

REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN D-DAY: THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AT
COLLADO BEACH DURING THE MEXICAN WAR

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The current historiography of the Mexican War does not give due credit to the significance of the landing at Collado Beach. No one source addresses all aspects of the landing, nor have any included an analysis of the logistical side of the operation. This thesis presents a comprehensive analysis of the operation from conception to execution in an attempt to fill the gap in the historiography. Additionally, the lessons learned and lessons forgotten from this landing are addressed as to how this landing shaped American military doctrine regarding joint operations and amphibious operations. The conclusion drawn from the historical sources supports the argument that this operation had a significant impact on the American military. The influence of this operation shows itself throughout American military history, including the establishment of amphibious doctrine by the United States Marine Corps and during World War II.

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CHAPTER I

REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN LANDING

The saltwater splashed against the hull of the surfboat as the soldier jostled the man next to him, trying to make room for the Navy oarsman as he pulled the oars against the sea. The soldier could feel the gaze of every man in the fleet upon him and his comrades. None of the men knew what the beach would hold for them when they landed. All they knew was that they had to take the beach, to plant the American flag on the same shores that Hernan Cortez had conquered so long ago. It was their chance to make history. The soldier saw the first boat approach the shore. His commander jumped out and began to wade ashore. In the moments after, every surfboat in the first wave hit the shore, and the men leapt from their boats and began to move towards the dunes behind the beach. This was their time. They would take this beach.

On 11 May 1846, after many years of building tensions between the United States and its southern neighbor, Mexico, erupted into conflict, President James K. Polk asked Congress for a declaration of war. According to Polk, “the cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte [Rio Grande]. But now . . . Mexico has . . . invaded our territory and shed American blood on American soil.” What started as a border dispute regarding the newly annexed Texas spiraled into one of the United States’ first wars of aggression. It defined the period in which it occurred, shaped the men who would command in the next war, and laid the groundwork for future military doctrine.¹

¹ James K. Polk, *Diary of James K. Polk.*, ed. Milo M. Quaife (Chicago: A.C. McClurg &, 1910), 384-386.

While the Texas border dispute over the Nueces Strip – the piece of land between the Rio Grande and Nueces rivers – acted as the catalyst for the war, there were many underlying reasons that the United States pressed for war. Manifest Destiny, the belief that Americans possessed a god-given right to expand westward, certainly fueled the fires of war, given that much of the land that lay between the United States and the Pacific coast belonged to Mexico. The refusal of Mexico to sell this land and settle the border dispute further agitated those already prone to hostile action. Expansionists like President Polk sought to expand the United States both in power and territory. He found his cause for war when the provoked Mexicans attacked Fort Texas – across from Matamoros – as they tried to dislodge the Americans from territory the Mexicans felt was theirs. Polk declared that “we must take redress for the injuries done us into our own hands, that we had attempted to conciliate Mexico in vain, and had forborne until forbearance was no longer either a virtue or patriotic; and that in my opinion we must treat all nations, whether great or small, strong or weak, alike, and that we should take a bold and firm course towards Mexico.” The expansionists were not willing to use *any* means necessary, but they would not shy away from force should that seem to be a viable path to expansion.²

This desire for expansion across North America, fueled by Manifest Destiny, led the United States into its first imperialistic war. With the conclusion of this war, the United States almost doubled in size from the territory gained from Mexico. The war itself drew much attention from the rest of the world, because it was the first time that the fledgling United States had fought a foreign power aside from its estranged political parent, Great Britain. Not

² Polk, *Diary*, 354; K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 3-5.

much was expected of the young country with the little army, certainly not against a power such as Mexico. America soon proved it could hold its own on the world scene.³

President Polk and his cabinet sought the capitulation of the Mexican government as soon as possible. The war became expensive, and Polk saw no hope in a settlement to the war without the Mexican government being forced to the table. His solution was to send an army to capture Mexico City and compel the government to accept peace terms. However, Major General Zachary Taylor's army in northern Mexico could not make the march across the inhospitable land stretching from the Rio Grande to Mexico City, about six hundred miles of almost road-less country.⁴

Consequently, the decision was made to launch an expedition from the Gulf of Mexico, and invade Mexico near Veracruz at Collado Beach. That city was the main port for the Mexican capital and there was a direct route to Mexico City from Veracruz. Major General Winfield Scott proposed an operation in a memorandum he presented to the president and his cabinet. General Scott's plan was endorsed, and he began his preparations and movement towards Mexico to start his grand expedition. The amphibious landing at Collado Beach would mark the beginning of Scott's Mexico City Campaign.⁵

In American military history, the Mexican War is often a forgotten and little appreciated war. Within the war, the amphibious landing near Veracruz is even more often overlooked or diminished. The significance of this war can clearly be seen in the objectives achieved during its

³ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 12-13.

⁴ United States Congress, *The Mexican War*, House Ex. Docs. No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session [Serial Set 520], 839; Zachary Taylor, *Letters of Zachary Taylor from the Battle-fields of the Mexican War*, ed. William K. Bixby and William Holland Samson (Rochester, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 78-79.

⁵ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 232-233.

short duration: the logistical support of several armies, three invasions into Mexico, and the first American occupation of a foreign capital. The third invasion, and the achievement of the last objective, began with an amphibious assault by a force of almost ten thousand men. The historiography of the Mexican War is certainly sizeable and includes many respected historians, but within this set of works the landing at Collado Beach more often than not is neglected. Some historians give due credit to the landing and the war, but far more miss the importance this landing had for both American and American military history. The landing at Collado Beach was a foundational event in American military history, and its significance must be represented within the historiography. The piecemeal approach used by virtually all Mexican War historians does not do the landing justice. Collectively the historiography of the war shows the far-reaching significance of the landing, but on an individual level, no one volume tells the whole story. This paper is an attempt to compile the available sources and demonstrate how truly significant the landing at Collado Beach was to American history.

Three men guided the expedition to its ultimate success. Generals Scott and Thomas Sydney Jesup mobilized the Army of Invasion, supplied it, and moved it to the shores south of Veracruz. Then the details of the landing were shaped and executed by Commodore David Conner of the Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico. The cooperation between Scott and Jesup was paralleled between Scott and Conner. These three men worked in a synergistic relationship that allowed them to execute an operation that they could never have achieved working alone. Despite their resounding success, some of their peers continually placed or acted as obstacles to their operation.⁶

⁶ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 235.

One of the most significant aspects of the landing at Collado Beach – three miles south of Veracruz – was the logistical network that was established to support General Scott and his expedition. The Quartermaster Department under Jesup achieved the seemingly impossible when they provided support for multiple armies as well as a seaborne invasion of Mexico. This logistical feat included the production and procurement of war materials, the mobilization and movement of troops, and, before the beginning of Scott’s grand expedition, the commission of custom designed surfboats to carry the invasion force to Collado Beach. Only through close cooperation between Scott and Jesup was the invasion able to be outfitted and prepared in such a short amount of time.⁷

The landing at Collado Beach was truly one of the most awe-inspiring and defining moments in American military history. The careful organization and coordination designed by General Scott was executed expertly by Commodore Conner and his squadron. This joint operation demonstrated the importance of inter-service cooperation and laid the groundwork for executing large scale amphibious assaults. Such a day as that of the landing would not be surpassed by American troops until the Allied invasion of North Africa during World War II.

What was once forgotten and neglected must be remembered. The Mexican War and the landing at Collado Beach were defining moments in American History. Not only did the war shape the course of American history, but the landing at Collado Beach significantly influenced the course of world history. The landing and war were the first steps to building the American continental empire, an empire that would grow to impact the world. While some lessons will be learned from this landing in the years immediately following the Mexican War and into the

⁷ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 237-244.

Civil War, the significance of the war will be lost on the military and historians alike. It would be several decades after the Civil War before the United States military begins to apply in earnest the lessons demonstrated during the Mexican War.

The landing near Veracruz has a greater significance than just preceding the siege of the city. This landing was one of the earliest, and easily the largest, amphibious American landings prior to the invasion of North Africa in World War II. It was a triumph of planning, organization, and joint-operations by the United States Army and Navy, and it had no real precedents in American military history. According to noted American military historian Russell F. Weigley, Scott's "amphibious landing near Veracruz, for which he shares credit with the Navy, especially with Commodore David Conner, was a model operation which might well have aroused the envy of many of those who conducted similar landings in WWII." Such high accolades from such a respected historian demonstrate the historical importance of this operation. Sadly, not all Mexican War and American military historians have shared Weigley's strong positive opinions on the landing at Collado Beach. The negligence by a significant portion of Mexican War historians regarding the landing at Collado Beach diminishes the substance of their interpretations of the war in general.⁸

Histories on the Mexican War fall into two broad groups, those that discuss the landing well, including its significance, and those which neglect it. Within these two broad categories there are four subcategories: histories of the United States Army, histories of the Mexican War, contemporary histories and memoirs about that conflict, and biographies. There is no single text that adequately discusses the amphibious landing near Veracruz. Therefore, it is necessary

⁸ Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 75-76.

to look at a large sample of the historiography of the Mexican War in order to understand why the landing at Collado Beach holds such importance for American History, and how historians have so often devoted little attention to this key event.

General histories of the United States military such as Weigley's typically devote little time to the Mexican War and even less to the landing near Veracruz. Many such histories focus on the significance of the landings rather than the landing itself. Weigley discusses the landing in the context of its contribution to amphibious landing doctrine, the design of specifically built landing craft, the beginnings of basic combat loading, and that the surfboats assaulted the beach in the order of battle. He highlights many of the key aspects of the landing, but does not provide many details.⁹

In Maurice Matloff's general history of the United States Army, he devotes four paragraphs to the landing and siege of Veracruz, and he completes his account of the landing in a single paragraph. However, in that paragraph he does note that this operation claimed the honor of being the first major amphibious landing in the history of the United States Army. He also mentions some of the men that took part in the landing – Robert E. Lee, George G. Meade, Joseph E. Johnston, and Pierre G.T. Beauregard – all of whom would become prominent players during the American Civil War. While brief in his treatment of the landing, he touches upon two very important impacts of it: first, it was an important step in the Army learning to execute amphibious landings/assaults, and second, many of the men who led the opposing armies

⁹ Weigley, *Way of War*, 76.

during the Civil War gained important experience in this operation and throughout the Mexican War.¹⁰

Allen R. Millet and Peter Maslowski published an expansive history of the American military experience that was later revised for republication. Interestingly enough, the Mexican War did not merit a full chapter in their eyes. They allotted to it about half of their chapter on “The Armed Forces and National Expansion.” Within this, the landing at Veracruz received only one paragraph, with the main point being that General Scott was in a hurry to avoid the yellow fever season. Aside from noting the size of the operation, no other significance of the landing or the battle was mentioned. In doing so, Millet and Maslowski essentially ignored the event that laid the foundation of the United States Army’s amphibious doctrine, or at the very least gave Army officers their first experience in executing such a large amphibious assault/landing.¹¹

William Hartzog’s *American Military Heritage* is a brief overview of America’s wars that highlights important battles and innovations. Hartzog’s Mexican War section includes a brief discussion of the Battle of Veracruz. Hartzog does not spend much time on the landing – just a few paragraphs – however, he draws some important comparisons in his last two sentences. He states that the landing at Veracruz “showed the rudiments of amphibious warfare doctrine and technique” such as those that would be used at Normandy and Inchon in future wars. While

¹⁰ Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1969), 1: 174-175.

¹¹ Allan Reed Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 155.

Hartzog's excerpt lacks much of the detail of his peers, he draws connections that many do not, and he grasps the true significance of the Veracruz landing.¹²

One of the most significant outcomes of the amphibious landing at Collado Beach was the impact it had on the development of joint operation and amphibious doctrine. This landing was the first major operation of its type that the United States had ever executed. In order to achieve such an important amphibious operation the Army and Navy had to work together. Inter-branch cooperation is still not a flawless proposition today. The fact that Scott and Conner could cooperate to such a degree was all but revolutionary for the military of the day.

Roger A. Beaumont published a history of amphibious operations throughout the Western world. According to Beaumont, the landing at Veracruz was not only the largest amphibious assault up to that time, but it would remain the largest until the Allied invasion of North Africa during World War II. He acknowledges that aside from its size, it also marks the first major amphibious joint operation since the Napoleonic Wars. Beaumont notes that this landing was planned as an assault. Commodore Conner's enthusiastic support, Beaumont writes, played an essential role in the operation's coordination and was unique for the time. Such cooperation between branches was rare; even within a single military branch such as the Army, Scott and Taylor were at odds with each other. Beaumont's discussion of the landing, while brief, demonstrates the importance the operation represented to joint operation doctrine and amphibious landings.¹³

¹² William W. Hartzog, *American Military Heritage* (Fort Monroe, VA: Military History Office, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2001), 63-64.

¹³ Roger A. Beaumont, *Joint Military Operations: A Short History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 17-20.

In Craig L. Symonds' collection of essays on combined operations during the Civil War, one of the essays by Edward H. Wiser discusses the landing near Veracruz. Wiser places a heavy emphasis on the cooperation between the Army and Navy during the operation, stating that this cooperation paired with the innovative, custom designed surfboats made this an extremely efficient landing. Wiser cites General Holland M. Smith's book, *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy*. Smith credits the landing at Collado Beach with allowing amphibious tactics to reach a new level that was little improved upon in the following seventy-five years. Smith writes that the two main goals for the Navy were to blockade Mexican ports and to support Army operations. This reinforces the idea that the foundations of American joint operations can be found in Scott and Conner's cooperation. Wiser's article and Smith's treatise both credit the landing with being foundational for the development of both joint operation and amphibious doctrine.¹⁴

Rowena Reed's *Combined Operations in the Civil War* covers the same topic as Symonds' collection. While Reed did not place the same level of importance as Wiser and Smith on the Veracruz landing, she does write about the impact that Scott's expedition had on combined operations during the Civil War. She discusses how officers looked to the landing near Veracruz for guidance when preparing to land at Hilton Head near Port Royal. Reed also credits George B. McClellan's knowledge of amphibious operations with the experience he gained during Scott's

¹⁴ Craig L. Symonds, *Union Combined Operations in the Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 136, 144-145; Holland M. Smith, *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1992), 9-10.

campaign. Her connections between the Civil War and Mexican War are sparse, but the ones she makes show the influence of the Mexican War on the leaders of the Civil War.¹⁵

Michael Evans' book on amphibious operations argues that true amphibious operations and doctrine began with the landing at Gallipoli in 1915 during the World War I. He provides no information on any prior landings, nor on the impact they had on developing the doctrine for amphibious operations. He discusses the lessons learned from Gallipoli – surprise, forethought, cooperation between commanders, clear objectives, and planning – as key to the development of amphibious doctrine. The latter four of this list were all exemplified by Scott, Jesup, and Conner during the planning and execution of the landing at Veracruz. Sadly, Evans chose not to include even a brief introduction crediting the years of amphibious operations that could have helped these later operations avoid costly mistakes.¹⁶

Leo J. Daugherty's book, much like Evans', lacks any discussion of Scott and Veracruz despite the title *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare*. Daugherty sets the start of amphibious experience in 1898 at the landing on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during the Spanish-American War. The main discussion about this amphibious landing revolves around two points – establishment of advance bases and how it laid the groundwork for future landings. The latter point Daugherty makes denies any previous American experience in amphibious landings, thus excluding both the Mexican War *and* the Civil War. Actions during both these wars were still within easy memory of those fighting during the Spanish-American War. Despite this fact, the

¹⁵ Rowena Reed, *Combined Operations in the Civil War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978), 25, 34-35.

¹⁶ Michael Evans, *Amphibious Operations: The Projection of Sea Power Ashore* (London: Brassey's, 1990), 1-10.

troublesome landings during the Spanish-American War showed that the lessons learned from the Mexican War had already been forgotten by 1898.¹⁷

Robert McNutt McElroy published one of the first "modern" histories of the Mexican War in the *Metropolitan Magazine* in 1907. McElroy devoted about a page to the landing near Veracruz, which for his brief article is a fair amount. This single page surpasses the contributions of many later authors to the history of the operation. In his article he noted that the landing was strongly urged by Scott and that the success of the landing stemmed in part from the cooperation between Scott and Conner. He also declares that the soldiers landed with the expectation of fighting entrenched Mexicans on the beach, but that the landing amazingly proceeded without a single clash.¹⁸

Justin H. Smith wrote in 1919 one of the earliest complete histories on the Mexican War, that holds the prize for being the longest text on that conflict. Smith devotes the better part of a chapter to the landing at Veracruz, but he does not provide any context about the landing outside of the series of events. Beyond this, his notes are almost unusable due to the way they are formatted. Reviewers of this book have commented that many of the notes lead to dead ends, and that many of his sources cannot be verified. While this source is quite expansive and contains many of the same foundational facts used in later books, it lacks much of the academic critique included in later books.¹⁹

¹⁷ Leo J. Daugherty, *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare, 1898-1945: Profiles of Fourteen American Military Strategists* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 1-15.

¹⁸ Robert McNutt McElroy, "The Mexican War," *Metropolitan Magazine*, March 1907, 742-743.

¹⁹ Justin Harvey Smith, *The War with Mexico*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1919), 2:17-36.

Some books about the Mexican War, such as Nathaniel Stephenson's 1921 work, place more emphasis on other aspects of the war. He discusses the role that the Texas Revolution and annexation had on the war. He offhandedly notes that despite landing at an empty beach the operation included "no element of the unheroic." Milton Meltzer also only spends a portion of his book, written more than fifty years later, on the war itself, and most of his discussion is about Scott and his officers. Meltzer notes that Scott, not being a West Point graduate, chose to surround himself with West Pointers in order to have the best possible staff of officers available to him.²⁰

At least one historian who discusses the Veracruz landing provides some interesting context. Alfred Hoyt Bill's book came out in 1947. Bill makes a special note of the significance of Scott's operation, referring to the size of the force being put ashore and that it was expected to be a hostile landing under enemy fire. He notes that the French landed nine thousand men on a beach in Algiers in 1830, but that they landed on an undefended beach in a sheltered bay. The only opposition discussed by Bill is a single shot fired by an unknown Mexican. While Bill clearly understood the importance of the landing, he chose to devote only two paragraphs to it; a few more on the preparations for the landing are included. Bill chose to pursue more of the political intrigue between Scott, Taylor, Polk, and Marcy rather than spend precious pages on the landing at Collado Beach.²¹

Robert Selph Henry's book was published in 1950. Henry devotes a whole chapter titled "D-Day, 1847" to the landing and subsequent encirclement of Veracruz. He greatly improves

²⁰ Milton Meltzer, *Bound for the Rio Grande: The Mexican Struggle, 1845-1850* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 157-162; Nathaniel W. Stephenson, *Texas and the Mexican War; a Chronicle of the Winning of the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 216-218.

²¹ Alfred Hoyt Bill, *Rehearsal for Conflict: the War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 213.

upon Bill's work both by delving more deeply into the sources and providing more details for the reader. Much of what is discussed in his book will become the standard facts of the landing used in many future books. Henry touches upon the concern over yellow fever, the cooperation between the Navy and Army, and the logistics in preparing for the landing; also he does an admirable job of breaking down the landing into an hour by hour chronology. In only thirteen pages, Henry's account provides not only the facts, but also frames the landing within the larger scope of American and military history. He notes that one of the records from this landing eventually became a support document used in planning the Normandy invasion, as well as being an important step forward in joint operations between Army and Navy.²²

Several historians of the Mexican War in the 1960s added little to the discussion of Scott's Veracruz landing. Otis A. Singletary's three-page, bare-bones account of the Collado Beach operation only marginally redeems itself by calling the landing an "assault," as Scott designed it to be. Seymour V. Connor and Odie B. Faulk almost completely neglect the landing at Veracruz and its significance. Connor and Faulk devote one paragraph to the landing, providing little information on the landing or the integral coordination between the Army and Navy that was integral to the landing. Robert G. Athearn provided only one sentence on the landing at Veracruz. For Athearn, the landing served simply as a means to capture Mexico City. He saw no other importance at the time, nor what it represented to the future of the American

²² Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company., 1950), 258-271.

military. For Athearn, the Mexican War was primarily a stepping stone to the Civil War; to him the Mexican War lacked any lasting impact for American military history.²³

Donald Barr Chidsey's addition to the historiography in 1968 delved more deeply into the landing. Chidsey's work hits upon all of the major points of the operation, including a special emphasis placed upon Scott's concern over *el vomito negro* or yellow fever. The political intrigue between Scott and Polk is discussed, as well as the idea of cooperation between Scott and Conner. Chidsey also devotes a paragraph to the specially built "nesting" boats that were used in the landing. Also, Chidsey made one important word choice in that he calls the landing an assault, which is what Scott designed it to be. While Chidsey does not spend time discussing the ramifications of the landing, it is easy to draw some conclusions about its importance from the facts he does include.²⁴

Charles A. Dufour wrote one of the better books on the Mexican War in 1968. Compared to other authors, especially from the 1960's, Dufour stands apart because he not only discusses the details of the landing, but also the significance of it. Dufour notes that this landing was the first major amphibious operation undertaken by the United States military, but beyond that it was a joint operation. This concept of joint operations mentioned by Dufour refers to the cooperation between Scott and Conner. Dufour discusses how the landing was a culmination of logistics, planning, and cooperation between Army and Navy, and that the assault-style landing was unopposed on the beach. This work touches on almost all of the major points of the landing; however, because of the small scope of his book, Dufour does not devote

²³ Otis A. Singletary, *The Mexican War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 71-74; Seymour V. Connor and Odie B. Faulk, *North America Divided: the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 109-110; Robert G. Athearn, *War with Mexico* (New York: Dell, 1963), 549.

²⁴ Donald Barr Chidsey, *The War with Mexico* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1968), 119-124.

much space to it, only ten pages. This does not provide him much time to delve into the significances he mentions.²⁵

John Edward Weems created a sizable volume about the Mexican War in 1974. As with many other historians, Weems devoted only about six paragraphs to the landing itself, though he did broadly discuss aspects of the preparation in the preceding six pages. Most of this section is filled with excerpts taken from various officers who were taking part in the landing along with General Scott. The brief section on the landing touched on all of the standard details of the invasion – beginning at the island of Sacrificios, surfboats, an uneventful and successful landing – though he omitted any discussion of the significance of the landing or that Scott planned the landing near Veracruz with the expectation of Mexican resistance on the beach. Weems thus adequately told the reader the story of the operation, while omitting any discussion of it aside from what the various officers wrote down.²⁶

Five years after K. Jack Bauer published his first book on naval operations in the Mexican War, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, he expanded it into a complete survey of the Mexican War. This is arguably the best single volume on the Mexican War, and after its publication in 1974, one of the most cited. Bauer did a spectacular job of balancing the different aspects of the war – political intrigue, logistics, strategy, and tactics – in a manner that is interesting, informative, and concise. While Bauer only spent about thirteen pages on the preparation phase and execution of the landing, he was able to demonstrate the cooperation between the Navy and Army, discuss the logistics of equipping and supplying the Army, and include the progression of

²⁵ Charles L. Dufour, *The Mexican War: a Compact History, 1846-1848* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968), 197-207.

²⁶ John Edward Weems, *To Conquer a Peace: the War between the United States and Mexico* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 329-330.

the landing from Brazos Santiago to Collado Beach. Though this section of the book is not as expansive as in his earlier book, he covered all of the major points without bogging down the reader with filler. Bauer's two books, while limited to only roughly a chapter each on the landing, set the benchmark and groundwork for all other writers on this topic because of the combination of enjoyable writing and comprehensive historical research.²⁷

John D. Eisenhower's work, published in 1989, does a wonderful job providing details about many of the aspects of the landing in the brief space allotted. He discusses the goals, planning, mobilization, and execution of the operation. The fact that this became the largest amphibious landing in the world up to that date does not elude Eisenhower. He even touches upon the tension between Scott and President Polk. The importance of the cooperation between the Navy and the Army – Conner and Scott – is also noted. Eisenhower, while only spending about six pages on the landing, covers most of the major points of the operation concisely and effectively. That being said, it is still a brief look at a significant operation.²⁸

James M. McCaffery includes a very standard account of the landing at Veracruz in his 1992 book. He does provide a few details about preparation for the landing, but they act more as interesting trivia than contribute to any real understanding of how the landing was organized. The most striking part of this section was its lack of overarching conclusions; he mentioned nothing about the importance of the landing. This is strange because if he had read any of the earlier books on the Mexican War, McCaffery could have easily found two to three

²⁷ K. Jack Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines: U.S. Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-48* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1969); Bauer, *Mexican War*, 232-245.

²⁸ John S.D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York: Random House, 1989), 253-259.

points of significance. Sadly, the most eye-catching part of this section is not what he includes, but what he omits.²⁹

David and Jeanne Heidler added their contribution in 2006 as part of the Greenwood Guides to Historic Events, 1500-1900, and it represents one of the most recent survey works on the Mexican War. The Heidlers devote five paragraphs to the landing at Collado Beach, which is a fair amount for the broad general history this book is designed to be. They also note the cooperation between the United States Navy – Commodore Conner – and the United States Army – General Scott. The joint operation is not discussed in detail or is its significance in the use of joint operations by the United States military, but they do discuss joint-operations as having been an important part of the invasion. Beyond covering the aid given to Scott by the navy, the Heidlers touch on the Mexican defensive indifference to the landing, and they allude to Scott's expectations that the landing would face serious resistance on the beach.³⁰

Some of the most recent works on the Mexican War are the most disappointing. Timothy D. Johnson focuses his 2007 history of the war on Scott's Mexico City Campaign, including the landing at Veracruz. He nominally devotes a complete chapter – twenty pages – to the landing at Collado beach, beginning with the invasion itself. But Johnson only spends about thirteen of these pages on the actual landing, and in these he often strays off onto tangents of the history about the Mexican War prior to the beginning of this book. While he does include a good narrative of the landing with discussions of the preparations and Scott's wartime goals for the invasion, he misses much of its significance. He completely ignores the importance of the

²⁹ James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 165-168.

³⁰ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *The Mexican War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 115-118.

Navy's role in the landing, and he devotes only a few passing words to the expectation that the landing would meet Mexican resistance on the beach. Joseph Wheelan gives the landing a mere one line in his 2007 work. He discusses the siege and surrender of Veracruz, but the landing is mentioned only as an afterthought. This is quite unusual for a history of the Mexican War, as many at least note the landing in its proper chronology.³¹

Contemporary historians at the time of the Mexican War often devoted little more attention to the landing at Veracruz. N.C. Brooks published his sizable volume on the war in 1849. This book was quite long and extremely detailed, especially compared to the works that follow it. Brooks spent about eight pages on the landing, but a fair amount of this was about the city of Veracruz, its people, culture, and so on. His section on the landing was detailed enough to convey the big picture, and he tactfully incorporated anecdotes that help the reader to understand it from the soldiers' and officers' viewpoints. Discussions on planning and the cooperation between the Army and Navy were included, and he touched upon the significance of these two points. It is interesting that Brooks could, so soon after the war, see the impact of the landing on American military history, but that later historians often lacked one or more of the points he makes. Many do not even address them to disprove them, and some historians ignore his work by neglecting the fact that the landing had any significance at all.³²

Roswell S. Ripley, a future Confederate general who served in Mexico, also published a large two-volume set on the Mexican War in 1849. Most of Ripley's discussion follows the basic

³¹ Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: The Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 9-23; Joseph Wheelan, *Invading Mexico: America's Continental Dream and the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007), 549.

³² N. C. Brooks, *A Complete History of the Mexican War: Its Causes, Conduct, and Consequences* (Baltimore: Hutchinson & Seebold, 1849), 291-299.

facts of the landing included in most Mexican War histories. He did write some about how the soldiers were surprised to find the beach unguarded and took it unopposed, because, as others indicate, the dunes would have made excellent defensive positions for the Mexican forces. Another unique aspect of Ripley's book was that it discussed Scott's proposal to President Polk, "Veracruz and its Castle." Beyond this, he also mentioned Scott's supplement to the proposal, which he added a few weeks later. Few if any of the other books mentioned these documents in the text, although some cited them as a source.³³

Cadmus M. Wilcox, another Mexican War veteran who became a Confederate general, and his wife Mary, in their book on the Mexican War published in 1892, spent very little time on the landing at Veracruz. They discuss how Scott and Conner started coordinating their efforts before Scott even left New York for Mexico, and how important Conner was in selecting a landing point. A brief recounting of the close call Scott and his staff had aboard the *Petrita* during a reconnaissance of the beach was also included. The fact that the beach was taken without a fight is also mentioned. While the Wilcoxes left out several important points, they did include a large appendix with Army and Navy rosters as well as a copy of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican War.³⁴

A few officers involved in the Veracruz operation penned memoirs that are of note. General Scott's memoirs provide great details of the events leading up to the landing, especially the political intrigue with Senator Thomas Hart Benton and the disgruntlement of Major General Zachary Taylor. Scott did make himself appear a bit naïve or innocent in many of these

³³ Roswell S. Ripley, *The War with Mexico*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1849), 9-23.

³⁴ Cadmus M. Wilcox and Mary Rachel Wilcox, *History of the Mexican War* (Washington, DC: Church News Pub., 1892), 242-245.

incidents. He provided a vivid and flowery if not a completely precise recounting of the landing. Ulysses S. Grant's account of his experiences during the Mexican War mention that he joined Scott's staff and gave his recollections of the landing. He gives a brief recounting of the events, but fails to address the significance of the landing or the cooperation with the Navy. The account written by Robert E. Lee, also a member of Scott's staff, only mentions that Scott asked him to join his expedition to Mexico, and provides only a short comment about the siege of Veracruz. He does not discuss the landing in any detail.³⁵

Jacob Oswandel's diary of his time during the war provides a much more illuminating insight into the war than the memoirs of the officers above him. Oswandel's diary follows his journey from his muster in Pennsylvania throughout his journey to Mexico and his recounting of the landing itself. It provides a unique look at the war through the eyes of a common citizen soldier who, as a participant, certainly understood the importance of Scott's Veracruz landing.³⁶

Several historians have chronicled the lives of the men than defined the Mexican War and the landings near Veracruz. Men like Scott, Jesup, Polk and Secretary of War William L. Marcy have all attracted the prying gazes of biographers. Surprisingly enough, Commodore Conner, the man who carried Scott's force to the beach, has not received a biography. It is indeed a curious omission in the historiography.

In his 1998 biography of Scott, Timothy D. Johnson devotes a chapter to Scott's experiences during the Mexican War. The chapter begins with about four pages on the landing

³⁵ Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LL. D.* (New York: Sheldon &, 1864); Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant.*, ed. E. B. Long (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1952), 59-60; Armistead L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History Embracing a Large Amount of Information Hitherto Unpublished*, ed. Marcus J. Wright (New York: J.M. Stoddart &, 1887), 97.

³⁶ J. Jacob Oswandel, *Notes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, ed. Timothy D. Johnson and Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 7.

at Veracruz. Johnson discusses the mobilization of troops and Scott's concern for "northers"³⁷ threatening the invasion. He also notes the cooperation between Scott and Conner. Scott, according to Johnson, was aware that he needed Conner's expertise in landing so many men. Johnson concludes that the landing was significant because this was the largest amphibious assault in American history until World War II, and it was not a feat that could be handled without joint-operations.³⁸

Allen Peskin's 2003 work is one of the most recent biographies of Scott. He spends a chapter – nine pages – discussing Scott's role in the invasion of Mexico at Veracruz. Regretfully Peskin only devotes about three paragraphs to the invasion. The rest of the chapter, as in the other biographies, focuses upon the political intrigue going on behind the scenes, as well as some that was in the public eye.³⁹

Chester L. Kieffer has written the only biography on Quartermaster General Jesup. Jesup's role in supporting Scott was an integral part of Scott's success. Despite any complaints that Scott had about not having the requested equipment and material for the invasion, if it had not been for Jesup, he would have been in an even worse situation. Kieffer discusses Jesup's role in supplying both Generals Taylor and Scott in their respective campaigns. Kieffer provides great detail concerning the logistics used and the infrastructure established by the quartermaster in order to execute the war. He spends eight pages on the mobilization of the resources to support Scott's invasion, as well as the establishment of depots at Brazos Santiago

³⁷ Norther was the term used during this time period to describe the tropical storms that could quickly arise in the Gulf of Mexico.

³⁸ Timothy D. Johnson, *Winfield Scott: The Quest for Military Glory* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 171-174.

³⁹ Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 150-151.

and Tampico. While Kieffer describes the logistical side of the landing, it is understandable that in this book he does not discuss the importance of the landing itself as it falls outside Jesup's role in the operation.⁴⁰

Thomas M. Leonard wrote his biography of Polk in 2001, and it is one of the shorter works on that president. Little emphasis is placed on the landing within Leonard's chapter on the Mexican War. The choice of commander appeared to be more important to Polk than the operation itself. Leonard seems to think that the operation, for Polk, was simply a means to an end. Walter R. Borneman's 2008 biography of Polk does not include much more information than Leonard's work does on the landing and its importance. The only possible important detail included in Borneman's work is a passing mention that Scott and Conner worked together to inspect the landing site. Robert W. Merry, in his biography of Polk, wrote by far the most on the landing at Veracruz, coming in at five whole paragraphs. The only comment of note by Merry is that the landing was a "flawless operation." Beyond this, the discussion shifts quickly to Nicholas Trist's mission to Mexico to write a treaty and end the war. Sam W. Haynes also wrote a biography of Polk. Haynes spends a fair amount of time on the political intrigue regarding Scott's appointment to lead the invasion, but he only spends one paragraph on the landing itself. All four authors find the political intrigue around Scott's appointment far more interesting than the significance of the landing.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 279-287.

⁴¹ Thomas M. Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny* (Wilmington, DE: S.R. Books, 2001), 173-175; Walter R. Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* (New York: Random House, 2008), 257-259; Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 358-359; Sam W. Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse* (New York: Longman, 1997), 162-163.

Ivor D. Spencer produced a biography of Secretary Marcy. His look at Marcy's involvement with the Veracruz expedition focuses mainly on the logistical side of the operation. Marcy dealt with much of the agitation that General Taylor expressed during the operation, all the while working with Scott and Jesup to organize the operation. While there is no recounting of the landing itself, Spencer does discuss much of Marcy's actions during the war in support of the landing.⁴²

Over half the texts included in this historiography provide little to no discussion on the landing at Collado Beach. Neglecting the role of the landing in the history of the Mexican War diminishes the significance of the war. Many of the most important military advances in the Mexican War occurred during the landing near Veracruz. This integral moment in American military history, often neglected by historians, should be remembered. Weigley writes that even though the "Mexicans chose not to oppose the landing . . . that mistake on their part cannot detract from proceedings which almost certainly would have been successful no matter what the enemy attempted." There is no reason that a historian should neglect mentioning the significant contributions this amphibious assault has had on the course of American military history, and how it laid a foundation for what is today institutional doctrine. However subtle or discrete these contributions were, there is no denying that this landing was a defining moment in American military history and American history in general.⁴³

⁴² Ivor Debenham Spencer, *The Victor and the Spoils: A Life of William L. Marcy* (Providence, RI: Brown Univ. Pr., 1959).

⁴³ Weigley, *Way of War*, 76.

CHAPTER II

THE MEN BEHIND THE VERACRUZ CAMPAIGN

Three men made the landing at Veracruz possible. Another man saw the expedition as a personal attack against him as a general and yet another as a threat to his political career.

Major General Winfield Scott proposed the plan for an expedition against the city of Veracruz to begin a campaign to take the United States Army to Mexico City and end the war. Scott's "Grand Expedition" required him to work with other commanders to ensure the operation was properly executed. He relied heavily on Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup and his Department to move and outfit his army for the invasion. Commodore David Conner proved to be an invaluable resource for Scott once they had rendezvoused at Isla de Lobos. This inter-department and inter-service cooperation shows how significant this operation was to the development of both logistical and joint operational history.

However, like all good stories, there must be an antagonist. In the case of the Mexico City Campaign, Scott faced several, the least of which was the Mexican Army awaiting him on the shores of Collado Beach. Opposition from General Zachary Taylor quickly turned to claims of abandonment and betrayal. All the while, Scott dealt with possible subversion on the part of President James K. Polk, who tried to have Congress appoint Senator Thomas Hart Benton to the rank of Lieutenant-General so he could place him above Scott in the expedition force. In the face of such opposition at home and on the Mexican beach ahead of them, Scott, Jesup, and Conner managed to set their egos aside long enough to conduct such a landing as was not seen again for ninety-five years, until Allied forces invaded North Africa during World War II.

Scott enjoyed the support of William L. Marcy, the Secretary of War, in his bid to become the commander of the Veracruz expedition. As the highest ranking officer in the Army and one of the most experienced, qualified men available, General Scott found himself the prime candidate to lead the invasion. Marcy favored Scott's appointment because he saw him as the one officer of sufficient ability, experience, and vision to carry out such an operation. Scott noted that prior to receiving his orders to lead the expedition, he had several pleasant meetings with President Polk, during which he thought he had gained Polk's support as general-in-chief of the expedition force. After his departure from Washington, Scott became aware that "bungling treachery was planned during the precise period of my very friendly interviews with Mr. Polk!" Polk considered General Scott a potential political threat due to Scott's ties to the Whig Party. Even Taylor in a letter to a friend insinuated that Scott used his connections to the Whig Party to influence his appointment. Polk feared that if Scott became a war hero, he would become a good candidate for the Whig nomination for president. Scott claims in his memoir that it was his "knack at success" that made Polk fear for competition in the future election. Polk attempted to get Congress to appoint Senator Benton to command the expedition, so Polk would have one of his own allies in charge. However, Congress did not give Benton the appointment, thus Scott retained control of the invasion force. Thankfully, Congress chose the most qualified man for the position despite his political naiveté.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LL. D.* (New York: Sheldon, 1864), 384-385, 398-401; Ivor Debenham Spencer, *The Victor and the Spoils: A Life of William L. Marcy* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1959), 157, 161; Zachary Taylor, *Letters of Zachary Taylor from the Battle-fields of the Mexican War: Reprinted from the Originals in the Collection of Mr. William K. Bixby, of St. Louis, Mo.*, ed. William K. Bixby and William Holland Samson (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 103.

General Taylor, often known as “Old Rough and Ready,” exemplified a form of fierce independence that quickly put him at odds with peers and superiors. The general was also the only other possible military candidate to lead the Army of Invasion at Veracruz. Taylor suggested an invasion similar to Scott’s as the best way to end the war after he realized the difficulties his army would have faced if it marched from the Rio Grande to Mexico City. An overland march would have strained Taylor’s supply lines and left him with little hope of improving them, given how far he would have been from the coast. Even Taylor acknowledged that an amphibious landing near Veracruz would be a more efficient way to end the war. However, Taylor’s hostile reaction to General Scott’s gathering of forces showed little in the way of maturity or grace. If Taylor had received the appointment to lead the invasion, it is likely that his arrogance would have prevented much of the necessary cooperation between branches which made the landing a success.⁴⁵

Early in the war, Taylor quickly alienated Quartermaster General Jesup due to his constant accusations that the Quartermaster Department denied him what he needed to carry out the war. From the beginning of the war, Taylor “looked upon the Gen as partially deranged ever since he wrote the Blair letter; & I regretted when I heard he was coming South to meddle in Army operations going on in Mexico under my direction, or that of any other person.” The “Blair letter” was written during the Second Seminole War, circa 1835, between Jesup and his friend Francis P. Blair. Blair was a highly influential Jacksonian and had direct access to Jackson’s ear, and Jesup criticized Scott’s censure of Jesup’s actions during an operation. The letter created a bit of backlash against Scott, especially since Scott thought that he and Jesup had

⁴⁵ K. Jack Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines: U.S. Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-48* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1969), 64.

previously come to terms with their disagreement before the letter reached Washington. Oddly enough, though Jesup and Scott managed to work through this disagreement and by the time of the Mexican War were on good terms, it was General Taylor who still harbored resentment for Jesup. In two separate correspondences in Mexico, Taylor expressed his distrust of Jesup.⁴⁶

Jesup tried to cooperate with Taylor, and he instructed his staff “to render the most efficient aid to General Taylor’s operations.” Jesup often pleaded with Taylor to provide him with information regarding his needs. Rather than receiving responses, Jesup was left to guess what Taylor might need in the field. One prime example was that the Quartermaster Department lacked logistical knowledge of the most feasible means to deliver supplies to Taylor. Jesup continually requested this information from General Taylor, but it never came. Forced to guess, Jesup began procuring wagons and pack mules in the hope that they would benefit Taylor. Even President Polk noted that Taylor had conspicuously neglected to inform Jesup of what resources would aid him or what was already available to him in Mexico.⁴⁷

Despite this, Taylor continued to blame the Quartermaster Department for “ignoring” his requests. Taylor continuously complained that he lacked the needed material for his army, including steam transportation to move up and down the Rio Grande. Jesup constantly tried to supply Taylor and his army with the desired boats, but he had to be conscious of not over-purchasing and having too many shallow water craft. Taylor kept accusing the Quartermaster

⁴⁶ Taylor, *Letters*, 88, 96; Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 97-98; United States Congress, *The Mexican War*, House Ex. Docs. No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session [Serial Set 520], 547-548; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 64.

⁴⁷ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 64; Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 257-258; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 139, 145; *Mexican War*, 556-557, 559, 559-561.

Department of lacking foresight and crippling his army. On one occasion, Taylor argued that the failure of Jesup's department to provide him a pontoon bridge prevented him from crossing into Matamoros, although Taylor neither built nor seized boats to meet his needs. General Taylor's continual blame of the Quartermaster Department led to a near feud between himself and Jesup. Despite Jesup's efforts, he was never able to win Taylor's support for the Quartermaster Department. In the end, Taylor's accusations appeared to have been unwarranted, and may have cost him the command of the Veracruz operation.⁴⁸

A small example of Taylor's refusal to cooperate with others, and to act beyond his station, was the Monterrey Armistice. The Battle of Monterrey, which occurred between 21 September and 24 September 1846, was one of the first major battles of the Mexican War and resulted in the American occupation of the city of Monterrey. During the battle both sides suffered serious losses, but it is deemed an American victory because General Pedro de Ampudia was forced to retreat and surrender the city. Taylor had Ampudia trapped in the city plaza and surrounded by howitzers. Rather than push his attack, Taylor chose to negotiate a two-month armistice with Ampudia, because he felt his own army needed time to mend. Making treaties lay far outside the powers of a general. This decision raised many questions in Washington, but after deliberation Polk decided not to censure him. The president denied the ability of the Army to make treaties, and deemed the armistice null and void. This caused a king-sized tantrum on the part of General Taylor at the perceived slight from the president.

⁴⁸ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 64, Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 257-258; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 139, 145; *Mexican War*, 556-557, 559, 559-561.

Such actions further reduced Taylor's possibility of being considered to lead any expedition to Mexico City.⁴⁹

Taylor generously shared his contempt for cooperation with General Scott. On 20 December 1846, Scott wrote to Taylor informing him that he wanted to meet at Camargo to discuss which troops would be moved from Taylor's force to Scott's Army of Invasion. Scott attempted to meet at Camargo, but Taylor claimed that he never received the request Scott had sent four days prior to his arrival for the meeting. Apparently, the delivery was bungled and the dispatch was lost; Taylor only received the duplicate, the originals having been captured and sent to Santa Anna. Some historians suggest that this encouraged Santa Anna to confront Taylor at what became known as the Battle of Buena Vista, because the Mexicans had learned that Taylor's forces were weakened due to the removal of troops. In his memoirs, Scott wrote that he offered Taylor the opportunity to stay in northern Mexico at the head of his army or to join Scott as a subordinate in the invasion force. However, a man like Taylor would never voluntarily subordinate himself to a man he held in such contempt.⁵⁰

General Scott, as he wrote in his second memorandum to Marcy, left Taylor with a force adequate only for defense. Taylor, according to Scott, could maintain the *status quo* in the line of defense with these men. General Taylor saw things a bit differently. It appears that after events like the Monterrey Armistice, Taylor began to lose touch with the direction of the war from Washington. From his letters, he seems not to have known about the decision to land at Veracruz until Scott's letter to meet at Camargo arrived. With this revelation, Taylor began a

⁴⁹ K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 99-100, 238; Taylor, *Letters*, 62; Spencer, *Victor*, 159.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Memoirs*, 402, 403.

spiral from disgruntlement to paranoia regarding his peers. After the arrival of Scott's letter, Taylor complained, "we now begin to see the fruits of the arrangements recently made at Washington, by an intrigue of Marcy, Scott, & Worth to take from me nearly the whole of the regular forces under my command, while in the immediate front of the enemy if not in their presence." This initial outrage is understandable for a commanding general who was losing many of his regular troops, but he extended his accusations further, claiming "I am satisfied that Scott, Marcy & Co. have been more anxious to break me down, than they have been to break down Santa Anna and the Mexicans." These claims were interesting, because Scott said similar words regarding Polk and the Benton intrigue. Taylor did not stop there, adding, "I have no doubt that Gen. Scott whose professions and sincerity I have not the slightest confidence in, after stripping me of the greater portion of my available force will give the necessary orders to those about him to write to certain individuals drawing the most outrageous comparisons in favor of the column under his command." This contempt for General Scott led Taylor to refuse to meet at Camargo and hand over the allotted troops.⁵¹

Taylor's obstinance forced Scott's hand. He informed Taylor that he was "much embarrassed by your great distance from me. That circumstance, and extreme pressure of time, has thrown me upon the necessity of giving direct instructions, of a very important character, to your next in command." On 3 January 1847, the order was given to Major General William O. Butler in Monterey to detach the troops of Taylor's that were designated for Scott's expedition. Butler promptly reacted and arrived with Brevet Brigadier General William J. Worth's division on 22 January at the mouth of the Rio Grande. Worth's regiment was an essential component

⁵¹ Scott, *Memoirs*, 403; Taylor, *Letters*, 74, 84, 90, 108.

of the invasion of Veracruz. Scott also wrote to Taylor, saying, “if I had been within easy reach of you, at the time I called for troops from your line of operations, I should, as I had previously assured you, have consulted you fully on all points, and, probably, might have modified my call, both as to the number and description of the forces to be taken from, or to be left with you.” Despite Taylor’s harsh words and petulant behavior, Scott thus tried to soothe Taylor’s anger.⁵²

In response to Taylor’s claims of being left defenseless against Santa Anna’s army and that if he had been left with as few as 500-1,000 more regulars the Battle of Buena Vista would never have been fought, Scott argued that in his previous letters to Taylor’s he offered his help face the Mexican army. Scott writes that if Taylor would have only met at Camargo, he would have worked with Taylor to defeat Santa Anna before moving on to Veracruz. Scott rebutted the claims of leaving Taylor defenseless with the argument that if Taylor had known Santa Anna was within striking distance with about 25,000 men, he should have met with Scott and informed him, so that they could have faced Santa Anna together, then proceeded with the invasion at Veracruz. If Taylor really knew, then he chose to knowingly withhold information from both Scott and the War Department. Also, Secretary Marcy was greatly angered by Taylor’s claims regarding Buena Vista, because if Taylor had stayed near Monterrey and held the defensive line as ordered, Buena Vista would never have happened.⁵³

According to Scott, Taylor had “the harmless errors, both of fact and opinion, of a good man, [and] ought to be treated as a nurse treats a child – a little sick and a little spoiled – gently.” General Scott found “the senseless and ungrateful clamor of Taylor” to be a hindrance

⁵² *Mexican War*, 852-853, 856, 864.

⁵³ *Mexican War*, 863, 864; Scott, *Memoirs*, 406; Spencer, *Victor*, 164-165.

to mobilizing his forces. Though Taylor proved to be a rather irritating thorn in General Scott's side, Scott continued with his expedition. Scott thus faced almost as much opposition from men nominally on his own side as he faced from the Mexican land he planned to invade. At least he could fight the enemy in front of him with bullets and bayonets; he was forced to mollify those among his allies with words.⁵⁴

General Scott was a man who shaped the United States Army and led with experience and respectability. General Taylor's men loved him for his rough-and-tumble nature, and his somewhat disheveled look seemed in sync many of the soldiers' own natures. General Scott – Old Fuss and Feathers – always presented himself in perfect military dress and expected his men to look and act as would be expected of professional soldiers of the United States Army. Despite these expectations, he was loved by his men. He was thoughtful; he chose planning and preparation over brute force. His men knew when they went into battle that Scott had chosen the best course of action, one that would favor victory while not needlessly sacrificing their lives. This concern defined Scott's character. His willingness to embrace whatever would lead to success while keeping his men's best interests in mind shaped the landing at Veracruz. This humility for the sake of success allowed Scott to work better with his peers, General Jesup and Commodore Conner, creating an environment of cooperation that any other candidate for his job could not have managed at the time. Likewise, Scott was a lifetime soldier but did not have the luxury of a West Point education. Knowing his inadequacies in engineering and other more recent technological developments, he surrounded himself with a staff of West Point graduates to bolster his ability to lead his army. General Scott was the right man for the invasion; without

⁵⁴ Scott, *Memoirs*, 419; *Mexican War*, 382-383, 404-406, 415, 839, 849, 1,153-1,156.

his focus on teamwork, it is unlikely that such an invasion could have been achieved. He effectively handled the problems of logistics and joint operation as well as the personal relationships that inherently went along with them.⁵⁵

The conflicts and petty tattling to Secretary Marcy that typified the relationship between Taylor and Jesup did not plague the relationship between Jesup and Scott. Despite the additional burden placed on Jesup and the Quartermaster Department by the invasion, General Scott's prompt requisitions and frequent communication nullified most of the friction that could have occurred. In contrast to Taylor, Scott requisitioned supplies in advance and gave considerable thought to other preparations.⁵⁶

Jesup moved south, in support of the invasion force, along the supply routes, leaving Henry Stanton in charge of the Quartermaster Office in Washington. Coordinating with Jesup, Stanton sent ordinance ships, shipwrights, and other supply ships as needed to support the preparation for the invasions. Scott and Jesup rendezvoused at Brazos Santiago and worked together to find enough transports to get their troops to Lobos. Even while Scott went to Camargo to attempt to confer with Taylor, Jesup continued to take "active measures to have everything depending on [him] ready for his operation." One of the delays of the operation for Scott and Jesup arose from a dearth of information about the area around Brazos Santiago and the Rio Grande, information which Taylor could have provided. However, Jesup handled the resultant challenges excellently. An example of Jesup's commitment to the operation is shown when he arrived at Tampico on the *New Orleans*. Some of the volunteer officers complained

⁵⁵ Armistead L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History Embracing a Large Amount of Information Hitherto Unpublished*, ed. Marcus J. Wright (New York: J.M. Stoddart &, 1887), 50; Scott, *Memoirs*, 415.

⁵⁶ Keiffer, *Maligned General*, 249, 280.

that they could not find transports to take them to Lobos after the regulars left. Jesup offered his steamer to carry as many troops as could fit to Lobos and then again to Sacrificios opposite Collado Beach. Once the primary rendezvous point moved to Isla de Lobos, Jesup issued orders to direct all supply ships to Lobos.⁵⁷

Generals Scott and Jesup overcame their differences from the previous war. Scott's desire to execute a successful operation overshadowed any lingering hurt feelings. As an example of Scott's willingness to bury the hatchet with Jesup, Scott supported Jesup's proposal to Secretary Marcy for an increase of the Quartermaster Department's assigned officers. With Scott's help, Jesup received the first department expansion in almost twenty-five years. Scott worked with Jesup and the Quartermaster Department to achieve ambitious goals in a short amount of time. Given the confines of time the Department performed admirably, and this was mostly due to the efforts of Jesup. Such cooperation and commitment to the invasion contributed to its ultimate success.⁵⁸

Commodore Conner – in command of the Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico – served as Scott's right hand in planning and executing the final stages of the amphibious assault. Cooperation between military branches always has the potential to be strained for the commanders due to competing ideas or egos. Often, the confidence which makes many commanders excel within their branch can put them at odds with commanders from other branches who do things differently. This did not seem to be the case between Scott and

⁵⁷ United States Department of War, Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870 (Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985, National Archives, Washington, DC), Roll 21: 404, 437; *Mexican War*, 571-572; George T. M. Davis, *Autobiography of the Late Col. Geo. T.M. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-camp Scott's Army of Invasion (Mexico), from Posthumous Papers* (New York: Jenkins and McCowan, 1891), 122; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 249, 280.

⁵⁸ *Mexican War*, 568-569.

Conner. Conner appeared to always be willing to help, offering information and suggestions, but always deferring to Scott for the final decision. Scott, too, welcomed Conner's suggestions regarding the next, best course for the landing. Their willingness to work together and use the best ideas between the two men helped ensure that the landing went off without a hitch.⁵⁹

Scott's ability to recognize his own weaknesses, unlike Taylor, allowed him to subordinate the Army to the Navy and to accept their help during the movement to the objective and the ship-to-shore phase of the landing. Scott's wise humility allowed him to surround himself with those that ensured his success, be they his West Point trained staff or his peers in the Navy and Quartermaster Department. Scott's letter of introduction to Conner illustrated his cooperative attitude:

You have, no doubt, been informed by the Navy Department that I am ordered to Mexico, and of the probability of our becoming, as soon as practicable, associated in joint operations against the enemy. I look forward with great pleasure to that movement. I shall do all in my power to render the combined service cordial and effective. Of your hearty reciprocation I am entirely confident. This is the beginning of a correspondence which the object in view will render frequent on my part, and I hope to hear often from you in reply, and on all matter interesting to the common service.

While the cordiality of the letter was standard in writing at the time, there is no underlying contempt as with Scott's correspondence with General Taylor. The common cordiality subsequently became true cooperation, as made evident in these two men's actions.⁶⁰

Scott's demeanor alone did not explain his and Commodore Conner's ability to work together. Conner assured General Scott that in "the joint operations contemplated against the enemy . . . you may rely on the cordial co-operation of the naval forces under my command."

⁵⁹ Charles L. Dufour, *The Mexican War: A Compact History, 1846-1848* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968), 198-200; Holland M. Smith, *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1992), 8-9.

⁶⁰ *Mexican War*, 842.

Brig. Gen. Holland H. Smith of the Marine Corps later outlined the role of the Navy in the Gulf of Mexico in two broad roles: “to effect a blockade of Mexican ports and seize such harbors as were necessary to carry out this mission,” and “to support the Army by maintaining communication and, where required, to assist in landing operations on the seaward flank.” Along with Conner’s readiness to support General Scott as needed, these broad roles further reinforced the relationship necessary to execute such an audacious landing.⁶¹

General Scott did his best to keep Conner informed of his movements and up to date on his plan. This constant communication supported the cooperation that allowed a force of over ten thousand soldiers on upwards of eighty ships to meet on a small island off the coast of Mexico. The Army and Navy finally rendezvoused at Isla de Lobos some sixty miles south of Tampico.⁶²

Once the Army and Navy joined together at Isla de Lobos, the real test of joint operations began. Now two branches of the military were jointly moving and making decisions. Prior to the landing at Collado Beach, there was no such precedent in American history for such a large joint operation. If successful this landing would lay the groundwork for future joint operations and amphibious assaults. Scott’s arrival at Isla de Lobos on 21 February 1847 marked a momentous day in United States military history. Over the next two weeks, Scott and Conner worked well together to lay the groundwork for the future of the United States military.

The battle plan for the amphibious assault of Collado Beach grew out of cooperation between Scott and Conner. Initially, Scott thought the Army could make the landing alone using

⁶¹ Smith, *Amphibious Tactics*, 10; *Mexican War*, 878.

⁶² Bauer, *Surfboats*, 68, 72, 75; Scott, *Memoirs*, 413; *Mexican War*, 847.

only Army transports, but after conferring with Conner it became evident that the troops would have to land from naval vessels. The harbor across from Collado Beach was not large enough to house both naval warships and the transports. Conner convinced Scott to allow the landing force to be ferried to the landing area by warships and steamers under the Navy's control. This was an important step for Scott. While there is little doubt Scott could have managed an amphibious landing, he realized the benefit of letting a naval officer handle the water transport part of the operation.⁶³

The battle plan for the landing began at Isla de Lobos. Once roughly half of Scott's force arrived, he set sail for Anton Lizardo about fifteen miles south of Veracruz, which would be the location for organizing the troops. Scott planned to determine the number of troops necessary to begin the operation based on the Mexican army in the field, not in the garrisons and guns of the city and fort. The landing force was organized into three lines, or waves, for the assault. The first line was under the command of General Worth. It consisted of the First Brigade of Regulars, Captain Alexander Swift's company of sappers and miners, and the field batteries of Captain George Taylor and Lieutenant George Talcott, to be transported on the frigate *Raritan* and the steamers *Princeton* and *Edith*. Swift's company was the first of its kind ever assembled by West Point as a company of engineers to build and destroy artillery emplacements. The second line was under the command of Major General Robert Patterson. It included the First Brigade of Volunteers under Brigadier General Gideon Johnson Pillow and the South Carolina Regiment of Volunteers, to be transported on the frigate *Potomac* and the steamers *Alabama* and *Virginia*. The reserves, placed under Brigadier General David E. "Bengal Tiger" Twiggs, were

⁶³ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 78; David Conner, *The Home Squadron Under Commodore Conner*, with Philip S. P. Conner (Philadelphia: P.S.P. Conner, 1896), 18.

made up of the Second Brigade of Regulars, to be transported on the sloops-of-war *Albany* and *St. Mary's*, the brig *Porpoise*, and the steamers *Massachusetts*, *Eudora*, and *Petrita*. General Worth and his men therefore received the honor of being the first to land on the beach.⁶⁴

Given these allotments of troops, only five of the Army's steamers would be needed to transport men and to tow surfboats into position in preparation for the landing. The surfboats – holding about forty troops each – were manned by a naval officer and sailors to effect the landing. In General Order No. 28, General Scott created a signal system to communicate between the ships in order to coordinate the landing. The flag system worked on a relay based on General Scott's flagship *Massachusetts* or Conner's flagship *Raritan*, depending on who was in charge of that portion of the invasion. There were five flags used for signaling, and depending on which flag was where on which mast the other ships would know the order issued. Scott put a significant amount of thought into ensuring that his troops would land safely and in a proper line of battle when they reached the beach. With the aid of Conner's squadron, Scott executed a spectacular landing.⁶⁵

This early form of a joint operation proved to be a success due to the diligent and gracious efforts of Scott and Conner working together to put their men ashore and, though not diminishing the achievement, in an unopposed landing. Conner noted, "the entire movement

⁶⁴ William G. Temple, "Memoir of the Landing of the United States Troops at Veracruz in 1847," in Conner, *Home Squadron*, 65-66; Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241; Davis, *Autobiography*, 123; *Mexican War*, 843; Webb B. Garrison, *Curiosities of the Civil War: Strange Stories, Infamous Characters, and Bizarre Events* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 428; United States Department of War, General and Special Orders Issued by General Winfield Scott, Headquarters of the Army, War with Mexico, 1847-1848 (Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, National Archives, Washington, DC), Roll 1: 45; Gustavus W. Smith, *Company "A" Corps of Engineers, U.S.A.' 186-1848, in the Mexican War* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), xiv-xvii. Patterson received the rank of major-general even though he only commanded a brigade because he was over volunteers.

⁶⁵ John Lenthall Papers, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia; General and Special Orders Issued by General Winfield Scott, Roll 1: 28.

was a combined military and naval operation, in which circumstances so favored the army as to yield to it the most active, brilliant, and best-appreciated share of the work. Nevertheless, the navy did perform most arduous and important services. Among these was the descent, by which the army was placed under the walls of the enemy.” The cooperation between these two men can be looked at as the foundation for how officers of all branches should behave during joint operations. Each should defer to the other when facing a situation that calls for one of the officer’s strengths. It is this synergistic nature that defined the amphibious assault at Collado Beach.⁶⁶

General Scott took men from across the United States and landed them on a foreign shore under the threat of enemy fire. This was no small task. He overcame political intrigue, competition for his command of the Army of Invasion, the daunting logistical hurdle of supplying and moving all of his men, and the practical difficulties of putting roughly 2,500 soldiers ashore in a single wave. Scott managed to overcome these sizeable hurdles by surrounding himself with men who could support his efforts. Quartermaster General Jesup and his staff worked tirelessly to ensure that the men found transports to Brazos Santiago and had supplies, weapons, and especially the surfboats that were crucial to the landing. Without the Quartermaster Department conquering this herculean task the landing would most likely have failed. Scott’s forethought and preparation, paired with Jesup’s diligence made this logistical feat possible. Commodore Conner worked side by side with Scott to ensure the landing was successful. These three men worked in tandem in their respective realms to create the perfect combination for such a momentous event as the landing at Collado Beach. The amphibious

⁶⁶ Conner, *Home Squadron*, 18.

assault at Collado Beach was Scott's first step on the campaign that would carry him to the halls of Montezuma.

CHAPTER III

LOGISTICS IN THE MEXICAN WAR

During the Mexican War, the United States Quartermaster Department undertook the daunting feat of equipping and supplying the United States Army. As with most wars in which the United States has become involved, the Army found itself woefully unprepared and underequipped to fight a war, especially one that took an American army onto foreign soil. The Mexican War is the first major war with a foreign nation in American history during which the Army took to the field in force and invaded that country. This marks an important shift in American military history. The Army was faced with logistical challenges it previously had not confronted. The Quartermaster Department went through many growing pains during this war as it and its commanders struggled to keep up with the growing demands for the war. This was especially true when it was called upon to support an amphibious landing at Collado Beach, a joint operation for which there was no precedent in American military experience.

The Quartermaster Department was headed by Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup, a veteran of the Second Seminole War. Over the course of the Mexican War, Jesup and his department were charged with mustering and supplying troops, providing transportation for their movement to their respective fronts, and establishing supply depots to outfit the Army. With the decision to execute a large amphibious invasion, the Quartermaster Department redoubled its efforts to meet the needs of mustering, supplying, and transporting Scott's new army. The preparations for the landing further taxed an already stressed department, but it

would be this additional strain that forced the department to grow, laying the foundations for a more robust Quartermaster Department in future wars.⁶⁷

This proved to be no easy task for Jesup. During the Mexican War, President James K. Polk sought to gain as much territory for the United States as possible, in the truest spirit of Manifest Destiny. This meant waging war on several fronts. The Army campaigned in northern Mexico, marched into what is now the southwestern United States and California, and invaded Mexico at Veracruz. The Quartermaster Department maintained supply lines to each of these armies throughout the war. At the start of the war, the department found itself unprepared for a multi-front conflict. Eventually, the Quartermaster Department overcame these great challenges and supported both General Winfield Scott's invasion force and Commodore David Conner's Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico. Without this infrastructure, the groundbreaking cooperation between Scott and Conner for the landing would not have happened.⁶⁸

The supply depots acted as the structural framework for the supply lines. These depots served as focal points from which manufacturing, shipping, and supplying occurred. General Jesup always kept himself up to date with the workings of his depots, and he kept an eye out for new locations to build new depots as the Army moved deeper into Mexico. This supply line stretched along the east coast, around and through many of the Gulf ports, and culminated at Veracruz once it was captured by Scott's force. The depots were where the Quartermaster Department's officers were stationed and carried out their operations. The depots integral to

⁶⁷ United States Congress, *The Mexican War*, House Ex. Docs. No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session [Serial Set 520], 479-480.

⁶⁸ Charles L. Dufour, *The Mexican War: a Compact History, 1846-1848* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968), 31, 137, 197.

Scott's Mexico City Campaign were Philadelphia, New Orleans, Port Lavaca, Brazos Santiago, Tampico, and Isla de Lobos.

The Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot – originally named the Schuylkill Arsenal – was built in 1800. This depot shipped most of the supplies for the Army, though the demand vastly exceeded its production capabilities. Acting as the primary Army manufacturing location, almost all of the supplies from the northeast United States either were manufactured here or passed through this depot after purchase. Storage of supplies – Navy and Army – was also a role of the Philadelphia depot. Be it gunpowder, boots, tents, or uniforms, it is likely that the Philadelphia depot placed its mark on it. Its proximity to Delaware Bay contributed to its importance, as it could easily move manufactured or purchased goods to the docks to be loaded and sent to the appropriate depot elsewhere. This central depot demonstrated the growing industrial strength of the United States, and allowed the Army to harness that strength to better wage war. Without this depot's production, Scott's army would have been without uniforms and many other supplies essential for his campaign.⁶⁹

The New Orleans Quartermaster Depot was under the command of the Deputy Quartermaster General, Colonel Thomas F. Hunt. New Orleans truly was the center of logistics for the Mexican War. Even though Jesup and Stanton kept the main quartermaster's office in Washington, all of the major logistical maneuvering occurred at New Orleans. Most supplies and men headed to Mexico to join either Taylor's or Scott's armies passed through New

⁶⁹ United States Department of War, Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870 (Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985, National Archives, Washington, DC), Roll 21: 254, 306, 312, 385; Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 254, 255, 256; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 132.

Orleans, making New Orleans a central gathering point for the war. Given that it is situated on the Mississippi River, which connects to the Ohio, most inland river travel at this point in time flowed through New Orleans before reaching the sea. Its proximity to Pensacola, Florida, and Mobile, Alabama – 150 to 200 miles – also made it an ideal command location to direct the transports from these nearby ports. The depot also acted as the major recoaling station after Key West, making it a necessary stop for most steamships.⁷⁰

When soldiers arrived in New Orleans from their respective states, the Quartermaster directed them to Andrew Jackson's old battleground for encampment until ships arrived for embarking. Jacob Oswandel wrote about his excitement at being at the same place where Jackson once fought the British. Many of the men who invaded Mexico at Veracruz, such as Colonel George T.M. Davis – aide-de-camp of General Scott – passed through New Orleans while they waited to be transferred to transports that carried them to Mexico. New Orleans was the beating heart of the lifeline that supplied and manned Scott's invasion force. Without New Orleans, there would have been no major midway point to gather men before embarking for the invasion gathering point at Isla de Lobos.⁷¹

Jesup struggled to ensure that his Department kept meeting the growing needs of the Army. Increasing staff certainly helped, but having enough currency to keep the Quartermaster Department in New Orleans operational proved to be a vital component as well. Given its position as a central hub for the logistics network, much of the purchasing and payments

⁷⁰ *Mexican War*, 692; Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 150, 152, 155, 295.

⁷¹ George T. M. Davis, *Autobiography of the Late Col. Geo. T.M. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-camp Scott's Army of Invasion (Mexico), from Posthumous Papers* (New York: Press of Jenkins and McCowan, 1891), 119; J. Jacob Oswandel, *Notes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, ed. Timothy D. Johnson and Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 16, 29.

occurred in New Orleans. In order to meet the needs of the military, the Department made sure to keep enough coinage on hand to pay its contracts. An interesting note regarding this can be found in the quartermaster's log. Stanton, while Jesup was inspecting the various depots, sent Captain M. M. Clark, an assistant quartermaster from Washington, DC, to New York to withdraw \$500,500 from the Assistant Treasurer, which was "destined for the service of the Department at New Orleans." Clark was ordered to take the "most expedit[ed] route from New York to New Orleans in the execution of the order." This entry was particularly interesting given that this withdrawal would most likely have been made in specie. This huge sum was put aboard a ship with Captain Clark who then sailed to New Orleans. The New Orleans supply depot was clearly important to the war effort to have such a large sum allotted to it. New Orleans acted as the linchpin that held the sometimes tenuous logistics of the Mexican War together. The withdrawal was made on 24 November 1846, twelve days after General Scott's expanded memorandum was presented President Polk. It is apparent that this transfer was made in preparation for the additional demands that Scott's expedition placed on the Quartermaster's Department.⁷²

New Orleans was also important because it was close to Mobile and Pensacola, which served as temporary gathering places for ordinance and supply ships awaiting orders. While Scott organized part of his fleet in New Orleans, a portion that had come down the Alabama River waited at Mobile for his orders to embark for Brazos Santiago. Mobile's location so close

⁷² Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 295.

to New Orleans made it a supplemental gathering point for men and vessels awaiting orders from that depot.⁷³

Port Lavaca, Texas, which lay about eighty miles north along the coast from Corpus Christi, became an important supply depot during the war. This depot was the starting point for the overland supply route to San Antonio, where Major General John Ellis Wool was stationed. This route ran from Port Lavaca to Camargo, Mexico, via San Antonio. There appeared to have been some debate within the Quartermaster Department over whether this overland route or the partial water route from San Antonio to Brazos Santiago via Port Lavaca was more efficient. The latter route to Brazos Santiago often included a stop at Corpus Christi, which also had a supply depot under the command of an Assistant Quartermaster General, Colonel Truman Cross. Many of the horses, mules, oxen, wagons, and carts delivered to Texas passed through Port Lavaca and either entered the supply train to San Antonio and Camargo or continued on to Brazos Santiago by sea. Jesup stopped here during his tour of the supply depots on his way south in support of General Scott's invasion force. During his visit, he gave the necessary orders for the supply of the Texas Regiment and had a portion of General Wool's supply train diverted to the Rio Grande to assist Scott's preparation for the invasion of Mexico. While this was not a major port during the war, it did play an important role in supporting the Army and supplying inland Texas with supplies.⁷⁴

After New Orleans, Brazos Santiago became the most important supply depot during the Mexican War. If New Orleans was the central hub, then Brazos Santiago acted as the gateway

⁷³ *Mexican War*, 838; Oswandel, *Notes*, 7.

⁷⁴ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 150, 197; *Mexican War*, 429, 567.

into Mexico for troops and supplies, as well as a lifeline for General Zachary Taylor. It was the main supply depot for all Army movements in northern Mexico after it replaced the temporary depot on St. Joseph's Island in Aransas Bay near Corpus Christi. Brazos Santiago operated in conjunction with Point Isabel – today called Port Isabel – about five miles away. Approximately eleven miles north of Point Isabel, Green Island could be found within the barrier islands. Both Point Isabel and Green Island acted as support for Brazos Santiago, either as temporary docking for ships or as guidance when vessels entered the bay behind the barrier islands. Brazos Santiago was the southernmost of these three locations. The camp itself was located just north of the mouth of the Rio Grande.⁷⁵ This positioned the depot to make excellent use of the steamships that could navigate the winding river dividing the two countries. The bar at the entrance to the harbor was ordered to be sounded by the Quartermaster Department, and Jesup even remarked in a letter that he was considering purchasing a dredging ship to use at Brazos Santiago and on the Rio Grande. When Scott arrived at Brazos Santiago on 1 January 1847, he set up his temporary headquarters there while gathering troops from Taylor's forces and waiting for new volunteers and supplies. Jesup and Scott met there in early 1847 to discuss plans for the campaign and attempt to address the supply problems they were facing. Brazos Santiago played an essential role in General Scott's expedition to Veracruz, partly because it was settled at an ideal location near the mouth of the Rio Grande and a midway point between New Orleans and Veracruz. Many of the regulars from Taylor's army also embarked from Brazos Santiago for Veracruz, including General Worth's men who would lead the assault. This depot found itself at the center of two important theatres of war, and it became the launching point

⁷⁵ Brazos Santiago is now Brazos Island State Park. It is located just opposite the southernmost tip of South Padre Island. Sadly little remains today of the Brazos Santiago supply depot.

for Scott's landing near Veracruz, one of the most influential campaigns in American history up to this point.⁷⁶

Being a gateway did not mean that Brazos Santiago was beautiful. Private Oswandel described the island as "a miserable looking place...two or three shanties and a few tents along the beach, and a harbor full of vessels. Some loaded with troops, stores, and ordinances to carry on the war with Mexico." As early as 22 October 1846, Secretary of War William L. Marcy had considered Brazos Santiago as a potential gathering and embarkation point for any military expedition against Veracruz. This depot became one of the main coaling stations for the Army transports and Navy vessels on their journeys south to Tampico or Veracruz; thousands of tons of coal were delivered here over the course of the war. While recoaling, ships often took on fresh water and provisions while they had the opportunity. General Taylor wrote in a letter to a friend about the large number of volunteers passing through Brazos Santiago either to replace the men designated to join Scott's expedition, or on their way to join Scott at Veracruz.⁷⁷

Tampico became a supply depot after it was captured by a naval landing force from Commodore David Conner's Home Squadron. In the early planning phases of the Mexico City campaign, Tampico was considered as a possible landing point for the expedition. However, Veracruz was chosen over Tampico because no easy routes existed between Tampico, San Luis Potosi (a major city about halfway between Monterrey and Mexico City), and Mexico City. The town of Tampico had about seven thousand inhabitants and was settled some five or six miles

⁷⁶ Oswandel, *Notes*, 26; Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the Mexican War* (Cincinnati: W.H. Moore & Co., 1851), 124; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 249, 280; Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 134.

⁷⁷ Zachary Taylor, *Letters of Zachary Taylor from the Battle-fields of the Mexican War: Reprinted from the Originals in the Collection of Mr. William K. Bixby, of St. Louis, Mo.*, ed. William K. Bixby and William Holland Samson (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 104; Oswandel, *Notes*, 26; *Mexican War*, 365-366.

upriver from the mouth of the river. On 28 November 1846, news reached Washington that Tampico had been captured. Jesup acted quickly, setting up a supply depot here in support of Taylor and in preparation for the expedition to Veracruz being prepared by Scott.⁷⁸

Tampico served in a similar, though lesser, capacity as Brazos Santiago. It provided a coaling station for passing ships, and it helped supply the Army stationed at nearby locations such as Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, about one hundred fifty miles northeast of Tampico. Tampico also played a role in transporting men for Scott's invasion. Several groups of soldiers from Ciudad Victoria were detached from Taylor's army and assigned to the invasion force. Tampico being the nearest friendly port, the troops were ordered there to await transport to Isla de Lobos. While Tampico was nowhere near as important or influential as Brazos Santiago, it did aid in the movement of troops in support of Scott's expedition.⁷⁹

Isla de Lobos received the honor of being the last major gathering point for Scott's army before the commencement of his operation against Veracruz. When Scott departed from Brazos Santiago, he left orders designating Isla de Lobos as the primary gathering point for the invasion fleet. Lieutenant Ralph Semmes of the Navy wrote that as his command waited at Lobos, "other ships, laden with surf-boats for the landing of troops, provisions, artillery, means of transportation, etc. began to arrive daily, direct from New York and other ports." About half of the troops and supplies requested by Scott for the invasion would arrive at Isla de Lobos

⁷⁸ K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 232, 237; Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field* (New York: Putnam, 1909), 237.

⁷⁹ Davis, *Autobiography*, 120-121.

before Scott gave the order to move the fleet to Anton Lizardo – a point about fifteen miles south of Veracruz – in preparation for the invasion.⁸⁰

The mustering, supply, and movement of troops fell heavily on the shoulders of the Quartermaster Department. When the war officially started on 13 May 1846, the United States Army was a fairly small force, given the significant disarmament it had undergone after each war, in part, due to the American fear of large standing armies. Waging a large-scale war against Mexico meant mustering volunteer citizen-soldiers to fight. Volunteer regiments consisted of:

Field and Staff:

- 1 Colonel
- 1 Lieutenant colonel
- 1 Major
- 1 Adjutant – a lieutenant of one of the companies, but not in addition

Non-commissioned Staff:

- 1 Sergeant major
- 1 Quartermaster sergeant
- 2 Principia musicians

10 Companies Consisting Of:

- 1 Captain
- 1 First lieutenant
- 2 Second lieutenants
- 4 Sergeants
- 4 Corporals
- 2 Musicians
- 80 Privates

⁸⁰ Oswandel, *Notes*, 30; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 124-125; *Mexican War*, 840-841.

This totaled to a theoretical nine hundred forty-eight men in each of the regiments. Not many volunteer regiments maintained this exact number of men, but it represents the number that the Quartermaster Department used when allotting supplies and obtaining transportation for each regiment.⁸¹

While the war may not have been popular with some of the more prominent members of society, such as Abraham Lincoln and Henry David Thoreau, there were plenty of men volunteering to answer the call to war. Men like General Edmund P. Gaines, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Seminole Wars, helped gather volunteers, including a regiment of Georgians. Further down the chain of command, Captain William F. Small recruited Company C, First Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, in which Jacob Oswandel enlisted as a private in the town of Huntington. The Quartermaster Department moved Oswandel and his company from Pennsylvania to Mexico to join Scott in the invasion.⁸²

After the individual officers created their companies and regiments, it fell to the Quartermaster Department to manage and move the hordes of volunteer from the various states. Usually the troops were first taken to New Orleans. Oswandel's company eventually made its way to the Ohio River, where they boarded chartered steamboat that took them down the Ohio to the Mississippi and on to New Orleans. The Quartermaster Department organized transports to take the regiment of Georgia volunteers from Montgomery, Alabama by way of the Alabama River to Mobile to await further orders. This was just the first leg of the three- to four-month journey to Mexico for most of the new volunteers. This proved to be easy for the

⁸¹ *Mexican War*, 479.

⁸² Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 284; Oswandel, *Notes*, 7.

quartermasters, as there were many ships along these rivers that could be chartered to move troops. With each movement of troops, the quartermasters assigned to the respective areas requisitioned supplies to be prepared at the various central gathering points, such as New Orleans. This meant that for every movement a group of troops made, the Quartermaster Department had to coordinate with other branches of the department by letter to prepare supplies to outfit these men before sending them on to their respective theaters. By the end of 1846 this would include the movement of troops in preparation for the landing near Veracruz.⁸³

With soldiers on the move, it was essential for the Quartermaster Department to meticulously maintain the supply lines for both the Army and the Navy. This proved difficult because of the great distance over which the war was being fought and how slowly messages traveled at the time. During the war, the longest distance over which the department had to ship supplies was from Philadelphia and New York to Mexico City, over four thousand miles away. To travel from Philadelphia to Veracruz, Mexico, could take upwards of three to four months. The department had to take into account what could realistically be shipped such a great distance. While wagons, clothing, and ordinance could make the trip, most foodstuffs could not. To maintain these supply lines, the Quartermaster Department focused on several key areas – efficiency, wagons, horses and draught animals, uniforms, ships, and supply depots. The department went beyond the areas listed here, but these areas formed the core of what quartermasters managed during the war.⁸⁴

⁸³ Oswandel, *Notes*, 7; *Mexican War*, 546.

⁸⁴ *Mexican War*, 546.

Efficiency was at the forefront of every quartermaster's mind; without it, the feat of supplying the Army would become exponentially more difficult. The task of providing the newly mustered regiments with the necessary transport, provisions, arms, and supplies of all kinds necessitated a careful attention to detail regarding the quantity of items acquired and shipped. General Jesup ordered that his men "state the number and date of their departure in order to enable me to determine whether or not they have been embraced in similar states required of the officers of those stations" to ensure that each quartermaster was doing his utmost to maintain efficiency in the supply lines. Time and time again in the Quartermaster's Log from Washington, DC, there were requests for the number of ships transporting troops or carrying goods to Brazos Santiago and other depots. Jesup and the Department kept a careful eye on the amount of supplies shipped, especially from manufacturing depots like Schuylkill in Philadelphia. Even when Jesup traveled to inspect the many supply depots, the Quartermaster Department continued to work efficiently under the guidance of Assistant Quartermaster General Henry Stanton. The number of wagons and shoes, pounds of gunpowder, etc. were kept to ensure that the material would be available when the need arose. Every vessel and wagon train was reported to the Quartermaster Department in Washington to maintain a smooth running operation. Without this emphasis on efficiency, Jesup would not have kept up with Scott's short timetable to build surfboats and gather his army.⁸⁵

The Quartermaster Department ultimately could not manufacture all of the supplies needed by the Army, and it could not deliver everything with only the ships it owned. This necessitated the contracting of many of the tasks. Among the numerous camp and garrison

⁸⁵ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 150, 153, 230, 254, 369.

items the Army required, the Schuylkill Arsenal only made tents; the rest were manufactured by private companies who worked with the department. Despite the fact that the hard-pressed department was buying many vessels to expand their shipping capabilities, there simply was not enough money to buy the number of ships needed to carry all the supplies. Thus, the quartermasters hired private shipping companies to carry goods for the Army. This logistical undertaking could not be shouldered by the Army's Quartermaster Department alone; the burden had to be shared with the American people. Expanding the Army's supply capabilities, whether by production or procurement, became even more essential with the opening of an additional front for the expedition to Veracruz.⁸⁶

Wagons became one of the most valuable commodities for the Quartermaster Department during the war. Without them the armies would be crippled, unable to advance into the field. The department estimated that one wagon per company was needed, eight for field staff, and six for the general headquarters. This was only the number for carrying the baggage of an army itself, not the perishable foodstuffs and fodder. An additional one-hundred-seventy-five wagons would be needed for the fodder, artillery, and other supplies should the army take to the field. The depots in the northern United States built some of the wagons that were sent to the fronts, but many more were purchased to keep up with the Army's needs. The department paid around one-hundred-ten dollars per "quality" wagon. The quartermasters purchasing these wagons gave each one a rigid inspection to ensure its quality. The Philadelphia depot continually sent as many wagons as were on hand to New Orleans in the early months of the war. By 29 January 1847, the Schuylkill Arsenal had four hundred wagons and two thousand

⁸⁶ Keiffer, *Maligned General*, 256.

mule harnesses on hand awaiting further orders. This demonstrates how the Quartermaster Department expanded their production and purchasing capabilities as the war progressed. Without this emphasis on wagon procurement, the movement of troops would have suffered, including the movements of many of the regulars from Taylor's army who were attached to Scott's forces for the invasion.⁸⁷

Along with wagons and harnesses, the draught animals to pull them composed another component of the supply trains. Horses, mules, and oxen were purchased in huge quantities from across the southern United States and sent south to be used to help supply the Army. Deputy Quartermaster General Colonel Thomas F. Hunt of the New Orleans Department ordered Major Nathaniel Anderson to purchase two hundred horses, one hundred for draught and one hundred for dragoon service, from Memphis, Tennessee. General Jesup directed the purchase of several hundred mules from western Georgia and southern Alabama to be sent to Colonel Hunt in New Orleans. These were to be held in reserve should the need for mules arise suddenly from the Rio Grande. Jesup also directed a selection of horses by the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons for their own use from those belonging to the public, paying the original cost of the horses. These purchases showed how many animals the quartermasters used to keep the Army functioning. Without these animals, the war would have ground to a halt.⁸⁸

Horses and other draught animals were a double-edged sword for the Army. They made supply trains possible, but the quantity of fodder they ate greatly increased the length of the trains, necessitating more animals to pull wagons of fodder. The Quartermaster Department

⁸⁷ *Mexican War*, 642; Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 62, 88, 109, 114, 416.

⁸⁸ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 80, 160, 170, 175, 176.

ordered 25,000 bushels of oats shipped monthly to Brazos Santiago from New York. Thousands of bags of oats in gunny sacks traveled from the northern United States to New Orleans and on to Brazos Santiago every month. Additional forage obtained at New Orleans was shipped to Brazos Santiago. Despite the additional burden of feeding the draught animals, they were absolutely necessary to the Army to transport supplies. Without these animals, the Army would have been without its lifeline. The build-up of draught animals prior to Scott's invasion provided both an established supply infrastructure to depots like Brazos Santiago and a supply of animals to draw from to march inland after the landing near Veracruz.⁸⁹

The production of clothing became one of the biggest strains on the Quartermaster Department. The Mexican War was the first conflict in which the Quartermaster Department had full responsibility for procuring, storing, and distributing army clothing to regular soldiers. By 14 January 1847 more than fifty thousand garments had been produced by the Schuylkill Arsenal over the course of the past month. Shoes were still procured on contract. One purchase report noted that 108,000 pairs of boots were purchased at the "entirely responsible cost" of \$1.00 per pair. Shiploads of clothing continuously made their way to the Brazos Santiago Depot.⁹⁰

Non-commissioned officers and privates of the volunteers received a \$3.50 per month stipend to provide their own clothes. This created a whole different set of problems because many of the volunteers tried to save money and bought poor quality goods, or many were swindled by war profiteers. Thus, as the war progressed, the Quartermaster Department

⁸⁹ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 62, 67, 86, 253, 283.

⁹⁰ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 312, 385; Kieffer, *Maligned General* 254, 255, 256; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 132.

petitioned Congress to allow it to provide uniforms for the volunteers as well. It is important to note the lengths to which the Army went to provide decent uniforms to all of its soldiers – regular and volunteer – beyond the additional logistic and resource strains it placed on the Department. A soldier without a uniform suffered from the elements far worse than one with a uniform. This greatly shaped the health and fighting spirit of the Army. The significance of such a step was especially evident in the Mexican War, given that the Mexican Army by the time of General Scott's Mexico City Campaign was made up mostly of inexperienced volunteers. Something as seemingly simple as decent uniforms could change the course of a battle by improving the condition and morale of Scott's men. Therefore, the additional burden on the Quartermaster Department showed itself to be a worthwhile addition.⁹¹

Obtaining the supplies, wagons, and draught animals would have been for naught if they were not transported to the front. The primary mode of transportation was the sea, both by sail and by steam. With the onset of the war, the Quartermaster Department began buying and chartering as many sail and steam ships as they could reasonably manage. Finding enough able ships posed a problem for the department, especially after the added transportation demands of Scott's expedition to Veracruz. The quartermasters sought "vessels of suitable charters at competitively low rates to be taken up at New York and Philadelphia . . . in the first instance with the understanding that their monthly services can after the discharge of their outward cargo be commanded at stated rates should the Department think proper to employ them under such conditional agreement." Some charters offered the option to be renewed for three

⁹¹ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll21: 385; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 254, 255, 256; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 132.

months at a time after the initial delivery; pending the shipping was acceptable. Many of the shipping contracts originated in Philadelphia, where the Schuylkill Arsenal was located.⁹²

The terms of the charters were fairly similar for all steamships. The basic charter included the following provisions: \$220 per day (deducting \$100 each day the engine was not used) to be paid upon delivery of the cargo, up to about \$5,400, and the owner had to furnish all coal. The contract for the *Endora* followed very similar lines, but included other provisions as well. She had to be officered, manned, and kept in good repair at all times. The charter included that the "United States [has] the privilege to purchase the vessel at the end of her charter for \$20,000 deducting from that sum \$100 per day for the whole period for which she may have received full pay (\$220) on her charter." The *Ocean* and *Ashland* were purchased for \$17,000 apiece, a similar sum to that specified in the *Endora's* charter, except that these two were bought outright. The *Ocean* and *Ashland* received full loads of coal and headed to Tampico to supply that depot with coal for the ships that stopped there. A particularly interesting purchase by the Quartermaster Department was the steamer *Massachusetts*. It became Scott's flagship, from which he guided the invasion force, although she was initially purchased to move troops from New Orleans to Brazos Santiago. The purchase of the *Robert Morris* demonstrated some of the difficulties of having the volume of specie necessary to purchase so many ships. The contract for the purchase was made in New Orleans, with the ship being transferred to Hunt's possession, but the bill was paid by Stanton in Washington.⁹³

⁹² Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 211, 231, 337, 369.

⁹³ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 210, 266, 312, 320.

Assistant Quartermaster General Stanton suggested to Captain L. B. Dusenbergh, the assistant quartermaster in Baltimore, that "Baltimore may not be the best place to find transports at a reasonable rate . . . Philadelphia, New York, & and Boston are open to you, and you are authorized to avail yourself of any or all of them." As General Scott's expedition grew closer, the demand for ships also grew to meet the increasing urgency to get Scott's troops and supplies there in time for the landing. On 5 January 1847, Stanton ordered Captain D. H. Ninton, the assistant quartermaster in New York, to charter without delay enough vessels (ships, brigs, and first-class schooners) "for the comfortable and proper transportation of 5,000 troops, with their arms, provisions, and baggage, for service on the Gulf coast all of which are to be finest rate vessels of their respective classes and to be well found in every respect, particularly in sails, rigging, cables, anchors, boats, and provided with good sound water casks with a sufficient supply of water for the number of men which each will accommodate for thirty or forty days." While the Department only managed to get a little over half of Scott's desired number of troops to Veracruz for the landing, the fact that they achieved that much is something to be praised.⁹⁴

One of the defining criteria for choosing steamers was the size and draft of the ship, so it could travel up river on the Rio Grande and the Rio Pánuco at Tampico. The considerations focused around a balance between the draft of the vessels and the size of their cargo holds. These ships had to be able to carry their shipment and fuel enough to make the trip from New Orleans to Brazos Santiago. The trip took about eight to ten days, weather permitting, and once the steamer arrived at Brazos Santiago it needed to be able to navigate the Rio Grande. Given the depth of that river and its curving nature, the steamboats could only draw about six to six

⁹⁴ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 368, 373.

and a half feet of water and could not be very long or they would not be able to navigate the bends in the river. Many of the Gulf of Mexico ports shared similar hazards due to sand bars at the entrance to the various bay and harbors. The Rio Pánuco at Tampico could only handle ships that drew up to eight feet of water. This became especially important during the final mobilization of Scott's army. Many of the regular troops from Taylor's army were moved by steamer along the Rio Grande from Camargo to Brazos Santiago for departure. Without shallow water steamers, it would have taken several days longer to march to Brazos Santiago⁹⁵

The Army found a way to modify steamships using India rubber camels to lighten the ship allowing for it to navigate shallow waters. A camel acted as an inflatable bladder that was attached to the bottom of a vessel and inflated using steam power. From Stanton's letter to Jesup, these camels seemed to be fickle devices which, if not attached properly, would not work. It required a calm sea to attach them with any hope of them working. The camels were six feet in diameter and designed to float a vessel to only draw six feet of water and be able to navigate the bars around Brazos Santiago. Stanton remained skeptical about the practical use of these camels; nonetheless, six such units arrived at Brazos Santiago to be fitted to steamers. A smaller camel also existed that could be fitted to wagons to help them ford rivers. These camels made it easier to use steamers for troop movements in the rivers near Brazos Santiago and Tampico during the gathering of Scott's invasion force.⁹⁶

Steamships presented a new tool for the United States Army and Navy. Steam power allowed ships to travel without being completely reliant upon the whims of the wind to carry

⁹⁵ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 131, 248, 263, 320.

⁹⁶ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 264, 265, 417, 438.

them to their destination. Steamships fulfilled the same basic roles as sailing ships in troop and supply transportation, but many steamships had the added benefit of being able to enter shallow rivers. This allowed the movement of men and supplies to inland locations such as Camargo, Mexico – opposite of what is now Rio Grande City – along the Rio Grande. Armies gained new flexibility and mobility thanks to steamships. Furthermore, many of the men of Scott’s army, as well as Scott himself, made their way to Mexico for their landing aboard steamers.⁹⁷

The power of steamships came from their steam engines, which drove the ships along in defiance of the wind. To feed these voracious engines, steamships had to ensure that they carried enough coal for their voyage or that there were recoaling stations along their way where they could resupply. Ensuring the supply of coal for the Army transports and Navy ships became one of the major tasks for the Quartermaster Department. The department bought two types of coal –general anthracite and Cumberland – to fuel steamships and supply depots. Anthracite coal is the type of coal preferred for burning in steam engines, given its high carbon count and few impurities. Cumberland coal was a type of anthracite coal that came from the Cumberland Coal Mine in Pennsylvania, and from the quartermaster’s log it appeared to be the preferred type of coal purchased in the northern United States.⁹⁸

On 25 September 1846, General Jesup directed one of his quartermasters in Louisville, Kentucky, to contract with the Louisville Coal Company for fifty thousand barrels of coal for steam boats to be delivered to New Orleans. In Philadelphia the quartermaster ordered two

⁹⁷ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, 86.

⁹⁸ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 263, 294.

thousand tons of “the best anthracite” at \$4.25 a ton and freight at \$4.50 and \$6.50 to Key West and Brazos Santiago, respectively. In Baltimore, the Quartermaster Department sought to purchase two thousand tons of Cumberland coal at \$5.00 or less per ton to be furnished to Key West and/or Brazos Santiago as needed. If coal could not be obtained in Baltimore, the quartermaster was directed to order anthracite from Philadelphia. Obtaining coal could sometimes be a problem because the depth of rivers varied over the course of the year, at times limiting navigation. Burgeoning railroads also provided competition for some of the coal and drove the price up. Ships carrying coal traveled to many of the major supply depots to deposit coal reserves for the transports traveling along the Gulf to Mexico. Some of the key recoaling stations included Key West, New Orleans, Galveston, Brazos Santiago, and Tampico. Without coaling stations at the supply depots, this new technology would have ground to a halt. Just as the Army had to include fodder for the draught animals, the Navy had to include coal to feed the always hungry steam engines. Despite the additional burden of supply coal to the depots, the advantage gained in both speed and reliability of movement was essential to Scott’s movement. One of Scott’s biggest fears was invading during *vomito* season. Steam power kept his ships moving forward regardless of the fickle weather in the Gulf of Mexico. The invasion faced several delays, but thanks to steam engines the Army was able to minimize the effect of weather upon Scott's landing at Veracruz.⁹⁹

While money seemed to freely flow while purchasing ships, a limit did exist to the United States’ financial capacity. Equipping vessels, buying coal, and chartering ships drained the Quartermaster Department’s coffers. An example of this was that the Department was able

⁹⁹ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 152, 153, 177, 263, 283, 294, 313, 320, 339, 402, 403, 410.

to purchase ships, but not always arm them to specifications. Jesup once admitted that “12 pound cannon cannot be supplied. The quartermaster directed that the vessels sail immediately without the guns to which you refer – the field battery with which each vessel is furnished will be sufficient for their protection.” Whether this represented the lack of concern over a Mexican naval threat is up for debate, but it does clearly show that the United States found itself hard pressed to properly equip every ship it built, bought, or hired. Thankfully, partially equipped ships did not have to face staunch naval resistance during the landing at Collado Beach.¹⁰⁰

Weather proved to be as relentless an obstacle for quartermasters as lack of transports or supplying coal. Many of the transports still relied upon the wind, thus lulls caused delays, while steam transports were able to continue ahead. Oswandel noted they experienced one such lull on his way to Brazos Santiago, only to be shaken by “a regular gale” of a storm. The storm that Oswandel experienced threatened to sink both his ship and the nearby *Sharon*. Both Pvt. Richard Coulter and Sgt. Thomas Barclay wrote about poor winds on the way to Lobos, and they noted that many of the men suffered seasickness. Some of the most hazardous weather anomalies were the northers that constantly threatened ships along the Gulf Coast. These rapidly occurring storms hindered the movement of transports, whether powered by steam or sail, and they also threatened to devastate the landing force if a storm occurred during Scott’s operation. Scott’s Inspector General Ethan A. Hitchcock wrote that “a heavy ‘norther’ raged for some days and the vessels off the mouth of the Rio Grande found it impossible to put to sea.”

¹⁰⁰ Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 152.

Scott even remarked in one of his letters to Secretary of War Marcy that his steamship was delayed due to opposing headwinds.¹⁰¹

The Quartermaster Department already faced a daunting task supplying Taylor's army in northern Mexico and other expeditions in the west. Scott wrote two key memorandums for President Polk that established what the invasion would need to succeed. With the approval of Polk, the preparations for the landing began in earnest, adding a far greater burden on the Department.

On 27 October 1846, General Scott submitted a memorandum proposing an invasion of Mexico from the coast, which was entitled, "Vera Cruz and its Castle." It discussed what would be necessary to capture the port city of Veracruz and its protecting castle, San Juan de Ulloa. President Polk, Secretary Marcy, and the rest of the cabinet had been debating the best course to bring the war to a close. They knew that the Army must take possession of Mexico City to force the Mexican government to admit defeat and come to the negotiating table. In the early months of the war it became clear that it would not be logistically feasible for Taylor to march his army to Mexico City from the north. There simply were not enough roads; the terrain was extremely hostile, being mostly desert; and the distance to maintain the supply the Army would have been too great. Former Consul to Mexico Francis M. Dimond briefed the cabinet on Veracruz and his experiences there during his time in Mexico. His discussion of Veracruz supported Scott's assessment of the city. Therefore, with Scott's proposal for an invasion at

¹⁰¹ Richard Coulter and Thomas Barclay, *Volunteers: The Mexican War Journals of Private Richard Coulter and Sergeant Thomas Barclay, Company E, Second Pennsylvania Infantry*, ed. Allan Peskin (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991), 26; Hitchcock, *Fifty Years*, 223; Oswandel, *Notes*, 28, 29; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 26; K. Jack Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines: U.S. Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-48* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1969), 71; K. Jack Bauer, "The Veracruz Expedition of 1847," *Military Affairs* 20 (Fall 1956): 164, 165.

Veracruz, Marcy and others who already had their eyes on a possible expedition to capture Veracruz supported this campaign as the best option to force Mexican capitulation and bring a close to the war.¹⁰²

Scott's memorandum argued cogently that the capture of the port without an advance inland would be meaningless. With the expectation that the capture would be “a step towards compelling Mexico to sue for peace,” Scott outlined what forces he believed would be needed to capture Veracruz:

To place the capture of both places beyond the probability of a failure, I suppose the following means to be indispensable:

The present blockading squadron re-inforced by many bomb-ketches – probably yet to be constructed.

An army of at least ten thousand men, consisting of cavalry (say) 2,000, artillery (say) 600, and the remainder infantry.

The whole of the artillery, and at least half of the cavalry and infantry, ought to be regular troops.

Scows and other boats, specially constructed for the purpose, sufficient to land, at once, at least 2,500 men, with two light batteries would be needed. Cavalry and artillery horse would follow, after a foothold had been gained.

The number of cavalry I have named might be indispensable to aid in the repelling any Mexican army in the field, seeking to save the city from an assault or siege.

For this purpose, and to overcome opposition at the point of descent, I have assumed ten thousand men to be the minimum force of the invaders.

The point of descent might be anywhere beyond the reach of the enemy's guns at the city and the castle, including Alvarado; but, preferably, as near the city as practicable.

This outlined the preliminary expectations Scott had as to what force was needed to land in the face of what he expected would be staunch opposition. Not only did Scott believe the landing would meet Mexican resistance on the beach, he “did not doubt meeting at [the] landing the most formidable struggle of the war. No precaution was therefore neglected.” Ten thousand

¹⁰² Bauer, *Mexican War*, 233. The full text of this memorandum, and its supplement, can be found in Appendix A.

men, custom built landing craft, and support from the Navy were all essential components to success in Scott's mind. Time would deprive him of much that he wanted, but he would receive enough of each of these three components to execute a glorious and successful landing, which fortunately proved to be unopposed.¹⁰³

Sixteen days after Scott's proposal went before the president and his cabinet, he submitted a supplement expanding some of his requests for men and supplies. Scott also included a detailing of the defensive lines Taylor and Wool would hold in northern Mexico after the transfer of some of their forces to Scott's expedition. Scott wrote that, "The *minimum* force (10,000 men) then proposed, I still deem indispensable." He believed he could capture Veracruz with this amount, but cautioned the Polk and Marcy that it would be ill-advised to proceed without twelve to fifteen thousand men. To ensure the success of the operation, Scott proposed reducing the force in northern Mexico to about eleven thousand after reinforcements arrived in order to start the expedition sooner. By deducting these troops from Taylor's defensive line in the north, Scott believed he could have four thousand regulars and five thousand volunteers, with an additional twelve hundred men drawn from the naval blockading force to supplement the invasion. With this more in depth proposal of not only what he felt was necessary, but also where to draw these men from, Scott received the approval to receive Brevet Brigadier General William J. Worth's brigade from Taylor's army.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 63-64, 66; *Mexican War*, 1,268-1,270.

¹⁰⁴ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 63-64, 66; *Mexican War*, 1,270-1,274.

On 16 November 1846, after four more days of prodigious activity, Scott produced yet another memorandum summarizing the needed men, supplies, and ships for the operation, which he gave to Secretary of War Marcy:

For transporting 14,000 men to Veracruz, with horses, artillery, stores, and boats, 50 ships, of from 500 to 750 tons each.

The Boats of the blockading squadron are not, I learn, capable of putting ashore, at once, more than (say) 500 men – only one have the number to be drawn from that fleet.

We should therefore require (say) 140 flat boats, to put ashore at once, say 5,000 men, with 8 pieces of artillery. Horses might follow in the second or their trip of boats.

The form of the boats, & c., shall be determined by to-morrow, when orders may be given for their purchase, (probably) construction. Colonel Stanton, chief quartermaster, is expected back to-night.

The ships need not (to avoid demurrage) be chartered until the troops are known to be nearly in position to embark.

P.S. – Orders should be given at once, to have in readiness to be shipped, ordnance and ordnance stores for the water expedition.

The Quartermaster Department already found itself working at full capacity to supply the Army and Navy with the necessary supplies and ships. Scott's memorandum placed a whole new burden on the department. While maintaining its already high level of production and procurement, the department now had to supply, move, and support an additional army in the field. Beyond the daunting new task of Scott's expedition was the short time frame the general placed on the production of material and the movement of troops. It was at this point in the war that the Quartermaster Department truly came into its own and stepped up to meet the challenges placed before it.¹⁰⁵

Commodore Conner also reported to Marcy that there were two possible landing points near Veracruz, but he did not comment on what size of force or how many supplies would be

¹⁰⁵ *Mexican War*, 1,274.

needed to take the beach. All that he reported was that there was a lack of beef in the area. Conner's Home Squadron also received support once the decision for the invasion was made. Secretary of the Navy John Young Mason diverted the *Ohio*, which was a ship-of-the-line, and three sloops-of-war to the Gulf. Four coastal brigs or schooners were purchased and outfitted as bomb vessels for use in the bombardment of the San Juan de Ulua fortress. Bureaucratic inefficiencies seemed to be the chief reason that these ships did not arrive until after the landing. Polk even noted lack of coordination between services, such as Secretary Mason's ignorance of the date of the projected landing.¹⁰⁶

This was the first time in United States history that a military commander requested custom-built boats for an invasion. Furthermore, Scott also requested enough boats to put ashore five thousand men, including light batteries, in the first wave of landings. By the time of the invasion, he only had received half the surfboats he had requested, but Scott still managed to put ashore 2,595 men under Worth, which was the number that his first memorandum called for in the first wave of the invasion. Once receiving the orders from Marcy to construct the surfboats, Assistant Quartermaster General Henry Stanton wrote, "The Department has been recently required to provide, at an embarrassingly short notice, one hundred and fifty boats or barges, of the description indicated in the drawings and specifications handed you yesterday, by the 1st of January!!" The success of delivering these boats proved to be one of Stanton's greatest achievements during the war.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 232, 236.

¹⁰⁷ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 63-64, 66; *Mexican War*, 1,268-1,274.

The boats that Scott requisitioned for the landing proved to be one of the most interesting aspects of the whole invasion. Lieutenant George M. Totten, a Navy officer, designed the surfboats, which were built near Philadelphia. His designs admirably met the needs laid out by Scott. The boats were double-ended, broad-beamed, and flat-bottomed, with frames built of well-seasoned white oak. They were built in three sizes in order to nest together for transport: forty feet which could hold forty-five plus men, thirty-seven feet which could hold forty plus men, and thirty-five feet which could hold a maximum of forty men. All of these were quite heavy:

First size.....Hull, 6280 lbs + Oars 242 lbs = 6522 lbs

Second size.....Hull, 5127 lbs + Oars 216 lbs = 5343 lbs

Third size.....Hull, 3942 lbs + Oars 190 lbs = 4132 lbs

Each surfboat carried a crew of six oarsmen, one coxswain, and a skipper. Each boat ranged in cost between \$795 and \$950 per boat. This was very expensive, but these vessels, given their nesting feature, could fit into ships with oversized hatches and be stored in their holds.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ John Lenthall Papers, Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 66; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 285; Bauer, "The Veracruz Expedition," 164; *The Mexican War*, 1274. For more information on the surfboats see William G. Temple, "Memoir of the Landing of the United States Troops at Veracruz in 1847," in David Conner, *The Home Squadron Under Commodore Conner*, with Philip S. P. Conner (Philadelphia: P.S.P. Conner, 1896), 60-62. William G. Temple, a naval midshipman at the time, described the production of the boats in great detail: "The boats are to be built with both ends alike, so as to steer with an oar at each end, and to stow in nests of three each. They are to be built of best well-seasoned materials, in the most substantial manner, and iron-fastened. The keel, stems, deadwoods, aprons, floors, futtocks, and cap on gunwale to be of white oak. The drawings of the boats will be furnished by the department, and the shape be such that the futtocks may be steamed and bent; but the rising-timbers and hooks must be worked from knees, and not grain-cut. The breast-hooks will be required at each end; in addition to which an iron strap must be brought round the stems on the wale about two and a half feet on each side. The bottom may be of white pine or cypress; the plank to be in width from five to six inches amidships, and to be fastened with wrought nails and two rivets in each timber. The upper strake and wale to be of white oak. The boats are to be caulked with cotton, and the seams filled with thick white lead. They are to have two coats of paint, inside and out; to be properly fitted with warping-chocks in the stem-heads, with white pine platforms and benches (head and stern-sheets), and with two ring-bolts in each end, and to be provided with white ash oars and boat-hooks, and with iron tholepins. The thwarts must be of yellow pine, so fitted as to unship, and secured with proper pins and plates according to directions." More can be found in his memoir.

Amazingly, the boats were actually completed in the thirty days as Scott had requested, though according to Assistant Quartermaster General Stanton it was

One of the most difficult orders which has ever been imposed on me, the construction, equipment, and shipment for the Brazos of the 140 barges about 22 tons burthen, required by Major General Scott for the coast wise expedition within the brief period of 30 days. They are all off for their destination, the difficulty of transporting them to their destination has been little inferior to that of their rapid and hurried construction. As few ships could be found capable of carrying them on deck, I have been under the necessity of purchasing and opening the decks of several vessels for their reception in their holds and between decks. These vessels have been purchased at a low rate, and will, it is believed, make good store ships.

As Stanton wrote, timely delivery of the surfboats proved to be almost as difficult as their rapid production. The boats were to cost about \$400 per boat by Scott's estimate, but the contract price ended up being between \$795 and \$950 per boat. The 141 boats, in 47 stacks, were shipped partly in Army vessels, whose decks had been cut to admit them into the hold, and partly on the decks of vessels chartered by the Quartermaster Department. Only sixty-five of the one-hundred-forty finished boats made it to Scott by the time of the landing. Though this was only half of the requested amount, it proved to be enough to accommodate the original twenty-five-hundred-man first wave Scott called for in his first memorandum.¹⁰⁹

Transportation problems were not limited to the movement of the surfboats. The War Department had planned to secure 41 transports, but due to a series of misunderstandings and other unforeseen developments, this did not happen. Mistakenly canceled vessels, delays due to lack of materials and understaffed crews, and bad weather caused many of the problems. Of the vessels gathered for the effort of moving supplies and men for Scott's expedition, fifty-

¹⁰⁹ Ivor Debenham Spencer, *The Victor and the Spoils: A Life of William L. Marcy* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1959), 147, 164; Temple, "Memoir of the Landing," 60-62; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 66; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 285; Bauer, "The Veracruz Expedition," 164; *Mexican War*, 1, 274.

three came from Atlantic ports and one hundred sixty-three from Gulf ports. Bad weather at New Orleans further delayed the loading of cargo on chartered ships and delayed their voyage to Brazos Santiago. Stanton struggled to meet the requested 140 boats weighing about twenty tons for General Scott's "Grand Expedition" and the several transports for the heavy supplies of ordnance and engineer stores ordered. By the time the invasion force reached Brazos Santiago, the Quartermaster Department possessed their maximum number of transports it had during the war. Over-purchasing to meet the demand for transports meant that an excess of ships had been bought and modified to carry troops and men, so the extras were sold at New Orleans.¹¹⁰

As late as 15 December 1846, Scott still called for forty-one more transports to bring supplies, ordnance, volunteers, and surf boats. Bad weather delayed most of these vessels by twenty-five to thirty days, and through a misunderstanding ten were countermanded by the War Department. Meanwhile, Worth's men needed transport to Isla de Lobos as promptly as possible. In response, Scott told Captain A. R. Hetzel of the Brazos Santiago Quartermaster Depot to quickly charter five vessels capable of holding eight hundred men and supplies each.¹¹¹

An additional concern Scott mentioned was that his landing must be executed before the arrival of spring because of the onset of *el vomito negro* (yellow fever) season. Scott desired to have Veracruz under American control so he could march inland away from the coast before the yellow fever could spread. Scott noted that he was "aware of the usual return of the black vomit, early in April, at the proposed point of our joint operations, and hence shall not be able

¹¹⁰ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 239; Letters sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General 1818-1870, Roll 21: 62, 331, 385, 404.

¹¹¹ *Mexican War*, 882-884; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 70.

to wait for the largest number of land troops I deem desirable.” Lieutenant Semmes wrote that the disease was more prominent at the beginning and end of the rainy season, which acted as a natural barrier defending the coast of Mexico. Several diaries and memoirs from the Mexican War drew similarities between Napoleon’s army facing the Russian winter and Scott’s troops facing the Mexican *vomito negro*. It seems that most people of the time, whether civilian or military, had a healthy respect for the disease that plagued the coast of Mexico during the rainy season. Semmes also noted that “when the norther has ceased to scour the coast in pursuit of victims, the vomito begins its more silent, but not less deadly of approaches.” The sickness usually proved fatal in two to five days, but “it sometimes prostrates, so powerfully, the nervous system, as to kill the patient in five or six hours.” While this latter claim may be exaggerated, it illustrated the extreme potency of the *vomito negro* and Scott’s justified fear of it. Armies are known to rapidly spread disease once an outbreak occurs; so many men in close confines could only lead to disaster if a disease broke out. Scott knew the risk and chose to take his chances facing an enemy he could fight rather than suffering one he could only endure.¹¹²

On 23 November 1846 Scott received his orders from Marcy, “Sir: The President of the United States desires you to repair to the lower Rio Grande, in order to take upon yourself the general direction of the war against Mexico from this side of the Continent, and more particularly to organize and conduct an expedition (with the co-operation of the navy) against the harbor of Vera Cruz.” With this order Scott began his journey from Washington, DC, to

¹¹² *Mexican War*, 843, 1,268-1,276; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 112, 116; Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 147.

Veracruz, where he and Commodore Conner would become the first soldiers to successfully invade Mexico since Hernan Cortez.¹¹³

¹¹³ *Mexican War*, 1,275-1,276.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN D-DAY

The castle of San Juan de Ulloa lay about half a mile off the coast of the city of Veracruz, built on a small island of soft coral stone. The castle walls looked out over the bay in front of the port city, casting their protective gaze along the waves. These walls of coral limestone could absorb the solid shot of cannon very well, but with the impact of a shell, the rock would rend and shatter, adding stone shrapnel to the explosion. The castle island was surrounded by reefs on the north-eastern, eastern, and southern sides. It was said to have some one hundred guns of various caliber, principally eighteen pounders, and a few mortars. Its water battery was considered very powerful. No wise navy officer would approach the castle within range of its guns.¹¹⁴

Veracruz contained about ten thousand inhabitants at the time of the invasion by General Winfield Scott. It was a walled city like many of the old Spanish towns, and it defended itself with numerous fortifications by both land and sea. The strong fort on the northern point of the city, and another on the southern point, had their guns pointed principally seaward. During the winter of 1846-1847, however, the fortifications of Veracruz had fallen into poor condition. Strategic points in the city were in need of repair, many of its large guns were unserviceable, and powder and provisions were very scarce. The official return of ordnance supplies dated 10 November 1846 showed only 65 quintales¹¹⁵ and 80 pounds of powder in

¹¹⁴ K. Jack Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines: U.S. Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-48* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1969), 67; William Harwar Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 79-80.

¹¹⁵ A quintale was approximately 100 pounds.

Veracruz and 349 quintales and 852 pounds of powder in the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa. The same report showed that 54 guns in the city and 12 in the castle were unmounted.¹¹⁶

On 23 November 1846, Scott received his orders from President James K. Polk via Secretary of War William L. Marcy. These instructions read, in part:

The President several days since communicated in person to you his orders to repair to Mexico, to take command of the forces there assembled, and particularly to organize and set foot an expedition to operate on the gulf coast, if on arriving at the theater of action you shall deem it to be practicable. It is not proposed to control your operations by definite and positive instructions, but you are left to prosecute them as your judgment, under a full view of all the circumstances, shall dictate. The work is before you and the means provided, or to be provided, for accomplishing it, are committed to you, in the full confidence that you will use them to the best advantage.

Scott left Washington that same day and traveled to New York, where a week later he boarded the steamer *Union* for New Orleans. During his four days in New Orleans, General Scott decided on Isla de Lobos as the final gathering point for his expedition forces before moving adjacent to Veracruz.¹¹⁷

Scott reached Brazos Santiago from New Orleans on 27 December 1846. Within a week, on 3 January, he called for the detachment of a portion of General Zachary Taylor's troops – one thousand cavalry, four thousand regulars, and four thousand volunteers, less those already headed to Tampico for departure from that port. General Scott had hoped to meet with Taylor to discuss the movement of troops, but Taylor failed to show when Scott had gone to Camargo to meet with him. On 4 January, Secretary Marcy noted that their intelligence had reported no

¹¹⁶ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 67; Parker, *Recollections*, 79-80.

¹¹⁷ K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846-1848* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 237; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 68; United States Congress, *The Mexican War*, House Ex. Docs. No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session [Serial Set 520], 836-837.

large covering army being assembled at Veracruz, and he expressed hope that Scott would be able to take the city and castle before such a force could be assembled.¹¹⁸

At Brazos Santiago, every brigade commander was exceedingly anxious to avail himself to Scott, to ensure that his brigade would participate in the first operation, “but General Scott, with his usual military diplomacy, met all such application with the stereotyped assurance that there would be more work to do than he had troops to accomplish, and that before they reached the City of Mexico they would have all the fighting they wanted.” Brevet Brigadier General William J. Worth arrived with his division of regulars at the mouth of the Rio Grande on 22 January. Worth and his men received the honor of being the vanguard of the invasion.¹¹⁹

General Scott had hoped to sail from Brazos Santiago by the beginning of February to avoid *vomit negro* season, but delays pushed the departure of the expedition force back until mid-February. Despite delayed ships, Scott ordered Captain A. R. Hetzel – a Brazos Santiago quartermaster – to charter enough vessels locally to get the troops at Brazos Santiago afloat by 10 February, and those at Tampico afloat five days later. On 15 February 1847 Scott set sail from Brazos Santiago aboard the steamer *Massachusetts*, destined for Tampico. Upon his departure, he left orders that after replenishing their water tanks, all ships with troops or supplies destined for the landing were to rendezvous behind Isla de Lobos.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 238; *Mexican War*, 391.

¹¹⁹ George T. M. Davis, *Autobiography of the Late Col. Geo. T.M. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-camp Scott's Army of Invasion (Mexico), from Posthumous Papers*. (New York: Jenkins and McCowan, 1891), 121; *Mexican War*, 856.

¹²⁰ *Mexican War*, 845, 847, 851; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 71, 72.

General Scott arrived at Tampico on 16 February,¹²¹ leaving two days later for Isla de Lobos. Colonel George T.M. Davis – aide-de-camp to General Scott – noted that “the arrival on the 16th of General Scott and his staff was strong as proof of Holy Writ that the hour of action was at hand, and the enthusiasm and military demonstration with which his advent was hailed at Tampico must have convinced him that he enjoyed the unlimited confidence of the citizen-soldier composing the brigades of Generals Quitman, Shields, and Pillow.” Scott stopped in Tampico to superintend embarkations at Tampico of some of the remaining troops there, namely regulars. Once his orders were issued he continued to Isla de Lobos.¹²²

Isla de Lobos is located about sixty miles south of Tampico, roughly eight miles east of Laguna de Tamiahua.¹²³ General Scott arrived on 21 February 1847, bringing troops with him to join the many men already on the island. When he arrived, the First and Second Pennsylvania, the South Carolina regiment, and portions of the Louisiana, Second Mississippi, and Second New York regiments were already there, but more men and most of his train were missing. The day after his arrival, Scott informed Commodore David Conner that he was sending ahead to Anton Lizardo two vessels with ordnance supplies, two with surfboats, and some transports. Scott requested that he have the troops landed and encamped ashore. On 26 February Scott

¹²¹ There is some confusion over when General Scott actually arrived in Tampico. Some sources say 16 February 1847, others record it as 18 February. Given the distance of just over three hundred miles, General Scott aboard the steamer *Massachusetts* should have been able to make the trip within a day. Given this information, 16 February will be the date used here.

¹²² Davis, *Autobiography*, 121; *Mexican War*, 855; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 72.

¹²³ During the war, Isla de Lobos was chosen for its good harbor. In more recent years the island has become a favored spot for tourism, especially for divers and fishermen due to the wildlife that live amongst the surrounding reefs.

informed Conner that once the regulars, one-third of his siege train, and some more surfboats arrived, he would leave for Anton Lizardo and attempt a landing.¹²⁴

At Isla de Lobos, Scott organized his troops into three divisions: one division of regulars under General Worth, the second division of regulars under Brigadier-General David E. “Bengal Tiger” Twiggs, and a division of volunteers under Major-General Robert Patterson. The second division of regulars would be held in reserve while the first division of regulars landed, to be followed by the volunteers. Worth’s men would be in the transports *Raritan* and *Princeton* and the Army transport *Edith*; Patterson’s men would travel in the *Potomac* and the Army transports *Virginia* and *Alabama*; and the reserves under Twiggs would be in the *Albany*, *St. Mary’s*, *Porpoise*, and *Petrita*, as well as the Army transports *Massachusetts* and *Eudora*.¹²⁵

General Orders No. 28 – regarding the signal system to be used to communicate between ships – and No. 34 were issued by Scott from the *Massachusetts* off Lobos. General Order No. 34 outlined the entire battle plan for the landing. Once “the army afloat” reached Anton Lizardo, the approach would begin as soon as possible. It stated that “the capacity of the surf boats that may arrive in time, will govern the order of landing. It is hoped that enough will be up to take ashore, at once, from four to five thousand men. The surfboats would each be commanded by an officer, and the surfboats would “land abreast, and in the *order of battle*. The utmost efforts will be made to effect the landing in that order.” The surfboats were to accommodate a platoon – half a company – with its officers, but also a competent number of

¹²⁴ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 75.

¹²⁵ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 78; William G. Temple, “Memoir of the Landing of the United States Troops at Veracruz in 1847, in David Conner, *The Home Squadron Under Commodore Conner*, with Philip S. P. Conner (Philadelphia: P.S.P. Conner, 1896), 67; Webb B. Garrison, *Curiosities of the Civil War: Strange Stories, Infamous Characters, and Bizarre Events* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 428.

sailor oarsmen. The soldiers aboard the surfboats were instructed to supply men to make up for any deficiency of oarsmen. Scott emphasized that “the troops after sounding, will leap out, without noise or [-----] and form rapidly in the exact order of battle.” Then, “as fast as the troops land, the emptied boats will rapidly pull away for the transports with boat signals flying” to receive the second wave of troops to land. Once the landing had been effected, the surfboats would come under the command of the Chief Quartermaster for the transfer of supplies and field batteries. These orders were issued to officers of every ship in the fleet in preparation for setting out to Point Anton Lizardo – about fifteen miles south of Veracruz – which would be the launching point of the assault. Scott’s orders to have his men land in lines of battle added a level of difficulty to the operation. At that time, it was difficult enough to land between 2,500 and 5,000 men, as Scott desired, using row boats under the threat of fire from the shore. To add the requirement that companies stay together while navigating rolling surf several hundred yards offshore was quite an expectation for the soldiers. This became far more feasible with the manning of surfboats by naval personnel, given their knowledge of the boat handling.¹²⁶

On 2 March, Patterson and his volunteers arrived from Tampico. After breakfast on the same day, the *Massachusetts* signaled each transport to send an officer aboard. There they received their sailing orders for Anton Lizardo. The *Massachusetts* got underway during the

¹²⁶ United States Department of War, General and Special Orders Issued by General Winfield Scott, Headquarters of the Army, War with Mexico, 1847-1848 (Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, National Archives, Washington, DC), Roll 1: 28, 34.

afternoon, with Scott's red and blue pennant on the main truck, and the transports fell in behind her. As the fleet sailed, the soldiers sang with gusto.¹²⁷

Commodore Conner, in anticipation of the landing, positioned the *Potomac* under Captain John H. Aulick near Isla Verde to help direct the incoming transports between Isla Salmedina and Anton Lizardo. Isla Verde is due east of Veracruz about three miles and Isla Salmedina lay just off of Anton Lizardo. The transports and naval vessels took up positions in the anchorage some ten to twelve between Isla Salmedina and Point Anton Lizardo east of Veracruz. Later the *Albany* and the *John Adams* arrived to assist in that service. Aulick was instructed to put an officer aboard each transport to act as a pilot and, once all officers competent to do that had been assigned, to give the masters of the transport the information needed to pass safely inside Blanquilla Reef to Anton Lizardo. At least one transport ran aground and had to be pulled free by the *Princeton*. As the transports moved to Anton Lizardo, midshipman William H. Parker recalled that "the first thing that excited our astonishment was the great amount of sail carried by the transports, and the next the skilful manner in which their captains threaded their way between the reef!"¹²⁸

The vanguard of transports reached Anton Lizardo on 4 March 1847. At times the whole eastern horizon appeared to be a solid wall of white canvas. On 5 March Scott arrived aboard his flagship the steamer *Massachusetts*. Lieutenant Raphael Semmes records that "Our hitherto quiet headquarters, in which we had stagnated all winter, became daily more animated, until Anton Lizardo was crowded with a magnificent fleet of steamers and sail-vessels; all bearing at

¹²⁷ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 76.

¹²⁸ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 76; Parker, *Recollections*, 82; Temple, "Memoir," 63-64.

their gaff-ends the proud flag of the republic.” Once at Anton Lizardo, Scott wanted a speedy disembarkation, to make the landing before a norther should come on, which would delay his invasion two to three days.¹²⁹

Private J. Jacob Oswandel arrived at Isla de Lobos on 16 March and recorded that by that date many of the men remaining there were getting restless for action against Veracruz. When his ship received the signal to begin, the sails unfurled, and men began to sing, “*With a Stout Vessel and a Bully Crew, we’ll carry the Ship Statesman through the storm, hi oh, hi oh. We are now Bound for the Shores of Mexico, and there Uncle Sam’s Soldiers we will Land, hi oh, &c.*” Oswandel arrived at Anton Lizardo on 6 March. He noted that his ship was anchored among more than 200 other vessels and that Scott and Conner could be seen aboard the steamboat *Spitfire* reconnoitering along the shore to find a suitable landing spot. Oswandel mistook the *Petrita* for the *Spitfire* in his journal.¹³⁰

While at Anton Lizardo, Scott issued General Order No. 45, which assigned the three waves of the landing to their respective transports and specified which units would be in each line. The first line was under the command of General Worth. The second line was under the command of General Patterson and the reserves placed under General Twiggs were made up of the Second Brigade of Regulars. Ensuring that the line of battle was formed by several different units, as in Worth’s wave, made this a difficult prospect.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 240; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 76-77; Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the Mexican War* (Cincinnati: W.H. Moore &, 1851), 125; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19.

¹³⁰ J. Jacob Oswandel, *Notes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848*, ed. Timothy D. Johnson and Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 32-34.

¹³¹ General and Special Orders Issued by General Winfield Scott, Headquarters of the Army, Roll 1: 45.

After arriving at Anton Lizardo, Scott joined Conner on the steamer *Petrita* to reconnoiter the beaches between Anton Lizardo and Veracruz for a suitable location to land the surfboats. Accompanying them were Worth, Twiggs, Patterson, and Pillow, as well as Scott's staff, including Captains Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston, and Lieutenants Pierre G.T. Beauregard and George G. Meade. The first option was to land across from the anchorage at Point Anton Lizardo, but the commanders rejected it because the troops would have to march from this landing point across loose sand and several considerable streams. Instead, a sandy stretch of shore three miles south of Veracruz, beyond the range of its guns, was chosen. They chose "a gently curving strip of sand paralleled by a line of sand hills about 150 yards inland, Collado Beach lies behind Sacrificios Island, two and one-half miles southeast of Veracruz." ¹³²

Collado Beach had its own dangers. The confined space of the anchorage at Isla Sacrificios made it a hazard for the transports. According to Semmes, "the anchorage of Sacrificios being small, it would have been impossible to crowd all the transports that were loaded with troops, into it, at one time; and therefore, it was resolved, on consultation between the two chiefs, to throw most of the troops on board the larger ships of war, and make them the transports, *pro hac vice*." They chose this beach for its wide landing area, and because it was out of range of the castle guns and had no visible defenses. ¹³³

Once the inspection had been completed, the *Petrita* steamed north along Blanquilla Reef toward Veracruz. The castle of San Juan de Ulloa opened its big guns upon her when she was within half a mile. One shell went over her, one went short, and one burst high. The crew

¹³² Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 77; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19; Temple, "Memoir," 64.

¹³³ Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 125; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 77; Temple, "Memoir," 64; Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241.

turned the vessel and quickly retreated out of range. In all, ten shots were fired at the *Petrita*. Since the commanders for both the Army and the Navy and much of their staffs were on board, a direct hit from one of the castle guns could have drastically altered the invasion. Thankfully for Scott, the gods of war favored the Americans in this event.¹³⁴

Once Scott chose his beach, all of the landing machinations began to start moving. The Navy's role was twofold during the landing –first, to provide protective fire for the landing force, and second, to transport the troops to Isla Sacrificios, where the landing operation would begin. The Navy's mosquito fleet would form a line close to the shore and be ready to shell any Mexican troops who might appear.¹³⁵ During the landing, the mosquito fleet was under the command of Captain Josiah Tattnall Jr. The fleet was positioned between the castle and the landing beach, but it did not engage the castle as Collado Beach was beyond the range of its guns. Reinforcements were sent to the Home Squadron to strengthen it for the landing: the ship-of-the-line *Ohio*; sloops *Germantown*, *Saratoga*, and *Decatur*; bark *Electra* to serve as a supply vessel; and brigs *Etna*, *Stromboli*, *Hecla*, and *Vesuvius* – all coastal freighters converted to bomb brigs. Each of the latter was armed with one ten-inch columbiad¹³⁶ on a pivot mounted amidships. Sadly, these vessels did not arrive in time for the invasion.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 77; Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary* (New York: Putnam, 1909), 237; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 125; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19; Temple, "Memoir," 64.

¹³⁵ The mosquito fleet was a detachment of Commodore Conner's Home Squadron made up of small steamers and gunboats designed to protect the landing force. Its commander, Josiah Tattnall Jr. would later serve in the Confederate Navy. For more information, see Edward H. Moseley and Paul C. Clark, *The A to Z of the United States-Mexican War* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 181.

¹³⁶ The columbiad was a large caliber, smoothbore, muzzle loading cannon able to fire heavy projectiles at both high and low trajectories.

¹³⁷ Parker, *Recollections*, 84; Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241.

The plan was simple and effective. On 7 March 1847, General Scott issued General Order No. 47 directing the first line of the invasion to push inland and begin an investment of the city should the landing succeed. The date for the landing was set for 8 March, but the threat of a norther forced General Scott and Commodore Conner to postpone it. No storm came, and so the first movements for the assault began at daybreak the following day.¹³⁸

At daylight on 9 March 1847, the troops began to assemble. General Scott could scarcely have chosen a better day. Bauer later poetically described it as “a brilliant sun sparkled in the cloudless blue sky and illuminated the snowcapped grandeur of distant Mount Orizaba once again looking upon a conqueror landing at Veracruz.” Lieutenant Semmes noted that “if we had had the choice of weather, we could not have selected a more propitious day.” Many of the soldiers and officers in their journals mentioned a feeling or connection to the time of Hernan Cortez, as if this invasion force were walking in his footsteps. General Scott felt that “the sun dawned propitiously on the expedition.” As if predestined, the landing took place on the thirty-third anniversary of Scott’s promotion to the rank of general. The propitious day was enhanced by calm seas with little surf on the beach, a condition Scott felt was necessary for the landing.¹³⁹

Recalling the initial movement of the naval transports, Colonel Davis described the movement of the fleet:

The magnitude of its tonnage, the order and precision of its movement, the gorgeous display of its bunting, floating on the breeze from every vessel, their decks packed with soldiers, and their arms glittering in the sunbeams; and, as we approached, the

¹³⁸ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 241; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 79.

¹³⁹ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 242; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 126; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 79; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LL. D.* (New York: Sheldon &, 1864), 418-419.

withdrawal of every English, French, Spanish, and German man-of-war from the shadows of the frowning battlements of the citadel of San Juan de Ulloa, to seek a refuge beneath the ample folds of the Stars and Stripes, and the wild enthusiasm of our forces and their struggles to be among the first to reach the enemy's shores, was a sight such as no imagination can conceive, and which in our future history may never again be witnessed.

Davis was partially correct in his final statement. It would indeed be many years before so many nations again saw such an event as the landing at Collado Beach.¹⁴⁰

As the sun rose, crews were sent back to Salmedina to prepare the surfboats, while aboard the vessels sea salt was cleaned from weapons, rations were issued and canteens filled, ammunition was distributed, and the men formed upon the decks with arms at hand. Every man of the Army was directed to take in his haversack enough bread and meat (cooked) for two days, and the vessels of war were ordered to supply the troops with water and provisions, while they were on board. Captain French Forrest of the *Raritan* was assigned to superintend the transship movement of the troops from the transports in which they had arrived.¹⁴¹

Oswandel received orders that morning to pack and prepare to land. The soldiers were taken off the ships and put on "so-called surfboats," then moved again to USS frigate *Potomac* to be moved to Sacrificios. Once the surfboats were readied, they were used to ferry the troops from their transports to the vessels that would carry them to Sacrificios. When the ferrying was completed, the surfboats were made fast to the steamers to be towed to the landing area: fifteen to be manned by the *Raritan* and made fast to the *Spitfire*; twenty to be manned by the *Potomac* and made fast to the *Vixen*; ten to be manned by the *Albany*, ten to be manned by the

¹⁴⁰ Davis, *Autobiography*, 124-125.

¹⁴¹ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 79; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19; Temple, "Memoir," 66; Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 150.

St. Mary's which were made fast to the *Eudora* and the *Petrita* respectively; and ten to be manned and taken in tow by the *Princeton*.¹⁴²

At 9:45 a.m., the covering force hoisted anchor and sailed for the landing area. *Reefer*, *Bonita*, *Petrel*, *Tampico*, and *Falcon*, which formed the inshore covering force, hoisted anchor and stood out for the landing area. Fifteen minutes later, at 10:00 a.m., the *Raritan* signaled the main body of ships to prepare to get under way. After "all preliminary arrangements having been made, between 11:00 a.m. and 12 o'clock noon, the fleet – Commodore Conner leading, in the flag-ship *Raritan* under Captain Forrest, whose decks, like those of the other ships, were crowded with troops, and General Scott following at a short distance, in the steamer *Massachusetts* – got underway, in gallant style, and filed, one by one, out of the narrow pass leading from the anchorage." General Scott wrote that "the whole fleet of transports – some eighty vessels, in the presence of many foreign ships of war, stood up the coast, flanked by two naval steamers and five gunboats to cover the movement. Passing through them in the large propeller, the *Massachusetts*, the shouts and cheers from every deck gave me assurance of victory, whatever might be the force prepared to receive us." Even though the beach did not have defenses built upon it, Scott believed Worth and his men would face Mexican forces that would try to throw the Americans back into the sea.¹⁴³

The fleet eased its way toward its goal. The sailing vessels moved quietly under the masses of white canvas. The steamers chugged along and pulled at the surfboats in tow. Every deck teemed with masses of blue- and grey-clad troops while here and there the sun

¹⁴² Oswandel, *Notes*, 35; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 80, 127.

¹⁴³ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 242; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 80; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 126; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19; Temple, "Mémorial," 67; Scott, *Memoirs*, 419.

glimmered off a burnished bayonet or button. Bits of music could be heard above the hum of conversation, along with the creak of rigging and the slap of the sea against the bow.¹⁴⁴

At 12:15 p.m., the inshore covering force hove to off of Collado Beach. The next three hours were filled with the movement of the larger vessels as they appeared and moved to their assigned posts. At 12:45 p.m., the *Reefer* and her accompanying gunboats arrived off Sacrificios. The rest of the ships soon arrived and took their assigned places with surprisingly little disorder or confusion. Once they were safely anchored, the steamers cast loose the surfboats, whose oarsmen propelled them to the troop ships to embark their passengers. At 3:30 p.m., the two steamers *Spitfire* and *Vixen*, with five schooner-gunboats of the inshore force, closed to within about ninety yards of shore. During this preparation, the flotilla of gunboats attached to the squadron, under Commander Tattnall as senior officer, took position within grape-range¹⁴⁵ of the beach, so as to cover the landing with its guns, as previously ordered by Commodore Conner.¹⁴⁶

At the assigned time, three flags were hoisted on the main truck of the *Massachusetts*, signaling Worth's division to prepare for the landing. Soldiers began clambering down into the surfboats. Lieutenant Semmes remembered that "the surfboats, 67 in number, and each one manned by experienced seamen of the navy, were hauled alongside of the ships; the soldiers, with their arms and accoutrements, were passed into them; and as each boat received her complement, she shoved off, and laid on her oars at a little distance, until the others should be

¹⁴⁴ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 242.

¹⁴⁵ Grape-range refers to a type of cannon shot using pellets that when fired spread in an effect much akin to a shotgun. This type of shot was particularly devastating against infantry.

¹⁴⁶ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 8, 80; Bauer, *Mexican War*, 242; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 19.

ready.” When each detachment was ready, it formed up in the line of battle parallel to Collado Beach and abreast to the acting naval transports some four hundred fifty yards off shore. The strong currents that swirled around Isla Sacrificios and its reef threw the surfboats into confusion. The units became mixed up, but rather than sort them out boat by boat, General Worth ordered that each regiment would pull for the boat with their regimental colors hoisted. The perfect line of battle was lost, but each surfboat landed next to others in their regiment.¹⁴⁷

While the surfboats formed up parallel to the shore, Mexican cavalry could be seen among the dunes behind the beach. In response, the mosquito fleet under Commander Tattnall ran close in to the beach and kept up constant shelling. At 5:00 p.m., the *Tampico* hurled a 24-pound shell at some cavalry who could be seen on the dunes behind the beach. The shot had no visible effect on the cavalry. For the anxious Americans, this cemented their fear that the landing force would have to fight strong Mexican opposition to claim the beach.¹⁴⁸

At 5:30 p.m., the *Massachusetts* fired a shot, signaling the beginning of the landing. The cannon silenced the murmur among the fleet; all eyes were fixed upon the surfboats as the sailors pulled hard to cover the four hundred fifty yards to the beach. The setting sun behind the dunes silhouetted the walls and castle of Veracruz. To nearly everyone’s surprise, while the small surfboats closed in on the beach, not a single crack of musket fire was heard from the shore. Then, just before the surfboats touched the beach, a figure leaped out of one of the

¹⁴⁷ Bauer, *Surfboats*, 80-81; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 126-127.

¹⁴⁸ Parker, *Recollections*, 84; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 81.

craft, into water up to his armpits. He waded ashore. It was General Worth. His staff followed him onto the beach, and surfboats began hitting the sand all around them.¹⁴⁹

In a matter of moments, the first wave followed General Worth, 2,595 men in all, without a single casualty. Oswandel watched from his ship and remembered that “as soon as the surf boats struck the beach the soldiers instantly jumped on shore, some in the water. We are now looking for the Mexicans to attack our men, but on they rushed in double quick time until they came to a sand hill. Here they planted the flag of our country with three hearty cheers, responded to with great enthusiasm by every soldier on board the ships.” At 5:40 p.m., Worth’s men planted the American flag upon the dunes. All of “the troops debarked in good order; and in a few minutes afterward a detachment, which had wound its way up one of the sand-hills, unfurled the American flag, and waving it proudly over their head, planted it in the land of Cortez.”¹⁵⁰

When the United States soldiers reached the top of the sand hills, they realized that the Mexicans had fled back into the safety of the city walls. After the first assault, the remaining United States forces landing at the beach no longer tried to land in the order of battle. In less than five hours, more than ten thousand men landed at Collado Beach without a single loss of life.¹⁵¹ Extra care had to be taken in landing the siege train. At first they tried to land the heavy

¹⁴⁹ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 242, 244; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 81-82.

¹⁵⁰ Oswandel, *Notes*, 35-36; Bauer, *Mexican War*, 244; Davis, *Autobiography*, 125; Bauer, *Surfboats*, 82; Semmes, *Service Afloat*, 128.

¹⁵¹ The number of troops landed at Collado Beach during these five hours varies between 8,600 and around 13,000 men, depending on the source.

batteries from two surfboats lashed together side-by-side, but this did not work. The remaining guns were lowered into the surfboats carefully due to their fragile white-pine bottoms.¹⁵²

This landing positioned the American forces to besiege and take the city of Veracruz, beginning the march to Mexico City. If the Mexican soldiers had met the Americans on Collado Beach, the Army would have been in far worse shape. This decision not to resist the landing by the Mexican commander changed the landing from a hazardous amphibious assault to a perfect example of how to execute such an operation flawlessly for future American military leaders. Over the next week, Scott directed his forces to take up positions around Veracruz to begin the siege. General Scott chose to besiege the city rather than assault it, as was the popular idea amongst his men. He did so to save his men's lives and the lives of those in the city. As the investment around the city continued, the Mexicans sent horsemen to find soft points in the American lines. Brigadier General Juan Morales – the Mexican commander at Veracruz – chose to hold his small garrison within the walls.¹⁵³

On 22 March 1847, Scott called for the formal surrender of Veracruz, which Morales rejected. Gun batteries, both ashore and afloat, continued to bombard the walls of the city, trying to force its capitulation. Finally, on 29 March, the formal surrender of Veracruz took place. Scott achieved the surrender by tempering his demands and allowing the Mexican forces to save face. He agreed to parole the whole garrison and allow civilians free movement around the city. General Worth assumed charge of Veracruz as military governor.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Bauer, *Surfboats*, 82, 419-420; Conner, *Home Squadron*, 20; Temple, "Memoir," 68, 69.

¹⁵³ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 245-248.

¹⁵⁴ Bauer, *Mexican War*, 249-253.

So, the landing was a success and the city was taken. General Scott and Commodore Conner certainly deserved any accolades given them for this operation. It was a stunning example of what could be accomplished with joint operations. The Army and Navy had worked in unison to achieve a herculean feat at Collado Beach. Midshipman Parker stated that, “Whatever may be said of Commodore Conner’s management of affairs up to this time the arrangements for this service were perfect.”¹⁵⁵

Commodore Conner must be credited with successfully conducting an incredibly complicated operation. He suggested the landing place, the method of transporting troops to the debarkation point, and handled the details of the landing. General Scott deserved credit for conceiving and planning such an audacious operation. The landing was by far the most difficult operation that American troops had faced up to that time. Moreover, Scott managed to land on a hostile shore without much of his logistical support and not quite the number that he deemed minimal to execute the operation. Concerns about the *vomito negro* and possible reinforcements from the Mexican army pushed Scott to execute the landing in less than optimum conditions. All of that being said, the cooperation between Scott and Conner made the landing a success. Without this cooperation, the assault could have turned to chaos and Scott could have lost many men to accidents without ever facing the Mexicans behind their walls. With the landing complete, General Scott took Veracruz and began his march to capture Mexico City, the first foreign capital ever occupied by the United States Army. This was an epic beginning to a historic campaign.

¹⁵⁵ Parker, *Recollections*, 84.

CHAPTER V

LESSONS LEARNED AND LESSONS FORGOTTEN

The amphibious assault at Veracruz proceeded flawlessly, and not a single casualty occurred during the process of landing. The success of the operation resulted from the optimal cooperation between the Army and Navy. Eventually the military developed a doctrine for joint operations such as these, but General Winfield Scott and Commodore David Conner were pioneers who laid the groundwork for others to follow. More than just doctrinal foreshadowing, the cooperation demonstrated the need for commanding officers that knew when to lead and when to follow, men that saw their own limitations, and who worked with others to make something greater than the sum of its parts. Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason noted that he “witnessed with lively satisfaction the evidences of zeal and cordiality which characterized . . . efficient cooperation with the army.” It would be several decades before joint operations received serious consideration again within the United States military. The examples of effective cooperation between branches would be forgotten and have to be relearned in following wars.¹⁵⁶

The importance of this amphibious assault, both in planning and execution, served as a reference point for those creating amphibious doctrine in the future. While most naval histories, such as that written by Robert W. Love, do not contribute greatly to the historiography of the landing at Collado Beach, there are a few that indicate this landing’s influence on later efforts. Gen. Holland M. Smith, of the United States Marine Corps, concluded that during the Mexican War “amphibious tactics reached a new level of development, which

¹⁵⁶ David Conner, *The Home Squadron Under Commodore Conner*, with Philip S. P. Conner (Philadelphia: P.S.P. Conner, 1896), 37.

was little improved in the next seventy-five years.” Historian and Navy Captain Edward L. Beach furthers this idea when he writes that, “Conner’s dispositions were thoroughly studied by the United States Marines, particularly in the period between World Wars I and II, and provided a precedent for the amphibious landings in the second world war. Such affirmations by a general officer of the Marine Corps, who made amphibious operations his specialty, and a decorated Navy captain are strong support for the argument that this landing contributed to future American ventures in amphibious operations. Another naval historian, Stephen Howarth, notes that even the Japanese followed the Mexican War and were “deeply impressed by the Scott-Conner-Perry capture of Vera Cruz,” showing that other future naval powers also considered the Collado landing of some significance. While it would be several decades before the United States Navy and Marine Corps would begin formulating amphibious doctrines, it appears that this event, though forgotten by some, played a role in the development of later policies.¹⁵⁷

The significance of the landing at Collado Beach on the Civil War is clear. Many of the commanding officers during the Civil War experienced the landing at Collado Beach first hand. Rowena Reed writes that the landing “showed a much higher degree of organization and logistical efficiency than had ever been attained before in such an operation.” She adds that George B. McClellan learned “to throw invading armies quickly and unexpectedly against strategic points, and then maintain these armies until victory was attained.” While McClellan’s

¹⁵⁷ Robert William Love, *History of the U.S. Navy* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 208-209; Holland M. Smith, *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1992), 9; Edward L. Beach, *The United States Navy: 200 Years* (New York: H. Holt, 1986), 159; Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1991* (New York: Random House, 1991), 160-161.

Peninsula Campaign did not end the war, it does demonstrate that the lessons of the Mexican War did affect the officers of the Civil War.¹⁵⁸

The logistics behind the landing were a feat on par with the landing itself. Mobilizing men and resources from across the United States, transporting them, and focusing them all on one small beach on the coast of Mexico are impressive feats that should not be overlooked. General Zachary Taylor's relationship with the Quartermaster Department is a prime example of the difficulties a general could have when he refuses to cooperate with those supplying him. Scott saw that it was necessary to work with Thomas S. Jesup and his quartermasters in order to supply his army and mobilize the full power of the United States against Mexico. Despite delays, material and manpower shortages, and lack of transports, Scott and Jesup still managed to get Scott's minimum number of troops with their supplies to Sacrificios for the landing. Their cooperation and determination saved what could have been a disastrous failure. This successful operation started the campaign that ended the war and earned the United States international prestige.

Whether the lessons to be learned are about joint operations, cooperation between commanding officers, amphibious doctrine, or managing logistics well enough to execute an operation, the amphibious landing at Collado Beach demonstrated them all. Navy historians E.B. Potter and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz write that "for the first time in the history of amphibious warfare, the ship-to shore movement was entirely navy planned and navy controlled, a practice that would not become general until World War II." This reaffirms the importance of the Collado Beach operation in the establishment of precedent on which future

¹⁵⁸ Rowena Reed, *Combined Operations in the Civil War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978), xii, 35.

doctrine would be built. Despite the many lessons to be learned, the United States Army, like so many other military organizations, is notorious for forgetting many of the lessons that a war has just taught them. This operation should be looked to as an example of how to prepare for and execute a large scale amphibious landing. This, however, would not always be the case.¹⁵⁹

Prior to the amphibious landing near Veracruz by American forces, the largest amphibious operation had been executed by the French with their invasion of Algiers in 1830. This is the only example of a large scale amphibious operation contemporary to General Scott's invasion. The two operations differed in both expectation and success. While the French had a similar distance to travel, were respectably prepared, and landed roughly the same number over the course of an entire day – about nine thousand men – this operation was not nearly as successful or as expertly executed as Scott's expedition. While the United States did not lose any men, the French lost between thirty and forty of their men during the landing due to accidents and the upsetting of boats. Furthermore, this landing was enacted in a wide bay, not an open beach directly on the ocean, giving the French some protection from the sea. It is also unclear if the French designed their invasion as an assault on a hostile shore. It is known they did not meet opposition, but not whether they expected to meet any. On the other hand, Scott expected to meet a hostile Mexican army when his men landed on the beach, so he prepared for such, especially in regards to landing in the order of battle. While the Algiers operation may have lent some information to Scott, there was no American precedent for an operation this massive. However, all future American endeavors would have Scott's expedition to emulate.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., *Sea Power; a Naval History*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 231-232.

¹⁶⁰ "Disembarkation," *New Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, March 27, 1847.

On two separate occasions, 25 December 1864 and 13 January 1865, the Union Army landed an amphibious force near Fort Fisher during the American Civil War. The first attempt included a naval duel with the fort's guns and landing men north of Fort Fisher against several batteries of guns. The second attempt with around one thousand men did not match the scale of Scott's landing at Veracruz. Beyond the size of the initial force, the landing did not have the same preparation and planning. The troops gathered and embarked on longboats – allegedly some were remnant surfboats from General Scott's invasion – and stormed the beach, wading through waist-deep water onto the beach. The second landing succeeded in putting on shore two thousand men total. Despite the goal of this operation differing of that of the Veracruz invasion, some of the lessons learned at Collado Beach might have benefited those planning the operation at Fort Fisher. It is possible that some of the organizational experience from the Veracruz landing resurfaced for the second landing. Organizing such a similar number of men to land on an unopposed beach bears striking resemblances to the Veracruz landing. Perhaps the failure of first attempt forced the officers to look to the recent past for ideas on how to land so many men at once.¹⁶¹

Arguably the best example of lessons unlearned came from later in the same century. While some lessons were remembered during the Civil War, by the beginning of the Spanish-American War, the United States Army ignored all prior experience with amphibious operations. At 10:00 a.m. on 22 June 1898, the United States Army began their landing at the small village of Daiquirí some fourteen miles from Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, during the Spanish-American War. A naval bombardment preceded the landing, effectively driving off the

¹⁶¹ Rod Gragg, *Confederate Goliath: The Battle of Fort Fisher* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 80-81.

defending Spanish and leaving an undefended beach. Daiquirí lacked a good harbor and docking facilities, and the presence of heavy surf posed a serious obstacle to the landing. The Army lacked sufficient lighters – akin to Scott’s surfboats – to safely execute the landing. The one pier was too high for the few longboats the Army did have; as a result, the soldiers had to jump from the rolling boats onto the pier while burdened with gear. Two soldiers missed the pier and drowned – pulled down by their gear – before they could be saved. Worse yet, the Army had no way of unloading the horses and mules, so the soldiers resorted to pushing the animals overboard with the hope more would swim to shore than not. Some of the animals panicked and swam out to the open sea. Others fatigued before making it to shore and drowned. The sea and beach became littered with the bodies of dead animals. The historians discussing this event stated that the Army had no experience executing such a landing. As this paper has shown, such experience did exist, but it was simply forgotten.¹⁶²

Operation Torch during World War II marked the largest amphibious assault involving American forces since the Mexican War. The American portion of the attack landed near Casablanca, Morocco, under the joint command of Major General George Patton and Rear Admiral Henry K. Hewitt. This was only the second time, the first being the second attempt at Fort Fisher, since General Scott and Commodore Conner’s cooperation that the Army and Navy had executed such a large operation while working in sync with each other. Landings during the Civil War and Spanish-American War used joint operations, but they never operated at the level of efficiency as did Scott and Conner’s invasion. This type of cooperation returned with the invasion of North Africa. The allied forces created joint-operational doctrine to define the roles

¹⁶² David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 212-214.

of the commanders and who would lead which portions of the operation. While this is something Scott and Conner did instinctively, it would take later generations until World War II to again look at what made the Veracruz expedition so successful.¹⁶³

Cooperation between officers and the division of roles within the operation are defining aspects of joint operations. Scott and Conner were able to implement a command hierarchy which the Allied forces would imitate, knowingly or not. A final similarity to the landing at Collado Beach is the boats used to land near Casablanca, which were surprisingly similar to the ones dreamt up by Scott for his expedition. While Operation Torch was a major learning opportunity for the Allies, and shaped the future Normandy invasion, if the Allied commanders had only looked back a hundred years to Scott and Conner, who knows what they could have learned.¹⁶⁴

The amphibious assault at Collado Beach during the Mexican War was a defining moment in American history. Not only did it start the campaign which culminated in the first American occupation of a foreign capital, but it created a foundation for the American military to build upon. In the case of amphibious doctrine, there would be mixed results in who learned the lessons from the Veracruz expedition. Some, like General Smith and Captain Beach, did look to Veracruz as a guiding event in the establishment of amphibious doctrine.

Other lessons, such as how to successfully manage joint operations, would take far longer to reassert themselves within military doctrine. Such cooperation always proved tense, but if commanders had looked to Scott and Conner's efforts and willingness to compromise,

¹⁶³ Orr Kelly, *Meeting the Fox: The Allied Invasion of Africa, from Operation Torch to Kasserine Pass to Victory in Tunisia* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 2002), 63-70.

¹⁶⁴ Kelly, *Meeting the Fox*, 63-70.

perhaps other joint operations would have been more successful. Sadly, the American military only learned the lessons these men taught in piecemeal. As it stands, it took two world wars for western militaries to relearn a lesson that should have been standard practice for almost a hundred years.

Not only can it be considered the beginning of American imperialism, but this landing also shaped an entire military generation. Scott's staff during the landing and the Mexico City Campaign reads like a roster of commanding generals during the American Civil War. Many of these junior officers, fresh from West Point, were first blooded during operations at Veracruz. The experience gained from working under Scott shaped how the Civil War would be fought. Beyond shaping the officers of the Civil War, the Mexican War also acted as training *en masse* for the American people. It trained a generation of men how to wage war.

The success of the landing stretches beyond its military importance into the realms of both American politics and culture. It was the starting point for capturing Mexico City and eventually bringing a close to the Mexican War, a war which led to American gaining most of what is now the southwestern United States. The landing can truly be seen as a turning point in American history where American imperialism began. There are many such moments that can make such a claim. Few however shaped the nation as much as this one.

The effects of the Veracruz expedition were more far reaching than General Scott could have ever dreamed. It defined a generation and shaped the next, and its influence would

continue to be felt throughout the following years. In the end, the landing at Collado Beach
“augured well for the present, and was prophetic of the future.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ George T. M. Davis, *Autobiography of the Late Col. Geo. T.M. Davis, Captain and Aide-de-camp Scott's Army of Invasion (Mexico), from Posthumous Papers* (New York: Jenkins and McCowan, 1891), 125.

APPENDIX A
VERA CRUZ AND ITS CASTLE

I beg to repeat, in a more methodical form, the views I have already had the honor to express (hastily and orally) to the Secretaries of War and the Navy, touching an expedition against the above places.

The government, or interior people of Mexico, seem, in war, to present to us this dilemma: "If you come with few, we will overwhelm you; if with many, you will overwhelm yourselves."

It is apprehended that this may be true of the line of operations upon the capital of Mexico from the Rio Grande, considering the great length of that line, and the deficiency of food and water on many of its links, some of them thirty, forty, or sixty miles in length.

To reach the heart of that country, from the gulf coast, there is a difficulty in three quarters of the year, more formidable than the artificial defenses of other countries; I allude to the *vomito* in all the ports, not to speak of the want of harbors for shipping, and of practicable roads leading into the interior, except at and from Vera Cruz.

Unless with a view to a second, or new line of operations, I regard the possession, by us, of the city of Vera Cruz and its castle, San Juan d'Ulloa, *as a step towards compelling Mexico to sue for peace*, as not likely to be worth one tenth of the lives, time, and money, which their capture would cost us. In other words, I am persuaded that our possession of those places would be of but very little more value than the present strict blockade of the port; unless, as intimated above, the capture should be promptly followed by a march thence, with a competent force, upon the capital. To conquer a peace, I am now persuaded that we must take the city of Mexico, or place it in imminent danger of capture, and mainly through the city of Vera Cruz.

To take the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa would, no doubt, be a virtual and prompt capture of the city lying under its guns. The reverse of the proposition would, probably not be equally, certain – I mean in any short time. The castle, after the loss of the city, might still hold out for many weeks, perhaps months, until compelled to surrender from the want of subsistence and water, unless earlier reduced by land and water batteries, escalade, & c.

It is believed that the castle, with a competent garrison, cannot be taken by water batteries alone; or by the latter and an escalade, without a very heavy and disproportionate loss of life on the part of the assailants, besides a loss of time, which, by running into the season of the *vomito*, might quadruple the waste of life, and cause the invading army to lose a campaign.

For these reasons, it seems decidedly preferable to capture the city first, and by its means (shelter and guns) to attack the castle by land and water, including joint escalades – unless it should be found probable that the want of food and drinking water would lead to an early surrender.

To place the capture of both places beyond the probability of a failure, I suppose the following means to be indispensable:

The present blockading squadron re-inforced by many bomb-ketches – probably yet to be constructed.

An army of at least ten thousand men, consisting of cavalry (say) 2,000, artillery (say) 600, and the remainder infantry.

The whole of the artillery, and at least half of the cavalry and infantry, ought to be regular troops.

Scows and other boats, specially constructed for the purpose, sufficient to land, at once, at least 2,500 men, with two light batteries, would be needed. Cavalry and artillery house would follow, after a foothold had been gained.

The number of cavalry I have named might be indispensable to aid in repelling any Mexican army in the field, seeking to save the city from an assault or a siege.

For this purpose, and to overcome opposition at the point of descent, I have assumed ten thousand men to be the minimum force of the invaders.

The point of descent might be anywhere beyond the reach of the enemy's guns at the city and the castle, including Alvarado; but, preferably, as near the city as practicable.

I suppose the expedition may be fitted out, and in position to make the descent, at the latest, by the beginning of the new year; leaving three months for the capture of the city and castle, and for the commencement of the march upon the capital before the season of yellow fever.

By that time, (say in the month of March,) that the army might be augmented to about 20,000 men, for ulterior operations, by new regiments of regulars and volunteers.

There are, already, on the Rio Grande, and in Mexico, more surplus United States volunteers than would be needed for the expedition in the first instance, and I suppose that four or five thousand regulars might be in readiness by the first of December, (mostly drawn from the same quarter,) and still leave a *threatening* force at Monterey.

The junction of Brigadier General Wool with General Taylor, together with the recruits who may be enlisted for the regular army, in the next month, will, it is believed, give the required number for the above purposes.

All of which is respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

WINFIELD SCOTT

Head-quarters of the Army,

Washington, October 27, 1846

Vera Cruz and Its Castle. – New Line of Operations, Thence Upon the Capital

On the 27th ultimo, I had the honor to submit a short memoir under this head. I beg to add a supplement.

Seeing the obstinacy of Mexico in declining all overtures to treat with us, and her present dogged silence, on the same subject, even after we have blockaded all her ports – again and again beaten or scattered her armies, and occupied many of her outer provinces – it is evident that, to compel her to sue for peace, we must modify our plan of invasion and prosecute it, with, if possible, redoubled means.

Time is always, at least, the *second* element of cost in war; sometimes the *first*. Nay, the shorter the war, the greater, in general, the economy of life.

Hence, among other reasons, a little war – a war prosecuted with inadequate means or vigor – is a greater evil than a big war. It discredits the party possessed of the superior means; it exhausts her finances, exhausts enthusiasm, and generally ends in a failure of all the objects proposed. Besides, in the present instance, neutral commerce begins to exhibit signs of impatience under the loss of an important mart; and interest, sympathy, or the chapter of accident, may, if the blockade, &c., be long continued, raise up new parties against us. Such is, no doubt, the sustaining *hope* of Mexico.

Until recently, I had concurred in the opinion of others that Mexico might be compelled to propose reasonable terms of accommodation by the time we had conquered the advantages our arms have now obtained. Considering her political instability, and our want, at the time, of an adequate regular army, the plan of campaign assumed at the beginning of hostilities, seemed worthy of an experiment. It has failed, and further brilliant victories on a single line of operations towards the capital, may be as tedious as that route is difficult, and equally barren of peace. The fatuitous obstinacy of the enemy – now known to be the inverse ratio of the prowess of her troops and financial means – yet remains to be subdued.

With a view to additional developments, I recur to the suggestions I have heretofore made.

The *minimum* force (10,000 men) then proposed, I still deem indispensable. Personally, I would be willing to attempt the capture of Vera Cruz, and through it, the castle of San Juan d'Ulloa, with perhaps a smaller army, aided by the blockading squadron off that coast. But I very much doubt whether the government ought to risk the expedition, under any commander, with a land force less than twelve, perhaps fifteen thousand men.

Considering the comparative short line from her central and more populous States to Vera Cruz, and that the war on the part of Mexico has evidently become *national*, no matter who may be the ruler, she certainly may be expected to assemble some twenty or thirty thousand men to garrison and to cover (in the field) Vera Cruz. This I am obliged to suppose she may do with greater ease than she placed seven or eight thousand troops at Monterey. She

would probably have ample time to double that number at that point, if we admit her capacity to arm so many: 1. By getting early information of our intended embarkation; and 2. By the possible delay of weeks, from heavy winds (northers) and surf, after the arrival of our transports off the points of descent. All these calculations (many of them probabilities) ought to be carefully considered before fitting out an expedition; the failure of which, from inadequate means, would be so fatal to the credit of the administration and the character of our country.

I have suggested, apparently, a large number of land troops for the operations on the coast. A small deduction, equal to the number of men, say 1,200, that might, for the first moment, be drawn from the blockading squadron may be made.

After effecting a landing, no doubt under heavy fire, with, say, two or three thousand of our best troops, at once, in boats yet to be constructed, making good the foothold, until the remainder of the expedition could follow, after beating the covering army, the city would be the next object of attack. If not likely to be forced to surrender by cutting off its supplies, in some few weeks, an assault would be preferable with the loss of several hundred men, to a longer delay; the fall of the castle would necessarily soon follow that of the city.

I have said the principal object in those captures, would be to open a new and better line of operations upon the enemy's capital. To reach that point, or to place it in imminent danger of capture, an army of more than 20,000 men may be needed: 1. To beat, in the field and in passes, any accumulated force in the way; 2. To garrison any important points in the rear, to secure a free communication with Vera Cruz; and, 3. To make distant detachments in order to gather in, without long halts, necessary subsistence.

If 10,000 men be more than necessary for the capture of Vera Cruz, &c., so much the smaller reinforcement – say, by the month of May, at the latest – would be needed for the advance upon the capital.

I suppose the expedition of 10,000 men may be put afloat, at the latest, by the first of January. It seems that the *vomito* is not to be feared on the coast, before May. The interval would allow us time to take the harbor of Vera Cruz, and to raise (by the aid of bounties) ten or twelve new regiments of regulars and to fill the ranks of the old, for operations in the interior.

If the reinforcements, with the necessary horses, guns, and means of transportations, arrive and Vera Cruz before the season of the *vomito*, the capital would be in peril, and probably, a peace early secured. Perhaps, before the arrival of that reinforcement, we might be able to advance and take Jalapa.

But it might be asked, how obtain the land force, regulars and volunteers, for the expedition, and have all afloat – eighth, nine, or ten thousand men – by the 1st of January?

Including the troops under the immediate command of Brigadier General Wool, (ordered down upon Monterey,) there will soon be on Major General Taylor's line of operations upon Mexican, *via* the Rio Grande and Monterey, say 6,500 regulars and 13,500 twelve months' volunteers, making a total of 20,000 men. We may leave upon that line, say, 2,500 regulars and

8,500 volunteers, total 11,000 men. With this force, all necessary garrisons in the rear may be kept up, and a column held at Monterey capable of advancing on the line of Saltillo and San Luis de Potosi, or of detaining in its front a large portion, or twice the number of the Mexican forces. It is certain that a garrison of Americans at Monterey, of four, or even three thousand men, would be able to defend it against a Mexican army of three or four times the number. But the moveable column at that point, out of the total of 11,000, might be carried up to at least 8,000. This, it may be assumed, would be fully sufficient to threaten and probably take Saltillo, if not San Luis de Potosi, &c., &c., combined with the movement on the new line of operations from Vera Cruz.

Deducting the forces to remain on the old line of operations, as above, we shall have disposable, for the expedition against Vera Cruz, 4,000 regulars and 5,000 volunteers, which, with the men to be drawn from the blockading squadron, may give an aggregate capable of taking that city.

I have not included in the aggregate of 20,000 men, above, any volunteers sent down from Santa Fe to Chihuahua, which force, under the orders issued, would, of course, come upon the line of Camargo and Monterey; nor have I included the recruits, to be enlisted in time for the new expedition. Besides those additions, probably more than sufficient to make good all intermediate casualties, perhaps two or three other companies of regulars (rifles and infantry) may be disposable for the two attacking columns.

To meet the double invasion, Mexico must either divide her forces and increase our chance of success on both lines, or double her forces on one, and leave the other comparatively open to our advance.

To divide our forces on the lower Rio Grande, and in the direction of Monterey and Saltillo, equitably and wisely between the two lines of operations upon the enemy's capital, the positive instructions of the government will be needed, besides the presence on the theatre of war of the highest in army rank. The latter, I beg to say, is the proper officer to carry out, on the spot, the instructions of government in respect to that division, and to direct the principal attacking column on and from Vera Cruz.

I need scarcely add that all preliminary arrangements should be commenced at once, such as taking up transport vessels for troops and supplies, with, say 1,000 horses for officers, cavalry, and artillery; the purchase and construction of boats for debarkation in the surf, &c., &c. Those arrangements may be made here, in great part, and within a few days, when I shall be ready to proceed to the Rio Grande, to complete those arrangements before the arrival of the transports.

All which is respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

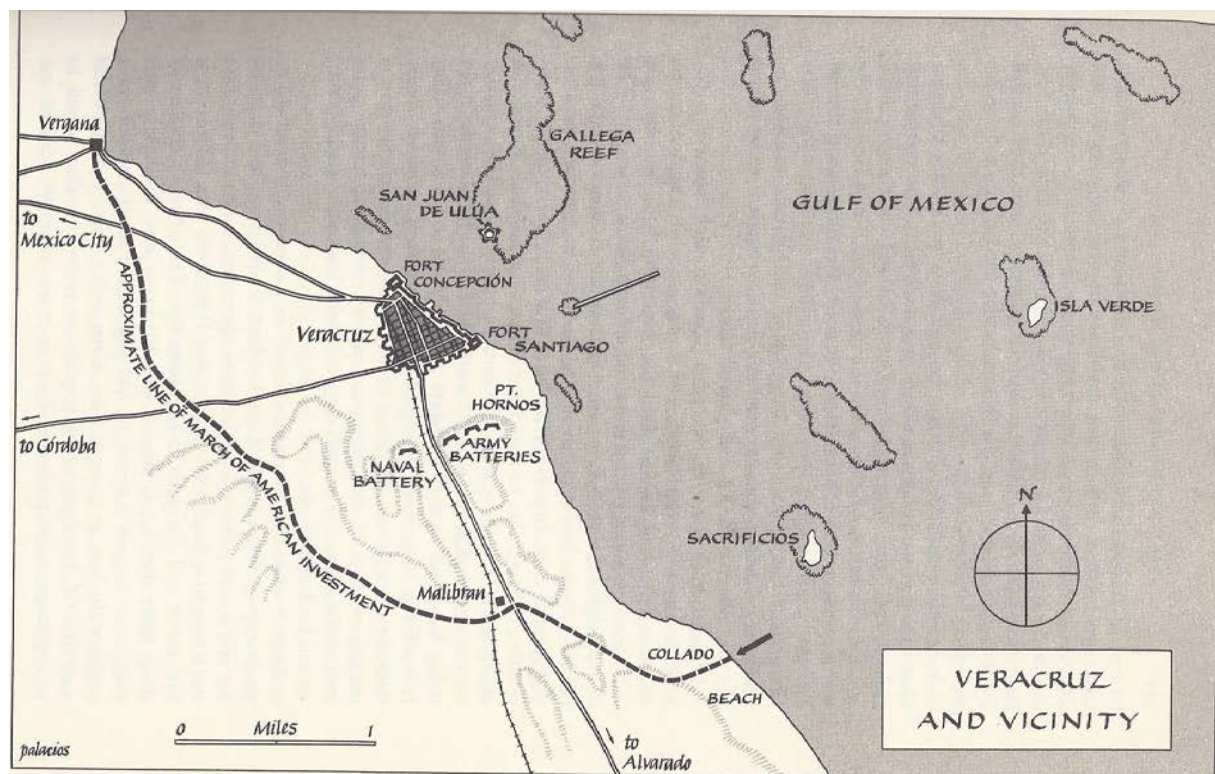
WINFIELD SCOTT

Head-quarters of the Army,

Washington, November 12, 1846

APPENDIX B

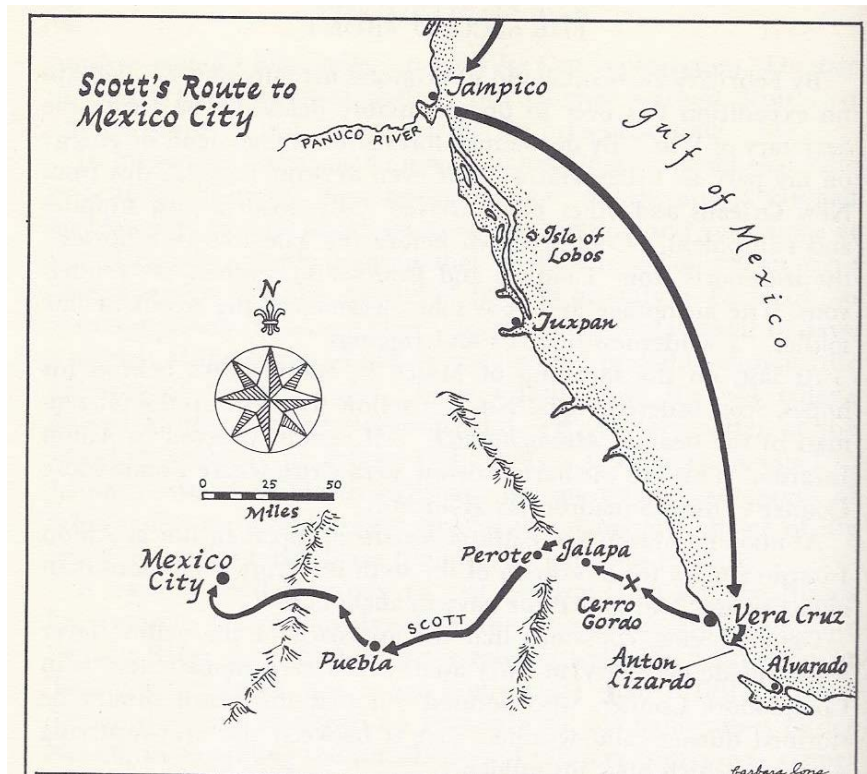
PICTURES AND MAPS



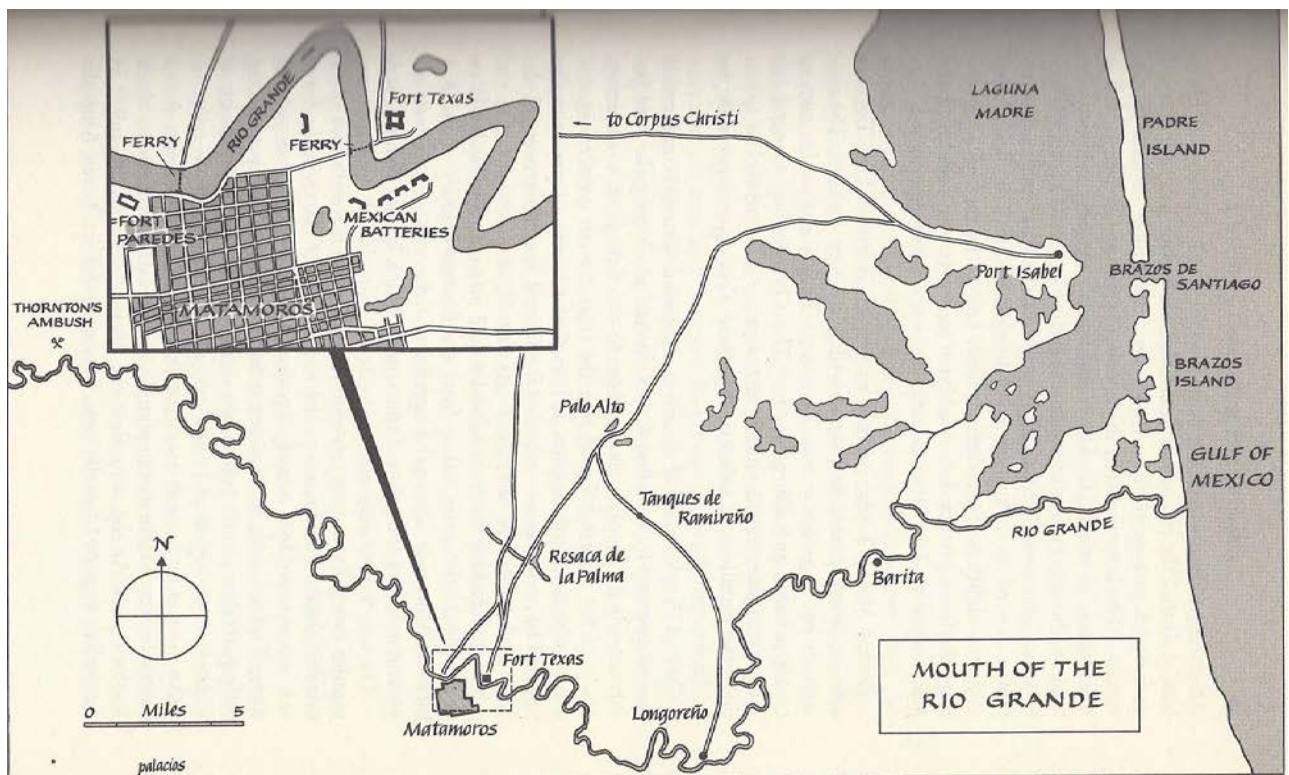
Map of Veracruz: Courtesy of K. Jack Bauer.



Siege of Veracruz



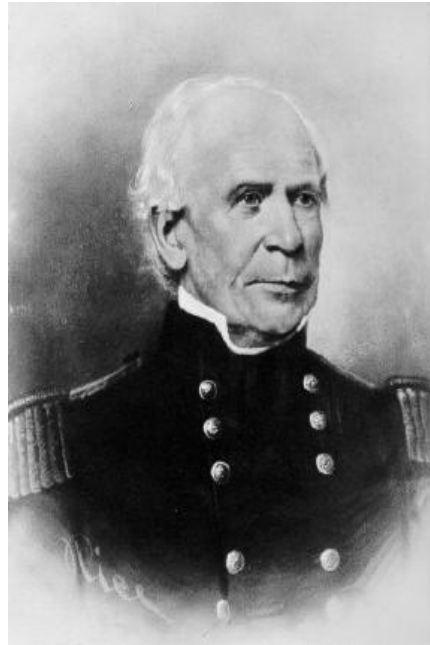
Map of Mexico City Campaign: Courtesy of Charles L. Dufour.



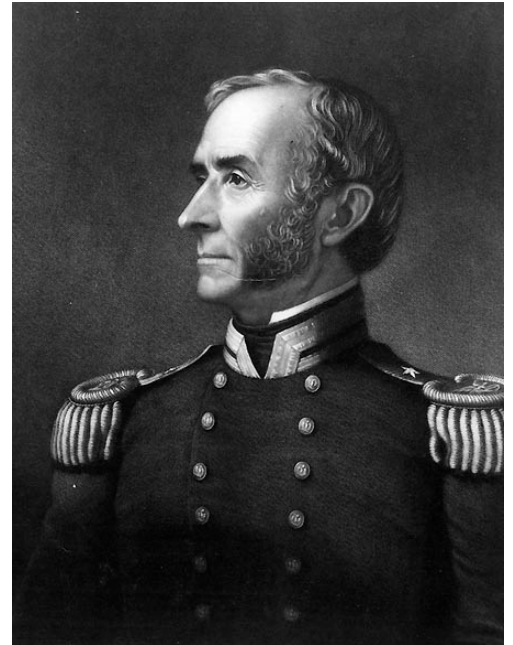
Map of Brazos Santiago: Courtesy of K. Jack Bauer.



Winfield Scott



Thomas Sidney

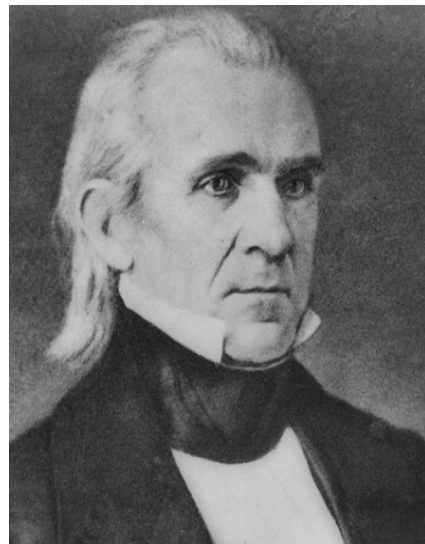


David Conner

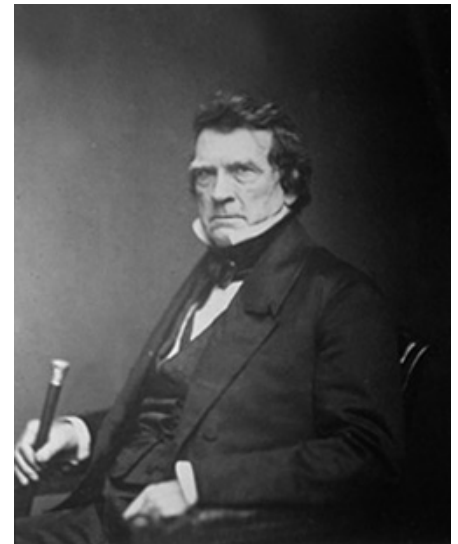
Zachary Taylor



James K. Polk



William L. Marcy





Landing at Collado



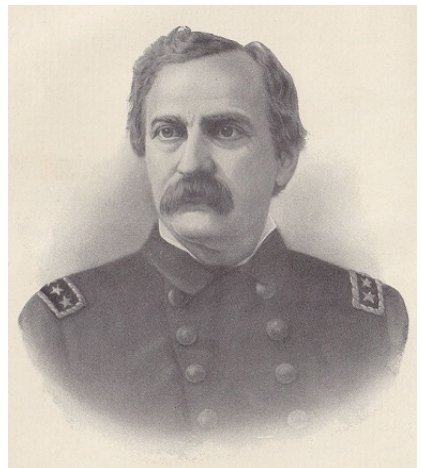
Josiah Tattnall



David Twiggs



Philadelphia Quartermaster



William H. Parker

APPENDIX C

JOHN LENTHALL PAPERS – SURF BOATS FOR MEXICAN WAR FILE

Boats

Surf Boats of Mexican Coast

Boats of Ships of Coast

11

In case of 2 and 3 masts when 2 masts and 3 masts with each

The boats to be built with both ends alike to steer with an oar at each end and stow in nests of 3 each - To be built of the best ^{well} seasoned materials in the most substantial manner and iron fastened - The Keel, Stems, deadwood, apron, floors, futtocks, Keelson, footings, Ridings, Hooks, Gunwale, cap or gunwale, gang board to be of white oak - The drawing of the boats will be furnished by the Department and the shape is such that the futtocks may be steamed and bent, but the rising timbers and Hooks must be worked from knees and not grain cut; ten heart hooks will be required at each end, in addition to which an iron strap must be brought round the stems on the keel on each side about 2 feet -

The Bottom may be white pine or Cypress, the plank in width from 5 to 6 inches amidships, fastened with wrought nails and ^{driving} in each timber, the upper stake and wale to be white oak; caulked with cotton and the seams filled with thick white lead - To have two coats of Paint inside and out - The boat to be properly fitted, with working cheek or stem heads, iron thole pins, Lying bolts in each end, white pine platforms and benches, oars and boat hooks - The thwarts of yellow pine must be fitted to unship and secured with copper pins and plates ^{according to dimensions} - Each nest must be furnished with 3 anchors, viz 150, 140 & 130 lb, to each of which must be fastened of cable no purpose will be received for iron than one nest or three boats, one must be the size of materials given be exceeded, and the work must in all respects be to the satisfaction of such persons as the Department may select to examine them

	20 ft	18 ft 10 in	17 ft 10 in
	1 st size	2 nd size	3 rd size
Length between the rabbets at top of gunwale	40 feet	37 ¹ / ₂ ft	35 ¹ / ₂ ft
Breadth, moulded,	12 feet	11 feet	10 ¹ / ₂ ft
Depth from rabbet of keel to top of gunwale	4 ¹ / ₂ ft	4 feet	3 ¹ / ₂ ft
Keel and stem sided	5 ¹ / ₂ in	5 ¹ / ₂ in	5 ¹ / ₂ in
Apron sided	4 ¹ / ₂ in	4 ¹ / ₂ in	4 ¹ / ₂ in
Stems and deadwood sided	9 ¹ / ₂ in	9 ¹ / ₂ in	8 ¹ / ₂ in
Flon timbers sided	2 ¹ / ₄ in	2 in	1 ³ / ₄ in
Do moulded in throat	3 in	2 ³ / ₄ in	2 ³ / ₄ in
Futtocks sided	2 in	1 ³ / ₄ in	1 ³ / ₄ in
Do moulded at head	1 ³ / ₄ in	1 ³ / ₄ in	1 ³ / ₄ in
Finer & Ribs	1 ¹ / ₂ x 3 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂ x 2 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂ x 1 ¹ / ₂
Ridings	6 ¹ / ₂ x 3	6 x 2 ³ / ₄	5 x 2 ¹ / ₂
Gunwale	3 ¹ / ₂ x 3 ¹ / ₄	3 x 2 ³ / ₄	2 ³ / ₄ x 2 ¹ / ₂
Upper stake	1 ¹ / ₂ x 6 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₂ x 6	1 x 6
Wale	2 x 6	1 ¹ / ₂ x 5 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₄ x 5

you in place of it was thought would have better

1st Boat

Hull	5507
Throat, Bench &	729
	<u>6280</u>
16 oars at 13	208
2 — 17	34
	<u>6522</u>

2nd Boat

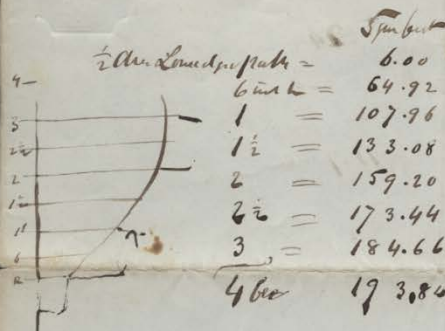
Hull	4457
Throat, Bench &	670
	<u>5127</u>
14 oars at 13	182
2 — 17	34
	<u>5343</u>

3rd Boat

Hull, Throat, bench	3882
Rowers, Philp	60
	<u>3942</u>
12 oars 13	156
2 — 17	34
	<u>4132</u>

Philp Dec 31-1846
actual weight

3rd Boat with 12 oars
13 oars at 13 = 4300 14



Ruth to 1/2

Whole area of Ruth's place = 12.00

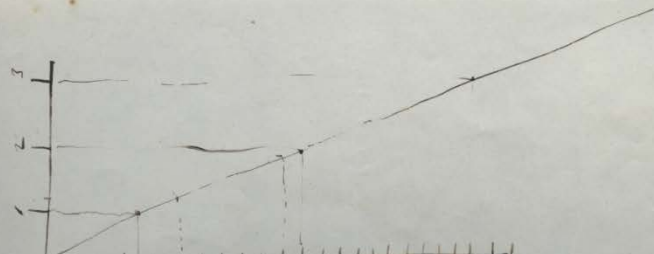
6 inch line	129.84
1/2	215.92
1 1/2	266.16
2	318.40
2 1/2	346.88
3	369.32
4	387.68

Ruth = 12.00 x 1 = 12.00
129.84 x 4 = 519.36
215.92 x 1 = 215.92
747.28
3/37 3640
124.55
= 3.55 tons to weight

215.92 x 1 = 215.92
266.16 x 4 = 1064.64
318.40 x 1 = 318.40
1598.96
3/779.48
1/2 to 2 but = 266.49
= 7.01 tons

318.40 x 1 = 318.40
346.88 x 4 = 1387.52
369.32 x 1 = 369.32
2075.24
3/1037.62
2/1037.62 = 345.87
= 7.98

307.32
387.68
1/757.00
3254/6 = 578.50 = 10.81 tons to weight



Sail Boats built for the Army — 1846

ordered to Washington by Lee & May
to make plans for Boats with which
to make the descent on Mexico by
Gen Scott —

92

Current Size & Weight as taken after the Boats were built

1 st Boat	2 nd Boat	3 rd Boat
whole cire = 16.92	whole cire = 15.46	whole cire = 14.37
Length = 40.00	Length = 37.75	Length = 35.75
Surf area 676.80	Surf area 583.61	Surf area 513.72
Weight (incl. sail) 6280 lb	Weight (incl. sail) 5127 lb	Weight (incl. sail) 3942 lb
Load per sq ft = 9.279	Load per sq ft = 8.785	Load per sq ft = 7.681
Load per sq ft 157 th	Load per sq ft 135.8	Load per sq ft 110.2
Estimated Weight 6400	5320	4015
Actual — 6522	5343	4132
Diff + 122	+ 23	+ 117

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