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Insurgents on the Baja Peninsula: Henry Halleck's Journal of the War in Lower California, 1847-1848

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Insurgents on the Baja Peninsula: Henry Halleck's Journal of the War in Lower California, 1847-1848

JOHN D. YATES

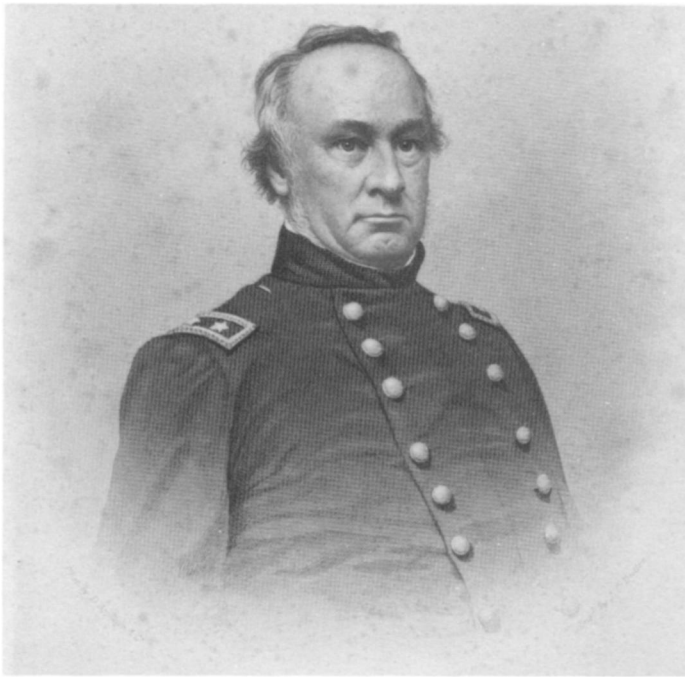
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PRESIDENT JAMES K. POLK'S SIGNING of the declaration of war against Mexico in May, 1846, proved but a culmination to years of talk and secret negotiations regarding the eventual United States' acquisition of Alta California from Mexico. Concern about potential British conquest of the Mexican territory and a pervasive national sense that it was the United States' manifest destiny to control the American continent from ocean to ocean suggested that acquisition by peaceful or aggressive means was merely a matter of time.

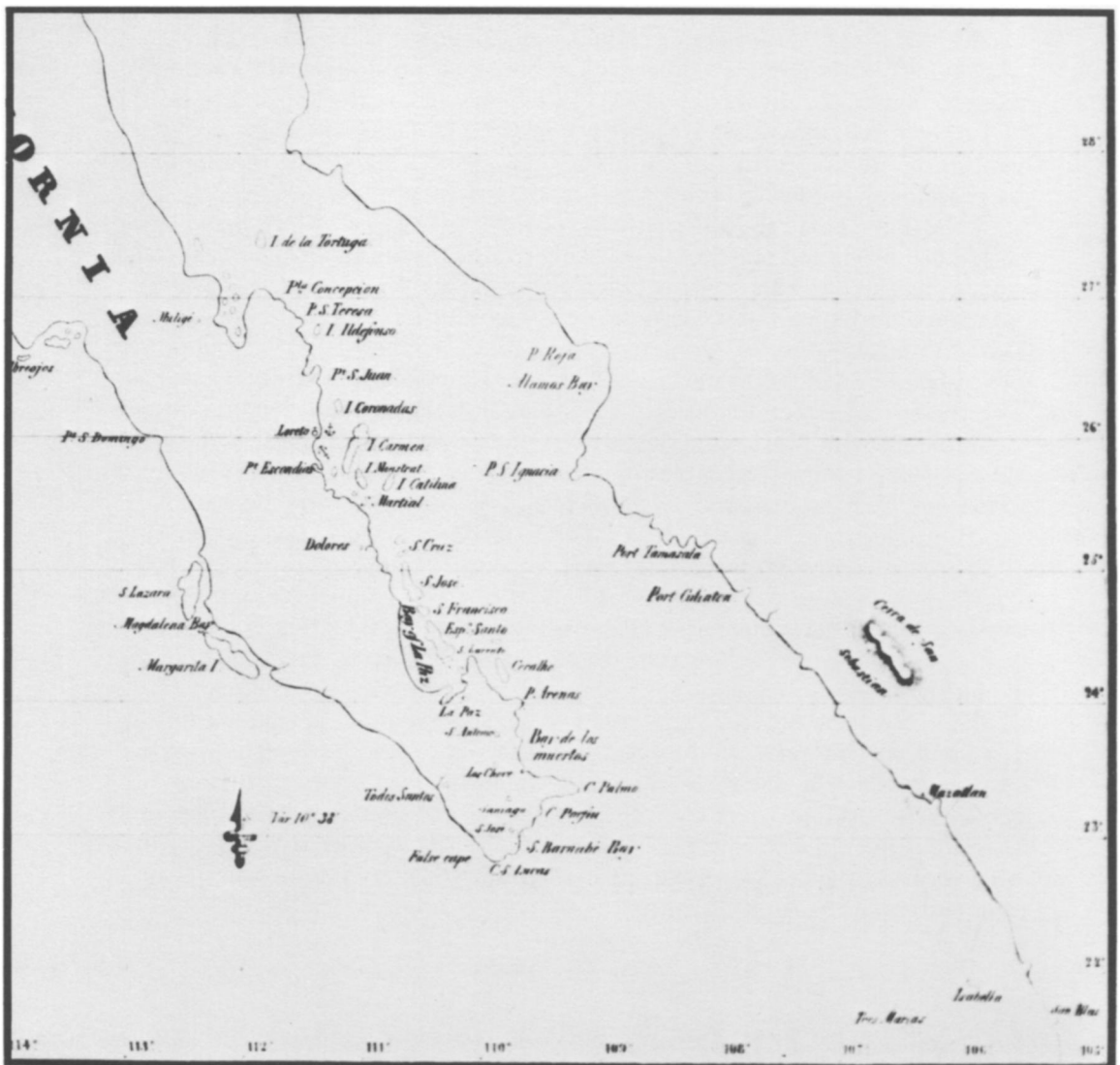
While the causes of the Mexican War related largely to Texas, Polk's ambition to add California and other southwestern territories to the national domain continued unabated after his failure to purchase the area and after his efforts at peaceful persuasion through his confidential negotiations with Thomas O. Larkin, sympathetic American consul at Monterey, were preempted by the Bear Flag Revolt. Several months before the outbreak, Polk's Secretary of the Navy Bancroft had secretly instructed Commodore John D. Sloat of the Pacific Squadron that in the event of war with Mexico, he was to occupy such ports in California as he considered necessary for the establishment of American authority in the province.

In the 1840's the most active commercial deep-sea port on the west coast of North America was Mazatlán. In addition to its commercial value, it served as a major revictualing base for the navies of the great maritime nations. All of the countries maintained naval agents there, and the port was homebase for the operations of their Pacific squadrons. Its only rival was Callao, Peru, to the south.

It is no wonder that any strategic move against Mexico by the United States would include some operation against such a large and active port. Both Secretary of the Navy Bancroft and Secretary of War Marcy ranked operations against Mazatlán as top priority in the event of war against Mexico even ahead of the plan to annex Alta California. The Alta California plan won out because the remoteness of this province from the Mexican heartland, the inability of its demoralized and reduced garrison to defend itself, its favor with settlers from the United States, and because of the pro-United States feelings of some of its prominent citizens.



Henry Wager Halleck—successful lawyer, businessman, author, and general-in-chief of the armies of the United States during the Civil War—began his military career in the 1847–48 military expedition to subdue guerrillas in Lower California. He ranged the gulf coast, led expeditions crisscrossing the peninsula, and participated in the capture of Mazatlán on the mainland to the east. Map from House of Representatives, Executive Document #173 I Congress, I session, 1849–50.



In June, 1846, Commodore Sloat received a dispatch from Secretary Bancroft advising him of the outbreak of war between Mexico and the United States and instructing him to implement the plan to annex Alta California. Another dispatch, dated May 15, arrived two days later in Mazatlán ordering him to "take possession of Mazatlán and of Monterey, one or both," and with the added suggestion that Guaymas be seized as well. Sloat sailed north, and in early July, after some delay, he raised the American flag over Monterey.

In ill health Sloat resigned his command to Commodore Robert F. Stockton, and on August 13 the more inflammatory Stockton entered Los Angeles, proclaiming on the seventeenth that "California is entirely free from Mexican dominion." Meanwhile, Navy secretary Bancroft wrote Stockton on August 15, ordering him to capture Guaymas on the Gulf of California, and he empowered the commander of the Pacific Squadron to make agreements temporarily neutralizing any Mexican province that was willing to revolt against Mexico and to grant American vessels free access to its ports. Baja California was rumored to be contemplating a revolt against Mexico, and this general order was calculated to allow the commander to annex that province at the most propitious time.

On August 19 Stockton proclaimed a blockade against Mexican ports; it was, however, only a "paper" blockade, since he lacked adequate power to enforce it. Stockton then announced plans to capture Acapulco as a base for land operations against Mexico City, and he went as far as directing John Charles Frémont to recruit 700 men for the California battalion for that operation. Stockton, however, had his hands full in consolidating his hold on the territory of California where the tone of his proclamation and the presumptuousness of Frémont incited several military engagements, notably at Chino Rancho and Cahuenga Pass. The meager force of three ships that he sent to the gulf during September and October to enforce the blockade were pulled back in November, 1846, because of the insurgents' resistance in the southern part of his territory. When this spirited action in Alta California concluded in January, 1847, American attention in the Far West was again directed to the Baja peninsula.

Two weeks after the Cahuenga Capitulation ended the Californios' revolt, Lieutenant Henry Wager Halleck, United States Engineers, arrived in Monterey on January 26, 1847, aboard U.S. Storeship *Lexington*. A converted sloop, the vessel carried the officers and men of Company F, Third Artillery, a train of artillery, powder, and ammunition, and a great variety of engineering supplies. Two of the artillery officers, Lieutenant Edward O. C. Ord and Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman, were Halleck's friends from West Point days. After a 198-day voyage from New York and a grueling thirty days doubling Cape Horn, the company landed at Monterey in good order, and, according to Sherman's memoirs, "Every man was able to leave the ship and march up the hill to the forts with his own knapsack and equipment." The artillerymen relieved Lieutenant Maddox and his Marine garrison and went into "canvas" on the hill near Fort Mervine. Halleck went about his engineering duties with customary thoroughness, and he designed a new redoubt to secure the approaches to Monterey by sea and land, inspected San Francisco Bay and its entrance, and made recommendations for coastal defense. Ord and Sherman and other artillery officers took up the monotonous routine of regimental duties.

Hence, rather inauspiciously, began Halleck's remarkable public career, one that saw him in the next seven years—while still a regular army officer—serve as secretary of state of the Territory of California, joint author of the California constitution, partner in the law firm of Halleck, Peachy & Billings, and director-administrator of New Almaden, the largest quicksilver mine in the western hemisphere. In 1853 he resigned from the army with the substantive rank of captain to take care of his burgeoning law practice. He rejoined in 1861 as one of the four permanent major-generals of the Regular Union army, having served for one year as major-general of the Second Division of the California Militia. (Another of the four major-generals was John Charles Frémont whom Halleck would succeed as general commander of the Department of the Missouri.) Promoted to general-in-chief of the armies of the United States in 1862 as a result of his strong administrative skills and strategic brilliance in attacks on the River Forts, Halleck found Washington, D.C. a "political hell," but as chief-of-staff he survived the maneuverings of political generals and draft riots, and he eventually produced for Grant and Sherman a superb professional army out of a rabble of ill-disciplined draftees.

Halleck's memoir of the Baja campaign, his first important military experience, was discovered at the time of Halleck's death in 1872 by Colonel George W. Granniss, the administrator of Halleck's estate and agent for the general's heirs (Halleck married the granddaughter of Alexander Hamilton) in the basement of the Montgomery Block—the famous but recently demolished San Francisco landmark building which was designed, promoted, and owned by Halleck. His law firm, Halleck, Peachy & Billings, occupied a large suite of offices on the third floor of the building from 1853 to 1864.

Today, the manuscript memoir which has never before been published and rarely used is in Halleck's law firm's papers at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. It is inscribed in pencil and ink on the blue, lined paper of the period; some portions are indecipherable due to stains, poor writing surfaces, and a penmanship compromised by haste. Regrettably, Halleck never finished the record of his Baja experiences, but he left notes to himself in parentheses for future reference. Ironically, though the scholarly or "bookish" Halleck published a number of respected and esoteric works on international law, mining, military strategy, and a translation of Henri Jomini's massive *Life of Napoleon*, he never concluded his personal memoir.

Following is an introduction and an edited version of Halleck's Baja California journal and an accompanying narrative which fills in gaps left by Halleck himself and the abridgment of the journal necessary for publication in the *Quarterly*. Halleck sets the stage in each sequence and discusses, in addition to military maneuvers, local conditions and personalities. He combines a military journal with a travelogue and chronicle of his personal experiences and provides a detailed first-hand account of the nature of a military man's experiences in a war against native insurgents and guerrillas. Light-hearted touches, an eye for women, and a lively sense of humor belie the public sense of a somber, unfriendly, and reserved man of little social grace.

Shortly after Lieutenant Halleck's arrival in California in January, 1847, Commodore Stockton again tried to enforce the blockade against Mexican

ports by sending Commander John B. Montgomery on the U.S.S. *Portsmouth* to the gulf to raise the flag at San Lucas at the southern tip of the peninsula and at La Paz on the east coast, but San José, north of San Lucas, refused to surrender. At La Paz, Articles of Capitulation were drawn up (similar to those of the Treaty of Cahuenga) granting Baja Californians the same rights as United States citizens and allowing officials to stay in office. Baja's governor, Colonel Miranda, a collaborationist, signed the document on April 13, 1847. Again, however, these efforts proved abortive, for Montgomery was unable to leave a garrison of men, and upon his departure American presence evaporated in the gulf.

Meanwhile, Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny had replaced Stockton and, in turn, been replaced as military commander and governor of the Territory of California by Colonel Richard B. Mason of the First Dragoons who assumed the command of the Tenth Military Department and the governorship on May 30, 1847. Just before he handed over his command to Mason, however, Kearny had received a dispatch from Secretary of War Marcy, dated January 11, 1847, with orders to occupy a port and hoist the flag in Baja California, and "actual possession taken and continuously held, or some place or places within it, and our civil administration there asserted and upheld." It was left to Mason to implement these directions, which he did by ordering Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Henry S. Burton (a lieutenant of the Third Artillery and a classmate of Halleck at West Point) of the First Regiment of New York Volunteers and two companies of the regiment stationed at Santa Barbara to embark on the U.S.S. *Lexington* for La Paz on the eastern shore of the peninsula.

Accordingly, Burton and his men arrived in the Bay of La Paz on July 21, 1847, and occupied the town which was to remain the base of all operations in the peninsula. Across the Gulf of California, successive commanders of the Pacific Squadron had tried unsuccessfully to enforce a permanent blockade of Mexican ports with one frigate and one sloop, more or less. Commodore William Bradford Shubrick, who had taken over the command of the squadron in January, 1847, on behalf of his senior, James Biddle, and to permanent command in July, was determined to support a blockade in force; in September, 1847, he assembled an expedition in Monterey to sail to the gulf and do the job properly. Under his personal command, the squadron would occupy the ports of Mazatlán, Guaymas, and others if necessary, and cooperate with the army across the gulf on the Baja peninsula.

As for Halleck, Governor Mason had appointed him secretary of state of the Territory of California on August 13, 1847. He had hardly settled down to his new bureaucratic and administrative responsibilities, however, when Shubrick asked him to join his expedition as chief-of-staff. Halleck jumped at the chance—only in the "field of glory" could one hope for a quick step up the promotional ladder—and Mason reluctantly released him.

In August the first class sloop *Portsmouth* (under Commander John B. Montgomery), the frigate *Congress* (under Captain Elie A. LaVallette), and the third class sloop *Dale* (under Commander Thomas Selfridge) proceeded to the Gulf of California as a vanguard to soften up the area and destroy commerce. On October 16, Shubrick on his flagship, the razee *Independence*, with the second class sloop *Cyane* (under Captain William Mervine) and the storeship *Erie* left Mon-

terey to rendezvous with the ships of the vanguard off the tip of the peninsula at Cape San Lucas; after a brief call at San José to make contact with Burton, they planned to cross the gulf and descend upon Mazatlán. On board Shubrick's flagship was Lieutenant Henry Halleck, and here his journal commences:

On the morning of the 25th [October] we made land a little north of Cape San Lucas, and soon afterwards fell in with several whalers. Calms and a strong westerly current around the Cape delayed us for several days. . . . The morning of the 29th we fell in with the Congress and received news of the bombardment of Guaymas, and the advance of General Scott's army upon the City of Mexico.

The frigate *Congress* had arrived off Guaymas on October 17. Captain LaVallette had tried to talk the governor into surrendering, but he failed. Accordingly, the town was bombarded and reduced, and then occupied by the sailors and marines of the frigate. Soon, the sailors of the *Portsmouth* relieved them to allow LaVallette on the *Congress* to make his rendezvous with Shubrick off Cape San Lucas.

The sloop Cyane anchored the evening of the 29th in the Bay of San José about three miles from the shore in 28 fathoms of water. The Independence and Congress came in next morning. The anchorage in this bay . . . is entirely open to the south-east and exceedingly dangerous between the months of June and November. On the 30th . . . we despatched a courier to La Paz with official papers for the Captain of the Dale . . . and the commanding officer [Burton] of that place.

Commander Selfridge of the *Dale* had anchored in the Bay of La Paz after an unsuccessful attempt to reduce the fishing village of Mulege some 250 miles to the north. (On board his ship was the famous amateur artist, Navy Gunner William H. Meyers, who painted and sketched naval scenes of the Pacific during his service.)

We were obliged to foot it [up to the town] for a distance of about five miles over a very sandy and heavy road. Our way, however, was enlivened by the songs of birds, and the woods by the roadside were filled with the most rare and beautiful flowers. . . . When we had arrived within a few hundred yards of the town . . . some boys from the adjacent ranchos rushed out with horses. . . . We despatched them to the beach to bring up our companions. It is usual to land at the northern beach with a mile and a half to the town; but we had landed at the Palm Beach for the convenience of watering the ship. . . .

San José del Cabo is situated in a broad and fertile valley . . . on the right bank of the San José River and a mile and half from its mouth. On the west side is a ridge of high mountains, one of whose conical peaks forms an excellent landmark for the anchorage. The town is composed of some strong adobe houses pretty well built.

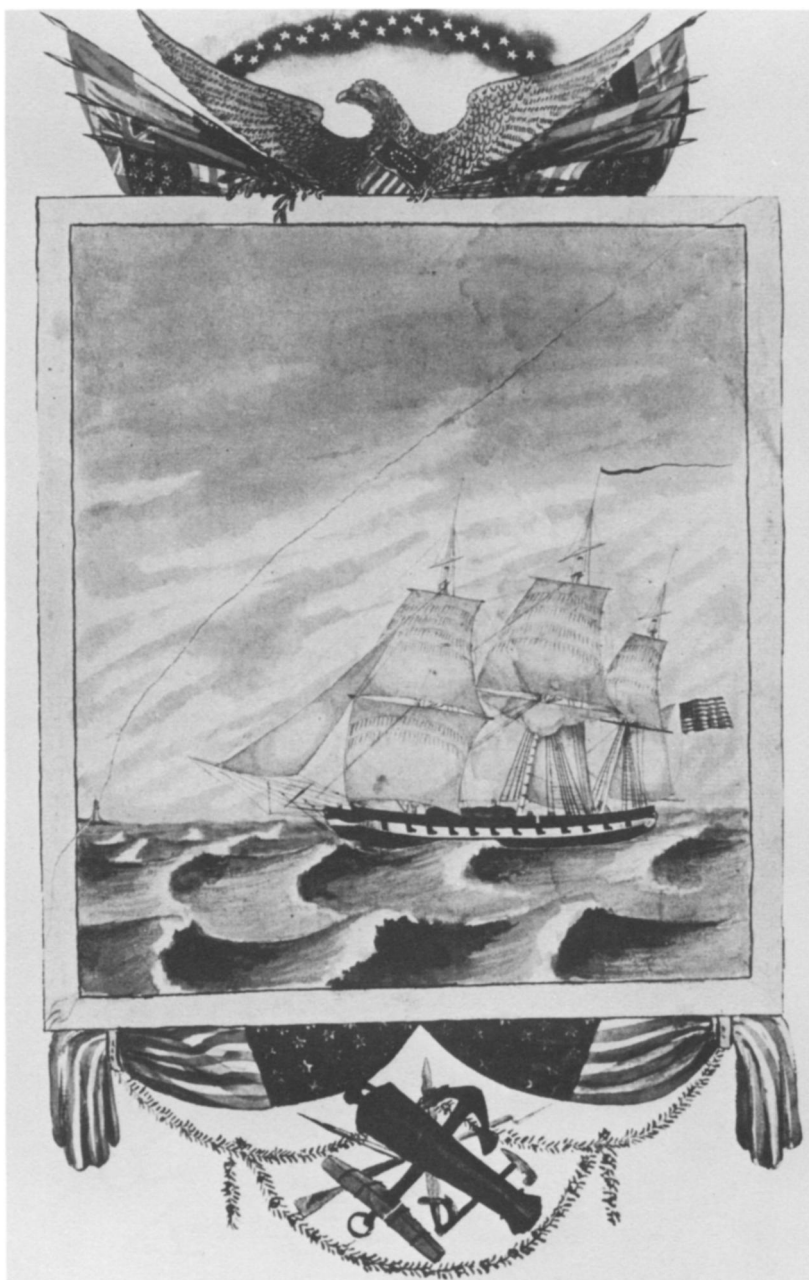
From information received at San José we learned that the country was in a very unsettled state; the most respectable inhabitants were endeavoring to maintain order and quiet; but a few worthless adventurers were inciting classes to insurrection. To understand this state of affairs it will be necessary to go back and take a brief survey of the previous operations of our forces on this coast.

Owing to the absence of our squadron from the gulf, the Mexicans had landed about four hundred men and several pieces of artillery and a large supply of ammunition. Powder had

also been supplied to the enemy, it is said, by the brig Thomas H. Benton from New York. A small body of soldiers, mostly refugees from justice, were landed at Mulije [Mulege] and placed under the command of Manuel Pineda, Captain of Cavalry, who proclaimed himself Gefe Politico y Comandante Militar de Baja California. His only authority for this was a passport from Colonel Rafael Telles, commanding officer at Mazatlán who was himself in open rebellion against the Central Government of Mexico.

According to Halleck, Pineda and his soldiers had little support at first from the local population who wished to remain neutral until a treaty of peace had been signed "to settle their future destiny." Pineda declared them all traitors and threatened reprisals unless they supported him, "thus many rancheros of Mulije [Mu-

Amateur artist Wm. Meyers, a naval gunner, painted the second-class sloop Cyane which, along with the Portsmouth, Congress, Independence and Dale, made up the Pacific Squadron contingent assigned to blockade and subdue Lower California.



lege] were induced to join the revolution.” Pineda and his associates were a villainous bunch, asserted Halleck.

As Pineda had fled from Mazatlán to avoid his creditors and the consequences of a dissipated and lawless life, and had assumed command in California without any legal authority of his government, his character condition seemed to fit him for the command of this band of lawless vagabonds. . . . He was utterly destitute of personal courage . . . and he arranged rather than executed plans of robbery and murder. The executions were left to several leaders of the guerrilla parties.

Pineda’s principal coadjutors were two clerics, Padre Vicente of Comondu, fifty miles to the south of Mulege, and Padre Gabriel Gonzales of Todos Santos, on the western coast. The former, who urged his men to kill Yankees to assure glorious rewards in heaven, was thought to be a “crazy fool even by his own flock.” He placed himself at the head of his guerrilla band in “robes and cross held high” but armed to the teeth, although at the first sound of gun fire he was the first to run. When his situation became dangerous, he took off in a whale boat across the gulf “with all the plundered church silver, and his prize gaming cocks.” Turned back by the launch of the *Dale*, he was last seen, Halleck observed, minus his swag, running to the hills “for he was an expert runner of foot races.” Padre Gabriel, Halleck reported, was a very different man:

He was cool, cunning and intelligent, and destitute alike of principle and honor. . . . He was living at this time at La Paz for the purposes of medical advice for the numerous diseases contracted in some of his scenes of debauchery. . . . He manifested the most friendly feelings towards the officers of the American garrison although in constant correspondence with Pineda. . . . He was engaged in procuring arms for the insurgents, but solemnly denied that Pineda was in the country for hostile purposes, and ridiculed the idea of any intended insurrection.

After the skirmish with the landing party of the *Dale* at Mulege, Pineda had moved south and with his “tatterdemalion” party set up his base of operations at San Antonio, some 15 miles south of La Paz; Padre Gabriel and his partisans moved to Todos Santos on the west coast of the peninsula. Halleck continued:

Such was the actual state of affairs in Lower California on our arrival at the Cape, but it was not easy to form a satisfactory opinion from the meager and contradictory reports which we received at San José. . . . Under the circumstances I proposed to Commodore Shubrick the propriety of sending a small body of men to Todos Santos to make a reconnaissance and ascertain the exact state of the country. Accordingly a party of officers and men were selected for this purpose and placed under the command of Lieut. Montgomery Lewis, U.S.N.

The party included Halleck, Navy Lieutenant George Selden, Navy Surgeon Maxwell, Lieutenant William Russell, and twenty-five sailors and marines.

November 1st, 1847. . . . Landed from the ship and found our guides, horses and pack mules waiting for us on the beach. Having completed our preparations we left the town about 5 o’clock [P.M.], took the road to Todos Santos. But no sooner were we under way than the country people begged us not to venture into the interior with so small a party, for Pineda, they said, had already organised several hundred men and would assuredly

attack us. The next day this rumored force increased to 700 men said to be lying in wait for us near the padre's rancho at San Jacinto.

Disregarding the rumors of Pineda's intentions, the party pressed on. They stayed the night at the Rancho Ascunción at the foot of a mountain some fifteen miles from San José, tying their horses to a line of trees, arranging their saddles and packs into "circular breastworks," and spending "a restless night."

November 2nd. Rose at daybreak. . . . Some of our animals had broken their picket lines and had wandered off, so we did not get in motion until 7 o'clock. The old ranchero brought us fresh milk and cheese and manifested every desire to treat us with the utmost hospitality. He was exceedingly poor and lived entirely upon the produce of his cattle; and not an inch of ground for miles around us was susceptible of cultivation. He had nevertheless raised up a large family of children, most of whom had married and were now living away from home. One daughter about 14 or 15 years of age still remained whose pretty face and magnificent figure would have made her a queen in any country village.

The country beyond the Ascunción Rancho, Halleck observed, was very barren and covered with great granite rocks as "though they had been split into fragments by thunderbolts." About nine o'clock Halleck's party passed the Rancho San Felipe and found some good pasturage near a fine brook of purest water where they breakfasted. Soon they were in the "middle of the mountain range that extends from Cape San Lucas to the northern extremity of Oregon, and on each side of us were lofty peaks, some four or five thousand feet." They crossed high table lands which lay half way between the gulf and the Pacific, and bivouaced for the night at the side of a small stream at a place the guides called Rincon. As there was "considerable danger of attack," they kept the strictest watch through the night.

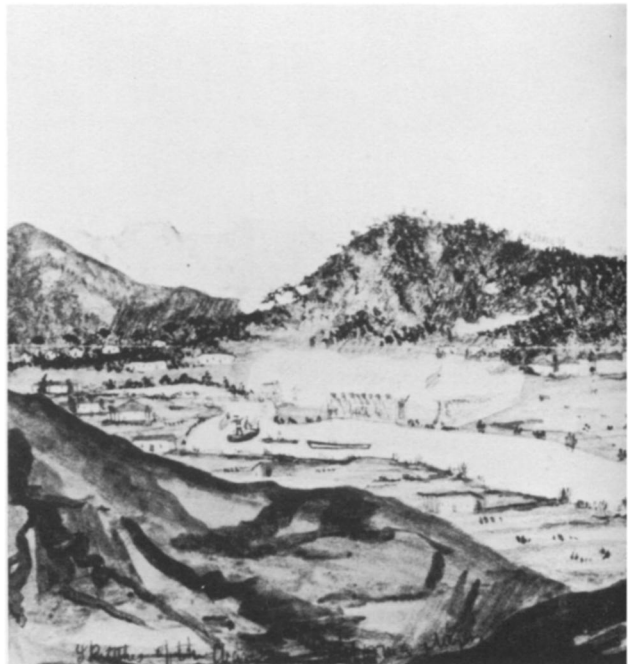
November 3rd. We started this morning at 4 o'clock and rode by moonlight. Our road lay across small streams and broken spurs of the mountains, and it was with difficulty that we could get our horses over the rocks and steep ravines that obstructed our way. . . . We had travelled by a mere mountain path, winding amongst the rocks and trees and generally through gorges so narrow that two animals could not pass at a time. At 9 o'clock we reached the rancho of San Jacinto belonging to Padre González, a fine sugar plantation on the San Jacinto River. On our approach most of the men up in the plantations fled to the woods and the women received us with great coldness, replying, "No comprendo," to all our interrogations. . . . At 11 o'clock we resumed our march, determined to push on as near as possible to Todos Santos before dark and ascertain the real state of affairs in that vicinity. At 5 o'clock we arrived at Pescadero, a collection of four or five ranchos, one of which was situated on top of a small hill and afforded an excellent look-out and defense. We resolved to stop there for the night and push on to Todos Santos in the morning. . . . We turned our horses to graze till dark, and while beef and vegetables were procured and cooked outside for the men, we contrived to have a supper prepared indoors for the officers. As the old ranchero was too miserably poor to furnish us anything but beef and milk, we obtained some chickens from a neighboring farm and turned them over to his daughters to prepare. How many children the old man had I do not remember, but I do know that he had at home five girls from 14 to 19 years of age, and as pretty as could be looked for on a California rancho. To good Spanish features, without any mixture of

Indian blood, were added forms that queens might envy. Wearing dresses without sleeves, and low in the bosom like our belles at home when they wish to display their charms in the ballroom, and being too poor to afford [?] with which Mexican ladies usually conceal their budding features, these belles of Pescadero, in their simple calico robes without the aid of cotton brocade and whale bones, presented us lovely figures as the age could ever wish to gaze upon; and with hearty appetites and chicken well cooked, we waited in anticipation of a pleasant entertainment.

At length the chickens made their appearance in an immense earthen dish . . . with a savory smell not to be ignored. A difficulty now arose in serving them up in proper style, for we had only brought with us our clasp-knives and metallic drinking cups. The latter answered well enough for our coffee in the field, and the knives served us perfectly in cutting up our beef after it had been roasted on a stick by a camp fire. But now that we had ladies to entertain the case was different; for one long dish and a knife or two constitute the usual table furniture of a Californian ranchero, and an earthen pot and iron skillet, the entire poterie de cuisine. . . . Some old cracked plates were found under a bed, however, and placed on a wooden trunk which served as a table, and blocks of wood arranged around it for seats. Each of us shared a block of wood with a fair companion, and it was necessary for the gentleman and lady to sit in close proximity . . . and one arm tightly about her waist lest she slip off the seat while the other hand did the double duty of feeding the entertained and the entertainer. As there was only one cup for every couple, the fair lady was obliged to drink from the same as her cavalier. We were deficient in knives and forks but then fingers were invented before either—and we used these to advantage and held up the chicken to the rosy lips of our sweethearts while they delicately nibbled off the fleshy meat. . . . If our friends at home could have looked in upon us, they must have admired the grace in which we plied these California beauties with hard bread, coffee and chicken stews.

[After the meal] preparations were made for a dance which was continued with much glee till a late hour. There were, however, some drawbacks to the gaiety of the evening—

The advance guard of the squadron proceeded to Lower California in August, 1847, to weaken the area before the main force's arrival, and on October 2, the Dale's landing force under Lieutenant Craven attempted to subdue the Mexicans, commanded by Pineda, at Mulege. Meyers dutifully recorded the skirmish in water colors.

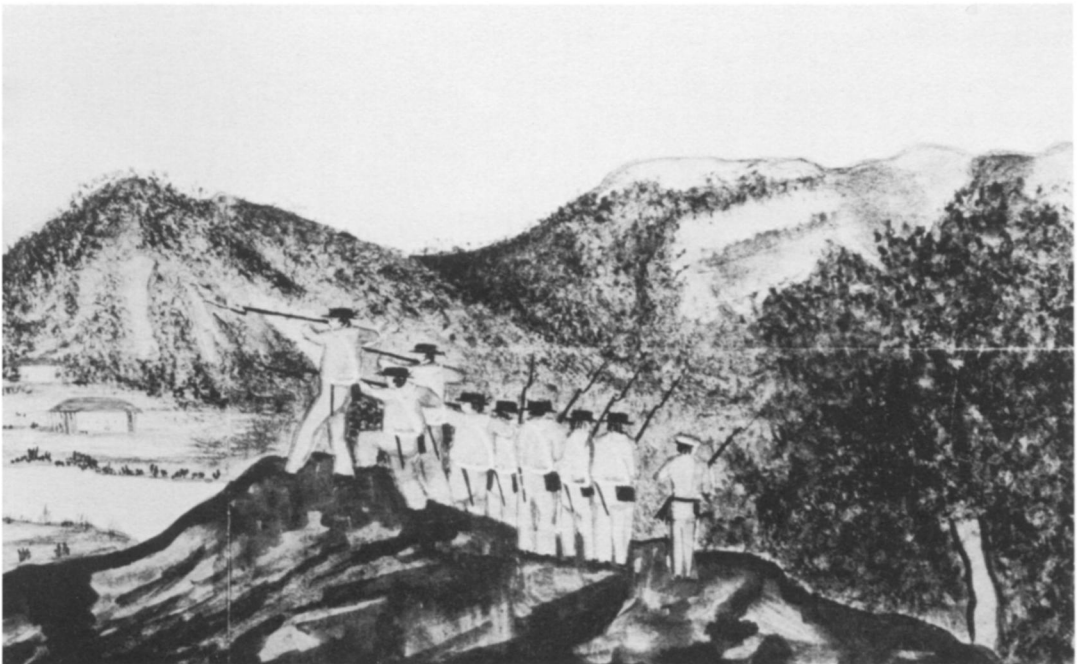


the old three-string guitar was out of tune, and the ground inside was very uneven; moreover it was slightly fatiguing to dance with revolvers in each pocket, horse pistols in the belt, and a heavy saber buckled to the side. Our carbines were close at hand, and in addition to four sentinels on the outside of the house, one officer always kept near the door to give an instant alarm in case of an attack. At 11 o'clock we bade goodnight to our fair friends and slept soundly on the ground outside, notwithstanding the close proximity of our sleeping beauties, and the strong probability of a fight before morning. . . ."

But daylight came without an attack, and at an early hour we were on the road to the Mission at Todos Santos. . . . On our approach we were informed that the insurgents had left the place. We reached the town about 8 o'clock and immediately took up quarters in the Mission. Alarmed at our approach Padre Gabriel had fled, but finding that we were not disposed to injure anyone, and fearing that his absence might compromise his pecuniary interests, he came back and pretended to be greatly pleased at seeing us in his house.

But Halleck and his party did not trust the padre who was "casting a sinister eye upon our horses and equipment," so they put a sentry on his door. They calculated, however, that the mission was admirably suited for defense and that their party of thirty could hold out against 300 Mexicans until reinforcements reached them from San José.

Describing Todos Santos, Halleck observed "a town of straggling houses," the church and the mission buildings in good repair, and "the missionary character of the establishment having ceased with the disappearance of the Indians." Reporting on the political conditions at Todos Santos, Halleck recorded a conversation with the smooth talking Padre Gabriel who assured them that he greatly regretted the disturbances that had taken place and that he blamed them upon certain evilly disposed persons from Mulege "who had endeavored to incite people to arms." The padre continued that some of the Baja Californians were in favor of remaining a Mexican colony, while others preferred annexation to the United States, "but to get up a revolution could only lead to disaster and ruin."



Halleck thought the padre's remarks very sensible, but "certain circumstances in his conduct led us to believe that, while plying us with soft words, he was actually planning some scheme to destroy us." Hence, a strong guard was posted, and the officers took turns to watch every movement of the padre. In spite of these precautions, however, the padre attempted to induce "the inhabitants to make the Americans prisoners." Failing in this, he dispatched a courier to Pineda advising him to ambush the Americans on their way to San José. Accordingly,

On November 5th we called in the second alcalde—the first had left the place on our approach under the pretense of private business in the interior of the country—and read to him a letter from Commodore Shubrick, and represented to him the ruinous consequences that must result to the contrary if the people should be so foolish as to join Pineda in his insurrectionary measures. The Padre acted as spokesman in reply and assured us on his own part, and for the authorities of the town, that no disturbances should take place and that they would continue to reorganize the existing government of the country till the question of allegiance should be finally settled by a treaty of peace with Mexico. It is worthy of remark that while the reverend Padre was guilty of falsehood in nearly every word he spoke, and in less than half an hour gave the lie to his protestations, the second alcalde and rancheros of Todos Santos were true to their word, and notwithstanding the threats of the priest and his partisans, continued as friends of the Americans in all the subsequent difficulties in the peninsula.

Having accomplished the principal object of our visit, our orders not permitting us to be any longer absent from the squadron, we left the Mission in the afternoon [November 5] intending to bivouac again at Pescadero. But as we were about to start, a circumstance occurred to exhibit the Padre's character in its true light. Contrary to our express orders he had sold rum to our Marines, and about half a dozen of them were so intoxicated as to be scarcely able to sit upon their horses; and one of the Padre's illegitimate sons [later, a captain under Pineda] had succeeded in stealing a number of the flints from their guns. He at first positively denied it, but the flints were found in his pocket. We felt disposed to administer a suitable punishment for his conduct but deemed it preferable in the existing state of the country to let him off with a severe reprimand. The Padre stood by and seemed to regard with approbation the theft and falsehood of his illegitimate offspring.

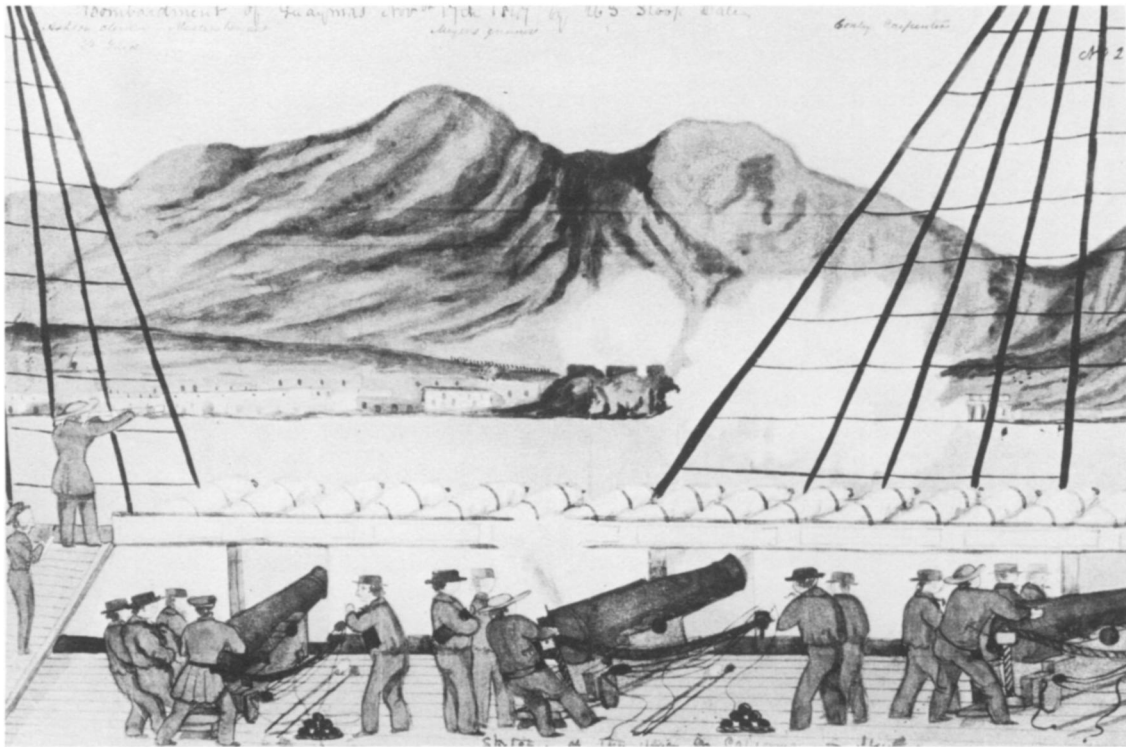
Halleck and his party reached Pescadero before dark on November 5 and planned to spend another riotous evening with the fair señoritas. However, a messenger arrived from their friends in Todos Santos who told them that a party of Pineda's insurrectionists had appeared soon after they left and were now planning an attack on the Americans at Pescadero. Halleck reported that they then "gave their whole attention to preparations for defense," and although during the night they saw several of the enemy in the distant bushes, the day dawned without an attack. The night of November 6 they bivouaced on the mesa, and friendly rancheros gave them milk and fresh beef. Taking a moment for his journal, Halleck reflected, "The beef of Lower California in the season when the cattle are fat is superior, I think, to any other I have tasted. . . ."

November 7th. We were early in the saddle, and stopping a short time on the road to graze our horses and cook our breakfast, we reached San José about sundown and immediately went on board the Independence to report the result of our reconnaissance. The Commo-

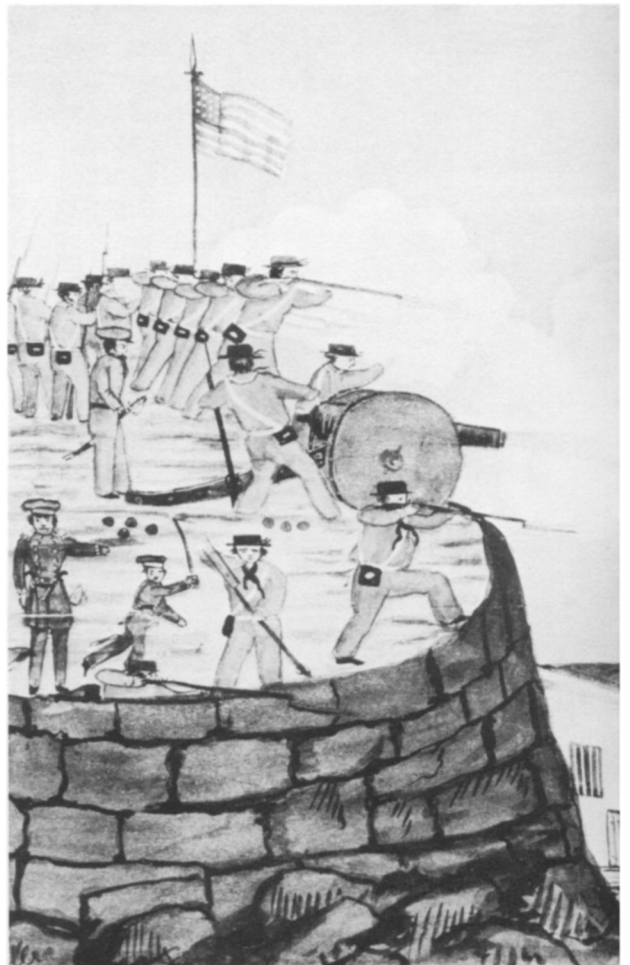
dore then heard from the alcalde of San José that it would be impossible for him to maintain the quiet of the town during the absence of the Squadron unless some force was left to give countenance and support to his authority. The people, he said, were friendly, but being denounced as traitors by the guerrillas, they were afraid to act according to their own wishes. A small garrison was deemed sufficient for the present object, it being intended that one of the vessels of war should return after the capture of Mazatlán. Accordingly on the morning of November 8th, Lieut. Heywood with four officers and 25 marines and sailors were ordered ashore to garrison the old cuartel at the upper end of the town. Fortunately there was very little surf this morning at the landing near the mouth of the river, so that everything was got ashore without difficulty. At one o'clock the Squadron sailed for Mazatlán leaving Lieut. Heywood, USN, and his little band to try their hand for a time with the guerrillas of the Peninsula.

Although Halleck left some notes on the Mazatlán expedition, they were short and sketchy and served only to remind him that he had to finish that portion (which we presume he never did). From other sources, primarily reports to Congress, however, we know that Commodore Shubrick had hoped to pick up some of Burton's New York Volunteers from La Paz to assist him in the expedition to Mazatlán. Before he left Monterey Shubrick was handed a dispatch from Lieutenant W. T. Sherman (promoted to Mason's acting assistant adjutant general) for Burton which directed the Volunteers to support the naval forces. The dispatch read, in part, "It is ordered that, if compatible with the safety of that portion of California, you leave at La Paz or San José such officers and men of your present command as will ensure the safety of our flag there, and with the balance embark and cooperate with the naval forces in any attack that they may make against Mazatlán" (House of Representatives, *Executive Document #17*, 31 Congress, 1 session). However, the Todos Santos reconnaissance party under Lieutenant Lewis (described by Halleck) had just discovered that there was considerable threat from the guerrillas all across the peninsula. Aware of this ominous situation, Burton also knew of Pineda's move to San Antonio and the threat to La Paz. Believing himself to be in no position to help Shubrick in his attack on Mazatlán, Burton in fact considered his hold on the peninsula so precarious that he instead prevailed upon Shubrick to leave a garrison of sailors and marines at San José under Lieutenant Heywood. As a result Shubrick, with the three ships of the squadron—the frigates *Independence* and *Congress* and the sloop *Cyane*—set out to attack Mazatlán with a much smaller landing party than he had anticipated.

The three ships arrived off Mazatlán on the afternoon of November 9, having sailed from the roadstead of San José at 1 P.M. on the eighth and covering the 200 miles of the gulf in twenty-four hours. Early next morning Shubrick placed his ships in position: the *Independence* (well fitted-out with eight 8-inch shell guns and forty-eight 32-pound carronades) anchored with her broadside to the town; the *Congress* (with approximately the same armament as the other frigate) commanded the old harbor and the road leading northward; and the *Cyane* (with twenty 32-pounders) commanded the landing near the new harbor. A party to carry the summons to surrender under a flag of truce assembled on the *Independence*: Captain Elie A. F. LaVallette, Henry Halleck, Flag Lieutenant Henry Lewis, and Henry LaReintrie who was Shubrick's secretary and translator (he



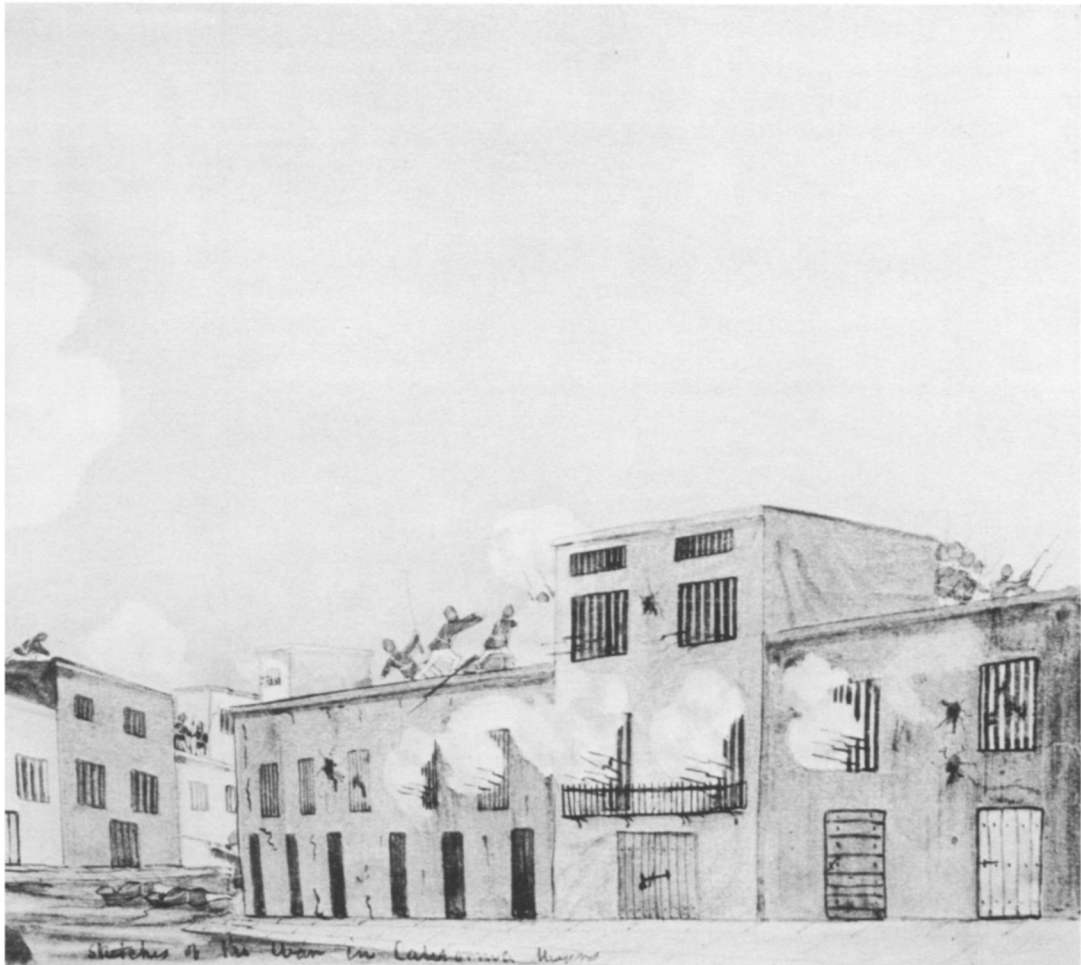
Following their orders to occupy ports, blockade trade, and cooperate with the army across the gulf on the peninsula, the Dale's 32-pounders—with artist Meyers firing (above)—bombaraded Guaymas, while seamen attempted to take possession of the fort and drive Mexican troops from the surrounding houses (right).



had held the same position under Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones at the time of the embarrassing descent on Monterey in 1842).

It came as no surprise to the truce party that the military commandant and governor of Mazatlán, Colonel Rafael Telles, was out of town. At previous landings of United States forces in Alta California the Mexican official in authority had regularly absented to a safe place from where he could issue bombastic proclamations in defiance of the invader. Two army officers and two civilian members of the junta met the American party, however, and they led them to the house of the president of the junta, José Vasavilboro, who informed the Americans that his junta had no vote "in the deliberations of the military" and that he was not aware of "their resolution" (National Archives, Microfilm records of Tenth Military Department, Rg 393, Roll 6). The summons to surrender was then sent by courier to Colonel Telles who was in camp with his troops at Palos Orientos, about twelve miles from Mazatlán. Exhibiting a flare for the dramatic, Telles paraded his troops, read the American summons aloud, tore the paper up, and jumped on the pieces.

Shubrick, meanwhile, had decided not to wait for Telles' reaction: between noon and one o'clock on the eleventh the landing party under Captain LaVallette



and Halleck departed from the squadron in twenty-nine boats with 730 officers, sailors, and marines and five field pieces. No opposition was made to the landings, and at 1:10 P.M. the Stars and Stripes was hoisted over the army barracks to the accompaniment of a twenty-one gun-salute from the *Independence*.

On November 13 articles of capitulation were drawn up and signed by the junta. Shubrick then imposed a moderate tariff, allowed all goods to be freely exported, promised no interference with normal life but harsh treatment for insurrectionists, and forbade the sale of liquor to United States forces. He also appointed LaVallette as governor and Halleck as lieutenant governor.

Colonel Telles, predictably, was furious that things had gone so well for the Americans, and he denounced the capitulation terms. On November 14 he moved his 700 troops nearer to the town and sent 150 men under a Swiss officer, Lieutenant Carlos Horn, to Urias on the road south to the interior with the idea of cutting off communications and trade with Mexico City. On hearing of this movement, LaVallette sent a force of ninety-four sailors under Lieutenant George Selden, with Henry Halleck to advise, to flush the Mexicans out of Urias. Another smaller party of sixty-two men under Lieutenant Stephen Rowan was sent up the Mazatlán estero by boat to cut off the enemy's retreat back to their camp. Selden and Halleck drove out one group of the enemy in the chaparral near Urias and then at dusk advanced towards the town and concealed themselves until daylight. During the night Halleck reconnoitered the area with several volunteers and at first light made contact with Rowan's party. They laid plans to coordinate an attack with Selden's men, and Halleck and his men returned to their position near Urias. At a signal from Halleck both parties attacked the town and routed the enemy who ran so quickly that Rowan and his men were unable to circle around and cut off their retreat. Four Mexicans were killed and twenty wounded, and the Americans suffered one casualty and several slightly wounded. (The information above comes from the House of Representatives, *Executive Document #17*, 31 Congress, 1 session.)

As new lieutenant governor, Halleck took up his administrative duties at Mazatlán and the responsibilities of constructing redoubts for the defense of the harbor and the approaches from the interior. Far to the north there had been some trouble at Guaymas, and the *Portsmouth* had been left there with her sailors garrisoning the town. Later, Shubrick pulled her away and replaced her with the sloop *Dale*, but when the Mexicans saw the big frigate being replaced by a sloop they plucked up courage and infiltrated the town. Commander Selfridge of the *Dale* bombarded the town to displace them and in the act of retaking the port he was badly wounded in the foot. Guaymas, however, was again garrisoned by United States forces.

Meanwhile, on the Baja peninsula Heywood's garrison at San José and Burton's at La Paz were both attacked by Pineda's men, and only with difficulty did they drive them off. In January, 1848, Heywood came under attack again and was driven from the town, and a number of his men were captured by the enemy. Heywood was able to send a message across the gulf to Shubrick who sent the *Cyane* to assist Heywood in regaining his post, which he did. At La Paz Burton received news from Mason in Monterey that another company of the New York Volunteers under the command of Captain Naglee was on its way to reinforce

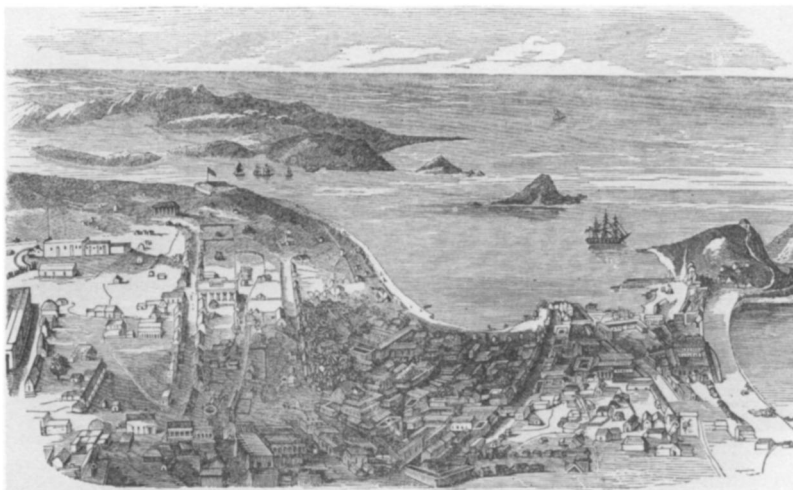
the garrisons; with any luck Burton would then be able to launch an expedition inland at the peninsula to actively engage the insurgents.

Across the gulf at Mazatlán at the end of December Telles was again flexing his muscles and building up a substantial force at Palos Prietos. LaVallette sent out two parties to dislodge Telles: fifty sailors under Lieutenant Henry Wise, again accompanied by Halleck, and a party of marines under Lieutenant William Russell. After a brief skirmish the Mexicans fled, leaving behind most of their baggage. They inflicted one casualty on the Americans, slightly wounding Lawrence Andrews, a wardroom steward on the *Independence*. Telles was replaced soon after by the new governor of Sinaloa, Don Rafael de la Vega, who was not a military man. He stationed a few troops on the road to the interior in hopes of preventing normal commercial activities, but all serious military threats were at an end.

Halleck then requested a transfer to the active theater of operations across the gulf, and he joined his old friend Burton as second in command of the United States forces for the coming active campaign against the insurgents on the peninsula. Here his memoir continues:

At Mazatlán I took passage on the 2nd of February [1848] for La Paz. The peninsula was still in an unsettled state. . . . Guerrilla parties still hung about La Paz and San José, annoying the garrisons with continual threats of an attack, but retiring to the mountains on the first appearance of a sortie party from the American works. Their principal object was to cut off those who might venture beyond the reach of our guns. . . . Their efforts proved unsuccessful until the end of January, when they succeeded in capturing Passed Midshipman Duncan Wally and five men near San José. Encouraged by the taking of prisoners the enemy converted the blockade of the little garrison into a siege. All the cattle in the vicinity of San José were driven into the interior, and as the Portsmouth had sailed for the U.S. without leaving [Heywood's] garrison with proper supplies of ammunition or provisions, there was every prospect of starving the place into surrender. Such was the state of affairs in the Peninsula at the time of our reaching La Paz. . . .

On the evening of the 7th of February we entered the bay by the northern channel between San José Island and Espiritu Santo Island, and the next morning were in sight of the town of La Paz. The houses are mostly built of adobe, and, being whitewashed, may be seen at a great distance and when approached by sea present a very pretty appearance. Hills and two sloping mountains some miles north form excellent landmarks to point out its position. The surrounding country presents a forbidding aspect, being composed of volcanic hills and arid plains covered with cactus. The sloop Cyane and several small coastal vessels were lying at anchor in the channel opposite the town, while the Stars and Stripes floated over the cuartel on the hill. The storeship Southampton [with Halleck on board] having anchored under Pinta Prieto [?] to wait for a change of tide, I took passage for the shore in a pilot boat; and as the sea was smooth, we laid our course with a light breeze directly across the shoal which extends from the [?] to near Pinta Prieto, forming the narrow channel through which vessels are obliged to pass in order to reach the town. The anchorage, however, is good almost anywhere outside this shoal; the islands of San José and Espiritu Santo protect the bay from the north and the east, and the mainland covers it from the so'westers. The appearance of La Paz on landing did not justify the favorable opinion we had formed when viewing it at a distance. The main street near the water was



Mazatlán, the most important port on the Pacific, surrendered to U.S. naval forces in November, 1847, after a number of skirmishes on the road to nearby Urias in which Halleck coordinated American attack parties.

tolerably well built up, and planted with quite pretty young trees; but the other parts of the town were mostly in ruins, a part of the buildings having been burnt by the guerrillas in their attack in November last, and others pulled down by the Americans to give greater play to their artillery. Many of the inhabitants were thus left without a home or even shelter for their heads, and soon fled to the fields and built themselves shanties of brush while others lived in the open air. War, on the smallest scale, is not without its horrors; and even in this bye-place of the earth, many a suffering female and helpless orphan live to call down the vengeance of heaven upon the heads of profligate statesmen who involve nations in useless and unnecessary wars.

Halleck discovered that there was a plan to unite a part of the crew of the *Cyane* with the garrison at La Paz to mount an expedition against the insurgents and rescue the American prisoners. A combined force of sailors and infantry could probably sustain itself against attack but would be ill-fitted to chase guerrillas who could freely move over mountainous country which they knew so well. However, it was thought, a small mobile American party in the interior would be of some value in supporting and reassuring those rancheros who continued to resist Pineda's threats. Nevertheless, the news from San José was discouraging and the garrison had been left without supplies, so the operation against the insurgents in the La Paz area had to be postponed while the *Cyane* was sent south to relieve San José and provision the garrison. Upon her return to La Paz they would perhaps set an expedition in motion again, and in the meantime Halleck determined to explore some of the islands in the gulf and visit some of the fishing villages further north on the east coast of the peninsula. On March 1 he set off in the launch of the storeship *Southampton*, with Lieutenant Worden, a pilot, and eight men.

Sailing along the islands of Espiritu Santo, San José, Santa Cruz, and looking into the ensenadas de los Burros and Dolores, we landed after five hours at San Marcia to look for a supply of gull's eggs with which this island is usually covered. . . . About two o'clock on the morning of the 5th, we reached the Bay of Escondido. As we rowed into the mouth of the harbor, the mirror-like surface of the water most beautifully reflected the stars and the dark shadows of the surrounding mountains. . . . The harbor itself is one of the finest of the world, being perfectly landmarked and having sufficient depth of water to float the largest ships ever built.

We anchored in the inner bay and waited for daylight, expecting to find a Mexican schooner which was reported to be concealed somewhere in this harbor. But when morning

came nothing was to be seen of the expected prize. . . . Finally we found the vessel hidden away in a small cove defended by one large dog and a miserable old Manila negro. We effected the capture with very little bloodshed, but the sails had been removed to Loreto . . . and if we wished to use the schooner we would have to go up to that place in the launch and secure them. This would involve the capture of the town which might not be too easy, but we decided that most of the men would be absent with Pineda, and that no opposition was likely to be made. . . . Having to contend with a headwind we did not reach the anchorage of Loreto until sundown. A lot of people had gathered around the church and they seemed to be armed. It was possible that they were a guerrilla party from Comondu or San Antonio and we might have had our hands full if we attempted to take the town with only ten of us. We resolved to land but we could not get the launch over a sand bar and we had to wade for 200 yards in water up to our necks, holding firearms above our heads to keep them dry. . . . The armed men were now apparently taking post in some underbrush bordering the town, and we approached with great caution, our guns cocked and hands on the triggers. In the hopes of surprising our opponents, we divided our eight sailors into separate columns, and directed the commander of each column, in case of a charge by the enemy's cavalry, to instantly form his men into a hollow square! Jack answered with his customary "'Aye, 'aye, Sir,'" not exactly knowing whether we were joking or in earnest. But as we approached the town the guerrillas vanished into thin air, and in their places were women and children. . . . Most of the males of the place were with Pineda, but the female community hailed our arrival with joy . . . and they were very upset when they learned our stay was to be a short one. . . .

We procured the sails, returned to the launch and set sail for Escondido. But the wind died and we had to use the oars. . . . The night was cool and our clothes were drenching wet, so the passage was far from pleasant. We reached the schooner about 1 o'clock in the morning. We lay aside our wet clothes, wrapped ourselves up in warm blankets and had a good snore. Having no room aboard the launch for bedding, we had only brought along a blanket and a pea jacket each—the deficiency was made up by the old sails of the schooner. The following day, while the sailors were busy ballasting the Rosario—the name of our prize—we made a short excursion into the interior and visited two ranchos.

March 7th. The squadron, consisting of the schooner Rosario and the launch, set sail this morning for Salinas Bay, the part of Carmen Island opposite the salt mines. . . . On the morning of the 9th we reached La Paz. We learned that the Cyane would not return for some time to unite her forces with the garrison and march against the enemy. In the meantime we sent out small parties to cut off Mexican outposts, and to pick up prisoners, horses and saddles and equipment . . . and we quietly made preparations for an expedition against San Antonio to rescue the American prisoners, and perhaps capture Pineda; and daily we increased our strength in captured horses and supplies. Some said that the garrison at San Antonio numbered less than 40 men, while others made it double that number, exclusive of the small parties, stationed on the roads leading to La Paz, who were watching our movements. The prisoners had been taken towards San José because Pineda believed that we were planning to rescue them. . . . They would probably be moved again if Pinedd heard of our intended movements. . . . It was therefore necessary to act with great caution. When 30 or 40 horses had been collected, and everyone supposed that some expedition was to be undertaken, it was given out that the affair was to be postponed for several days. . . . The men were greatly disappointed at this decision, but at 9 o'clock in the evening orders were suddenly given to a party of picked men to instantly mount their horses and

start . . . while at the same time a guard was thrown around the town to prevent any person from leaving in order to communicate with the enemy. . . .”

The party consisted of Captain [Seymour G.] Steele [First New York Regiment], Lieut. Henry Halleck, Dr. [Surgeon Alexander] Perry and Acting Lieut. Scott [First New York Regiment] and Volunteer guards, numbering in all 31 officers and men. . . . [Halleck neglects to mention that three Californian guards and citizens who lived in the area also joined the party—Messrs. Herman, Ehrenberg, and Taylor.] For the first twenty miles. . . .

At this eventful moment Halleck's journal is interrupted. For details of this important mission—in which Halleck played a leading part—to attack the enemy headquarters at San Antonio and rescue the men of Heywood's command who had been captured and made prisoners outside San José more than one month earlier, we must rely on Captain Seymour Steele's official report of the affair to Congress (House of Representatives, *Executive Document #31*, 30 Congress, 2 session).

Halleck's party rode out of La Paz between nine and ten P.M. on March 15. At daylight on the sixteenth they captured one of the enemy's pickets just eight miles from San Antonio and approached their objective under cover along an arroya and “charged into the town at full speed. . . .” They quickly rescued the prisoners from whom they learned that the Mexican garrison had been withdrawn to a defensive position just outside the town. The officers, however, were still in town, and within minutes the second in command of the insurgents, Captain Calderon, was captured, together with the adjutant, Lieutenant Arse, their flag, and all their private and public papers. The big prize, Commandante Manuel Pineda, however was lost to them: “He escaped in his night clothes, having just arisen from his bed,” reported Steele. Halleck and Steele then rallied their men, charged the Mexican positions outside the town, and drove fifty Mexicans into the adjacent hills. Three Mexicans were killed and eight wounded, and one American, Sergeant Thomas Hipwood, was killed. “Pantaloons, cravats, hats, horses, saddles attest the numerous narrow escapes,” but no Americans were wounded. Within two hours the party was on their way back to La Paz. Despite another attack from insurgents on the return trip in which six Mexicans were killed or wounded and the captured Mexican captain received a ball in his shoulder, Halleck and party covered the round trip of 128 miles in thirty hours. They were back at La Paz at 2 A.M. on the seventeenth, having led their exhausted horses on foot for the last five miles. Steele completed his report with acknowledgments: “To Surgeon Alexander Perry and Lieut. Halleck, U.S. Engineers, most sincere thanks are due for their counsel and assistance.”

Halleck's private journal begins again after his return from the whirlwind expedition.

Reinforcements having arrived from Upper California [Captain Henry Naglee and another company of First Regiment of N.Y. Volunteers], preparations were immediately made for taking the field. Accordingly between 12 and one o'clock on the morning of the 26th [of March, 1848], Lieut. Col. Burton started from La Paz with 217 officers and men to march against the enemy. . . . An advance guard of some 50 mounted men was formed. . . . It was intended to mount the remainder of the force as soon as horses could be captured,

but for the present most of the officers and men were on foot. After a fatiguing march of about 22 miles we halted at . . . the rancho Playatas. . . . Our vacqueros killed a couple of bullocks. . . . Officers and men crowded round the camp fires with pieces of meat on sharpened sticks held over the burning coals. The air was filled with the savory smell . . . none but old campaigners can appreciate the pleasures of such a feast. . . . At 4 o'clock we were again on the march . . . and we entered a very broken portion of the country . . . parts of the road were filled with volcanic stones, and we occasionally crossed hills of granite with fantastic twists and contortions whose colored veins gave evidence of what in former ages were the agonies of a burning world. After a few miles we overtook the advance guard—they had learnt from a captured partisan that Pineda with a few attendants were still at San Antonio; and the remainder of the guerrillas were near Santiago under the command of one, Castro. It was important to push on without delay. . . . We reached Las Trincheras, where there was water, at 8 o'clock in the evening, having marched about 34 miles in the last 24 hours. . . .”

March 27th. Left Las Trincheras this morning at 9 o'clock. During the forenoon we passed over a part of the country entirely destitute of grass, and covered only with cactus and stunted trees. . . . A small advance guard of mounted men pushed rapidly forward to San Antonio, and succeeded in surprising Pineda and his party, and the main body entered the town about 6 o'clock having marched this day 18 miles. . . .”

They remained next day in San Antonio where friendly rancheros brought them horses, and more of the column became mounted infantry. More rancheros joined them and volunteered to act as guides through the mountain passes. Other rancheros, Halleck recorded, “had undertaken to reconnoiter the enemy and bring us information.” When the reconnaissance party had not returned by the dawn of the twenty-ninth, Burton and Halleck decided to continue south to Santiago which lay on the road to San José. On the road by 5 A.M., a few miles from San Antonio they met a courier from Santiago who told them that “the enemy had left that place and were crossing the main range by the road from Miraflores to the Mission of Todos Santos.” Countermarching the column, the party returned to San Antonio and took the road across the peninsula to Todos Santos. Halleck wrote:

On leaving the valley of San Antonio we ascended into the mining district, and at 9 o'clock halted for breakfast at a rancho in the Arroya Honda. The whole of this district is extremely barren . . . scarcely enough grass to feed our horses. Nevertheless the cattle were in excellent condition, and we were able to get two or three fat bullocks for our men. At one o'clock we resumed the march . . . across rolling countryside thickly covered with small trees. At dark we bivouaced near a rancho on the Arroya de la Muella . . . about 24 miles from San Antonio, we had travelled today about 30 miles. . . . Most of our horses were ready to give out, and the men threw themselves on the ground and instantly fell asleep. . . . The roads we had travelled over the mountains were mere paths, and much of the way . . . we had come through arroyas or dry river beds, where the sand, or *terra perdida* as it is called, was ankle deep. The sun has been excessive and watering places are 15 or 20 miles apart; moreover it has been impossible to procure pack mules for carrying anything but hard bread for the march . . . and each unmounted soldier—and we still had 90 or so without horses—was compelled to carry on his back in addition to his arms and accoutre-

ments, his knapsack, blanket and canteen of water. For old soldiers this forced march would not have been a difficult one, but with our men it was pretty severe. . . .

March 30th. As the success of the expedition was dependent upon rapid movements, our men, notwithstanding their fatigue, were ordered to march this morning by 4 o'clock. It was, however, no easy matter to get them in motion. . . . We were determined to reach the Mission before the enemy could learn of our intentions. . . .

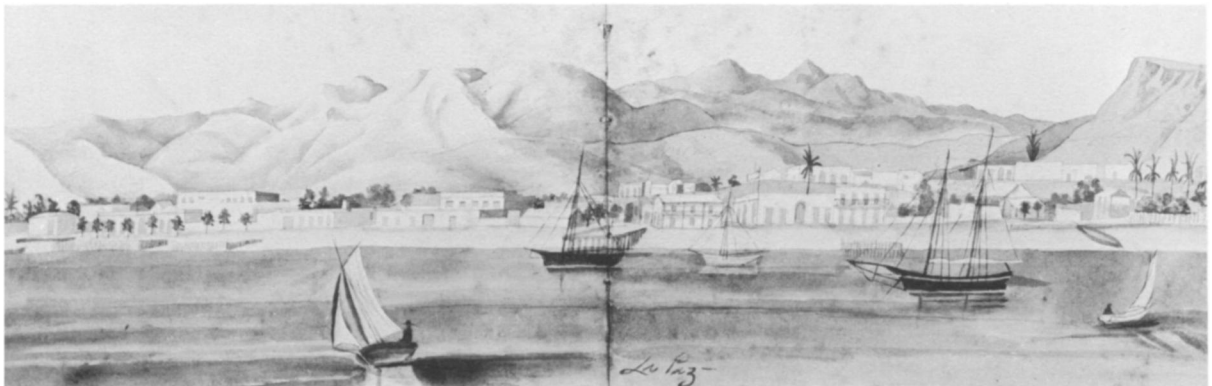
A party of forty-five mounted men were now detailed to cut the coast road some miles north of Todos Santos, and as this road is much longer than that taken by the infantry, it was supposed that the two would reach the Mission about the same time. If the main body of the enemy should take the coast road it was expected that our cavalry would be able to hold them in check till we could reach them with our infantry. The affair turned out precisely as we had anticipated. The enemy, seeing the dust raised by our cavalry north of the town mistook it for our main body, and took the main road from the Mission to the Arroya de la Muella from which our infantry were marching. They encountered our advance guard . . . and posted themselves on a high hill commanding the road ready to receive our attack. . . .

Early the following morning we sent our small parties to collect provisions and to secure horses; and in the afternoon a party of fifty men was sent along the road to Magdalena Bay in pursuit of a body of Yaquis [the insurgents' Indian allies]. . . . The main body of our troops remained several days at Todos Santos hunting out small parties of the enemy . . . and collecting horses from neighboring ranchos. On the morning of the 5th [April] they commenced the return march to La Paz taking the road by Arroya Honda and the Vanillos. . . .

At 6 o'clock the same morning I started with 25 mounted men for San José in order to clear the roads of any guerrillas that might be found in that direction. . . . After a hard days ride we encamped for the night near the plain of La Mesa and here found grass for our horses but no water. . . . The whole country was parched and where we had crossed fine mountain streams last November, we found only dry arroyas. The next morning we captured a number of guerrillas. . . . We reached San José about sundown, having ridden nearly 90 miles within the last two days. We remained at San José for a day to rest our exhausted mounts . . . and met up with Lieut. Selden with a party of sailors and marines. They had just returned from Santiago with 30 prisoners, having reached that place in time to meet some of the enemy force as it fled across the mountains from the field of Todos Santos. . . . They had surrendered without a fight.

Halleck's party left San José on April 8 for La Paz, accompanied as far as San-

On his return from Mazatlán in February, 1848, Halleck reported that "the peninsula was still in an unsettled state" and that "guerrilla parties still hung about La Paz," a beautiful harbor town of white adobe houses, painted in 1869 by William H. Hilton.



tiago by Passed Midshipman McRae and a party of sailors. Halleck describes the country in great detail, particularly its arability. "A fertile little valley occupied with vegetable gardens and little fields of sugar cane . . . the water courses are ornamented with orange trees." The people along the way and at Santiago treated them with great kindness and supplied them with food. "All seemed perfectly disgusted with Mexican rule," Halleck noted with some satisfaction, "and expressed themselves delighted with the change, and particularly pleased with the prospect of our retaining possession of the country." Leaving Santiago, Halleck continued:

April 9th. The first few miles out of Santiago our road lay in the dry bed of what once was a river. . . . At 10 o'clock we struck the coast at La Playa de la Palma; after resting for a couple of hours near this beach, we ascended to the Rio de los Charros whose narrow valley was bordered on both sides by lofty mountains. Not a breath of air was stirring and the rays of the sun, being reflected by the white sand of the river bed and the grey sides of the barren mountains, made the heat almost unbearable. . . . The dazzling brightness of the sun compelled our men to veil their eyes with their pocket handkerchiefs. At 6 o'clock we reached the valley of Los Charros where the alcalde killed a cow for us and prepared to entertain us in the homely but hospitable style of the country. . . . He fed us with plenty of aguardiente, tortillas and beef, and gave us dry hides upon which to spread our blankets. Few Californian rancheros have anything more to offer; but the kindness and true hospitality with which it is given make it more acceptable than the most sumptuous entertainment in more wealthy countries. . . ."

Halleck's journal ends with a series of disjointed notes following this April 9 entry regarding his proposed return to La Paz with his twenty-five men after a sweep of the country which began at Todos Santos on the west coast of the Baja Peninsula and carried him through San José. He communicated with Commander Selfridge of the sloop *Cyane* and arrived back at La Paz on April 11 with ten prisoners. On April 12 he penned a 3,500-word report to Colonel Mason, commanding officer of the Tenth Military Department, on "The Reconnaissance of the Coast of California, with reference to the location of works of military defense. . . ." The interesting, three-part report covers every possible subject, including defense, which might involve the future of the area if Baja California would be ceded to the United States in a treaty of peace with Mexico.

In May, 1848, Commodore Shubrick wrote to Colonel Mason and reported the end of the Lower California campaign. Anticipating the ratification of the treaty of peace with Mexico momentarily, he instructed Halleck to proceed to Monterey on the storeship *Southampton* with all the captured papers, the captured flags, and none other than the prisoner Gabriel González and his son Villaino. Accordingly, Halleck returned to Monterey in June, 1848, where he resumed his duties as secretary of state of the Territory of California.

While Halleck's unfinished journal contains no indication of his reflections on the Baja campaign nor of his own role in significant skirmishes, Burton's dispatches to the assistant adjutant general of the Tenth Military Department, Lieutenant William T. Sherman, particularly commend Halleck's lively attack on San Antonio on March 27 (his second attack on the town and one to which he refers only casually in his journal) which resulted in the capture of the wily in-

surrectionist leader Pineda. Burton also describes the attack on Todos Santos on March 30–31 “when Companies A and B under the direction of Lieut. Halleck were deployed as skirmishers in such a manner as to expose the enemy to a cross-fire. . . .” Continuing, Burton declared: “My warmest thanks are due to Lieut. Halleck for his assistance as Chief of Staff, and I present him particularly to the notice of the colonel commanding [Mason] for the able manner in which he led the attack on the 30th ultimo [March].” Again, Halleck hardly mentions this final battle at Todos Santos and characteristically gives the impression that he was little more than an observer.

Although the fighting in Baja California was many times bloodier than that in the northern province, the war was not won in either California but by the victories of Generals Taylor and Scott in eastern Mexico. The peace treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo disregarded the American victories in Baja California, the pronouncements of American officers, and the sympathies of many Baja Californians as apprised by Halleck. It confirmed the American possession of the Southwest and in Alta California but restored the province of Baja to Mexico. Halleck’s efforts were recognized in Washington, D.C., however, in the form of promotion back-dated to May 1, 1847, addressed “To Brevet Captain for gallant conduct in affairs with the enemy . . . and for meritorious service in California. . . .”

THE PORTRAIT of Halleck is courtesy California Historical Society; the map courtesy California State Archives. The Meyers’ water color on page 227 is from *Sketches of California and Hawaii by . . . Meyers . . . 1842–43* (San Francisco, 1970); those on pages 230–31, 234, and 235 are from *Naval Sketches on the War in California . . .* (New York, 1939). The Mazatlán engraving is from *Gleason’s Drawing Room Companion*, May 17, 1851, and the water color on page 242 is from William H. Hilton’s *Sketches in the Southwest and Mexico, 1858–1877* (Los Angeles, 1963) courtesy the Huntington Library, San Marino.

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