part of the Country, was consummated upon the 23<sup>d</sup> of September 1846— I was successful in maintaining my position, until I obtained honorable terms from a force of 600 Californians, my small party numbering but 72 strong, including Servants, Indians Camp followers. I was without supplies of any kind. I had no Artillery when attacked in the Government House— After much labour I succeeded in clearing and mounted upon the axels of Ox Carts, three old pieces of (Iron) Artillery and made shot and grape from the lead of Distillery pipes, which I found in a vineyard close at hand— My force although subsisting most of the time upon a scanty allowance of dried beef, laboured in strengthening our works with the greatest enthusiasm, determined to stand by me until the last man should fall, rather than submit to the terms proposed by the insolent Mexican officers.

Upon the 20th September 1846, after constant skirmishing and losing but one man, I marched out of the City with Colors flying, without leaving an article behind me, having endured more suffering in those seven days, than my service of seventeen years could equal. From this time until the Battle of San Pascual I was under fire almost without intermission— The force on Shore and afloat at San Diego, and the inhabitants of the town, were subsisted by the exertions of myself and my command, the Enemy having driven every hoof from the vicinity of the port.

In General Kearney's report of the Battle of San Pascual I am only mentioned as having been "Wounded in three places", whereas the only time the Mountain Howitzer was discharged it was fired by myself, with my Segar Machero (Lamp wick) after I had been most desperately wounded— And it has been considered by all who were upon that field that day, the 6th December 1846, that I rendered important service, and I have been complimented by every officer acquainted with the facts—

I trust, Sir, I will be spared the imputation of egotism, as I am compelled to state these facts, in justice to myself, and more particularly, as the Brevet of Captain places me upon a footing with the junior officer who distinguished himself upon one occasion, when my service runs through a period of two years.

I am, Sir,

Very Respectfully  
Your M<sup>o</sup> Ob't Serv't

ARCHI H. GILLESPIE  
Capt USM Corps

To the  
Honorable the Secretary  
of the Navy  
Washington

Brevet Captain. For distinguished services in California and for the defense of the Ciudad de los Angeles— When commanding a small party of Volunteers against a force of 600 Californians Sept 30 1846.

Brevet Major

For Gallantry and good Conduct in the Battle of San Pascual in California Dec 6th. 1846.

#### A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE SERVICE OF CAPT. GILLESPIE IN CALIFORNIA

Arrived in California April 17th 1846 upon Special Service, having travelled through Mexico as a Merchant, at a time of very great excitement, just previous to the breaking out of the hostilities with U. S.

Proceeded immediatly in search of Capt Fremont, and met him in the Mountains of Oregon May 9th, having passed through a hostile Indian Country, with only five men, suffering much hardship and privation, want of food etc.

Returned to California with Capt Frémont and arrived at the Settlements, Sacramento Valley May 24th, having subsisted nine days upon Horseflesh—

May 29th—Went down the Feather River and Sacramento in a Canoe to Sutter's Landing—from thence to San Francisco, and rendered important services to Capt Fremont, in procuring and purchasing supplies for his Camp, and joined him again, June 15th, with a large quantity of Stores, etc.

June 22<sup>d</sup>—Moved from the Sacramento with Capt Fremont and a party of Settlers for the protection of Sonoma.

July 5th—Organized the California Battalion under Capt Fremont—directed and gave all the Military instructions, necessary to the formation of that Corps—

July 10th—Arrived with the Battalion at Sutter's Fort, Sacramento Valley—

July 12th—Assumed the position of Captain and Adjutant of the Battalion.

July 23<sup>d</sup>—Volunteered under Cap't Fremont and the California Battalion at Monterey— Embarked for San Diego to attack the Californians under General Castro July 27th— At this time although Acting as Adjutant, performed the duties of Commissary and Quartermaster, and was held responsible for all the Supplies obtained for the Battalion at that time. Left in Command at San Diego August 8th—

August 21<sup>st</sup>—Appointed Military Commandant of the Southern Department of California, and left at the Ciudad de los Angeles with a Command of 48 men, Volunteers of the Battalion of Mounted Riflemen.



September 23<sup>d</sup>—At 3 o'clock A.M. was attacked in the Government House by a force of 65 Californians, beat them off with 21 men, wounding two of the Enemy.

From this time until 30th was besieged by a force of 600 Californians, having skirmished with them day and night, when honorable terms were granted, and the U. S. Forces marched out with Colors flying, taking everything with it—

October 7th and 8th—Rendered important services to Capt Mervine in his advance upon the City of the Angels, and in his Retreat before the Californians. October 8th—Volunteered to Command the Rear, the Enemy pursuing, and saved the force from a general rout—

October 31<sup>st</sup>—Returned to San Diego and foraged with great success in front of the Enemy, for the subsistence of the Troops and Inhabitants of the town—

November 10th—Beat off a Superior force of Californians in an attack upon the town of San Diego. Killing one and wounding four of the Enemy—

From November 18th to December 3<sup>d</sup> when a Command of Two Companies of Mounted Riflemen, obtained all the supplies of Cattle, Oxen, Horses and Mules for the Expedition under Commodore Stockton upon the City of the Angels—

December 5th—Having been despatched with a small force from San Diego for that purpose, met General Kearney in the mountains near St Isabel, and gave him all the information which led to the Battle of San Pascual.

December 6th—The Battle of San Pascual commenced at early daylight—Capt Gillespie endeavoring to rally the Dragoons who had turned before the Enemy, was attacked by seven Lancers, front and rear, and finally dismounted— Was wounded in the left breast, cut open to the lungs, and recieved a deep gash upon the right arm, & when rising from the ground recieved a blow in the mouth from a lance, which broke a front tooth— At length bleeding and faint he cut his way out, and endeavored to save the Mountain Howitzer of General Kearney's [Kearny's] Command, which was afterwards taken— Passing on to the Second Howitzer, where our force was rallying, Capt Gillespie heard the cry "Where is the Match?" and the answer "There is none!" "Where is the port fire?" "It is not lighted!" he instantly struck his Segar Machero and fired the Gun, just in time to hold the Enemy in check, and decide the fate of the day.

Before recovered of his wounds of San Pascual, Capt Gillespie went with his Command under Commodore Stockton, upon the march from San Diego to the Ciudad de los Angeles. He commanded the Rear in the Battles of San Gabriel and La Mesa January 8th & 9th 1847, and was wounded by a Carbine ball upon the left hip in the Battle of the 9th—

January 10th—Although suffering from his wounds, rehoisted his flag upon the Government House in the Ciudad de los Angeles—

March 11th—Relieved from service as Major of the Californian Battalion by order of General Kearney [Kearny].

Capt Gillespie was in every fight in California except, that of Burrows [Burroughs] upon the Salinas River, and was so actively employed and so constantly engaged with the Enemy, that he was reported killed seven times.

Note—The Mexican officers in Command of the Californians who besieged the Ciudad de los Angeles were promoted for the success in obtaining possession of the place—

Californians—600 strong

Americans — 72 “

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