

## Chapter 8 - We Take Nothing by Conquest, Thank God.

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Quotes from this phony history book are in red.

**p. 149** - "After agitation, and aid from the United States, Texas broke off from Mexico in 1836 and declared itself the "Lone Star Republic."

**Comment:** Texas was not the only Mexican state "agitating" to be free from the despotic government in Mexico City. Rebellions by different states and political violence has been the norm since Mexican independence in 1821.

In 1823, only 2 years after independence - five states in southern Mexico declared themselves independent from Mexico - Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Central Americans chafed at Mexican rule, and there were several battles with Mexican forces. On July 1, 1823, the United Provinces of Central America was formally established in Guatemala City. Constant infighting and wars resulted in the Union falling apart in 1838. The five states became independent nations without any interference from Mexico or threats of perpetual war - as threatened against Texas. **WHY??**

Yucatan rebelled against the centralist government of Mexico in 1835 and again rebelled from 1847 until 1901 when the Mexican Army finally conquered the capital city. In 1841 the state of Tabasco decreed its separation from Mexico but rejoined Mexico in 1842.

In 1832, Zacatecas rebelled but was defeated by Mexico in the Battle of Gallinero. After Santa Anna essentially made himself dictator in 1835, Texas, Coahuila and Zacatecas - again - rebelled. Santa Anna crushed the rebellions in Coahuila and Zacatecas but was then defeated by Texas. The US government did not give assistance to Texas. Young men were recruited for the Texas Army from the US and supplies were purchased in the US, but this was NOT the deciding factor in Texas surprise victory over the Mexican Army at San Jacinto and the capture of Santa Anna, which ended the war.

And there were many other rebellions. Vice President Nicolas Bravo tried to overthrow the government in Dec. 1827. This rebellion was put down in Jan 1828. Bravo was expelled from the country while other mutineers were imprisoned.

Another revolt occurred over the results of the Presidential elections of Sep 1, 1828. The winner was Manuel Gomez Pedraza, who was supported by out-going President Victoria. Vicente Guerrero rejected the results and organized a revolution with Santa Anna and others. After rebel forces bombarded the National Palace, Congress quickly annulled the election of 1828 and made Vicente Guerrero President.

Mexican states rebelling against the central government in Mexico City quickly became the national pastime after Mexican independence in 1821 and attempts to overthrow the central government occurred often. **For some historians to claim that the Texas revolution occurred because of Anglo settlers conveniently ignores the fact that many states in Mexico rebelled against the central government in Mexico City and these states had few if any Americans. What made the Texas situation unique - and unforgiveable from Mexico's point of view - was that the Mexican Army was defeated by an Anglo army, not by fellow Spanish, as was the case of the five central American states that seceded from Mexico in 1823.**

**p. 149** - "Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock, a professional soldier, graduate of the Military Academy, commander of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, a reader of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Hegel, Spinoza, wrote in his diary:"

"Fort Jesup, La., June 30, 1845. Orders came last evening by express from Washington City directing General Taylor to move without any delay to some point on the coast near the Sabine or elsewhere, and as soon as he shall hear of the acceptance by the Texas convention of the annexation resolutions of our Congress he is immediately to proceed with his whole command to the extreme western border of Texas and take up a position on the banks of or near the Rio Grande, and he is to expel



Mexico in 1821 after independence.



Mexico in 1824 after 5 southern states seceded.

any armed force of Mexicans who may cross that river. Bliss read the orders to me last evening hastily at tattoo. I have scarcely slept a wink, thinking of the needful preparations. I am now noting at reveille by candlelight and waiting the signal for muster. . . Violence leads to violence, and if this movement of ours does not lead to others and to bloodshed, I am much mistaken.”

“Hitchcock was not mistaken.”

**Comment** - Notice that the order is not an offensive order, it is a movement to defend Texas from any attack on it by Mexico - which declared repeatedly that annexion of Texas into the U.S. would result in war. The fact that our movement to the Rio Grande resulted in violence - the Mexican American War - does NOT make the U.S. guilty of the bloodshed that followed. If defending our border causes violence, then it is the fault of the attacker, not the U.S. It proves Mexico chose war over negotiations. Nearly 10 years of sporadic negotiations with Mexico had been fruitless. Why? Because Mexican pride could not accept that they lost the war to Texas. A bunch of outnumbered farmers, ranchers, businessmen and adventurous young men from the U.S. had defeated the Army of Mexico. Mexico was not going to negotiate over the Texas border since settling the border issue would be an admission that Texas was separate from Mexico. Mexico considered Texas a break-away province and made it very clear they intended to conquer Texas.

In August 1843, Mexico’s secretary of relations, Bocanegra declared “...the Mexican Government will consider equivalent to a declaration of war against the Mexican Republic the passage of an act for the incorporation of Texas with the territory of the United States; the certainty of the fact being sufficient for the immediate proclamation of war...”(A)(B) These threats of war were issued several more times by different Mexican officials.



José Bocanegra

The popular *La Voz del Pueblo* ranted “Extermination and death to the Sabine [River] was the cry of our victorious legions at the Alamo, Bejar and El Salado. Extermination and death will be the cry of the valiant regulars and of the citizen soldiery, marching enthusiastically to conquer Texas.”(C)

In the summer of 1845, Mexico gave official notice to England and France that war was inevitable.(D)

**On Jan 4, 1846, Mexico’s government was overthrown by General Paredes whose sole objective was to start a war with the U.S. and conquer Texas.** On Mar 21, Paredes declared that Mexico “does not recognize the American flag on the soil of Texas. . .”(E)

Mexico even tried to get England to help them in their war against the US. England refused to become involved. On June 1, 1846, British Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen sent this message to England’s Ambassador to Mexico, Charles Bankhead: “She [Great Britain] would find herself engaged in a war with a Nation with which she would have no personal cause of quarrel, in behalf of a Nation and Government which she has repeatedly warned in the most friendly and urgent manner of their danger, and which, solely in consequence of their willful contempt of that warning, have at last plunged headlong down the precipice from which the British Government spared no efforts to save them.” Bankhead was instructed to make these points when informing Paredes why Britain would not become involved in the war.(F)

Sources:

- A. Congressional edition, Dec 4, 1843 By United States Congress pg 26
- B. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.84
- C. The Annexation of Texas (1911), by Justin H. Smith pg 426
- D. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.154
- E. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 46
- F. British interests and activities in Texas, 1838-1846 by Ephraim Douglass Adams, pub 1910, p225

**p. 150** - “It was not at all clear that the Rio Grande was the southern boundary of Texas, although Texas had forced the defeated Mexican general Santa Anna to say so when he was a prisoner. The traditional border between Texas and Mexico had been the Nueces River, about 150 miles to the north, and both Mexico and the United States had recognized that as the border. However, Polk, encouraging the Texans to accept annexation, had assured them he would uphold their claims to the Rio Grande.”

**Comment** - The Rio Grande River became the border on May 14, 1836, when Santa Anna, the head of Mexico’s government, signed the Treaties of Velasco, which resulted in Texas becoming an independent nation. Santa Anna had been captured by the Texas Army after they crushed the Mexican Army at the battle of San Jacinto. Though there was strong sentiment in Texas to execute Santa Anna for war crimes, the new Texas government was more interested in a peace agreement than revenge. He was treated with tremendous respect as a prisoner and didn’t have to sign anything.

**It's essential to recognize that Mexico did NOT attack Texas over a boundary dispute. Mexico NEVER said they merely wanted to conquer the land up to the Nueces River.** Polk was aware of this Mexican scam.(A) If they wanted the boundary to be the Nueces, they had 10 years to bring it up with Texas, and later the US and negotiate a deal. But the issue was really not about the border. Mexico's goal was to conquer Texas.

Source: A. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, by George Lockhart Rives, pg. 325

**p. 150 - "In the White House now was James Polk, a Democrat, an expansionist, who, on the night of his inauguration, confided to his Secretary of the Navy that one of his main objectives was the acquisition of California."**

**Comment -** This proves nothing. Another important objective for Polk was to take all of the Oregon Territory, but the issue was settled peacefully after difficult negotiations with Britain. The U.S. only got the southern half of the Oregon Territory. So saying he wanted California does not prove he intended to start a war over it.

**p. 150 - "All that was needed in the spring of 1846 was a military incident to begin the war that Polk wanted."**

**Comment - Mexico wanted to start a war with the U.S. Polk did NOT want a war with Mexico.** Polk had every reason to seek a diplomatic solution with Mexico. The US Army was untested against a conventional army. The last time the US Army faced off against a regular Army was the War of 1812, when they were routed by the British. Why would Polk fight a country with an untried army far from home over unfamiliar territory? Many foreign observers believed it would be nearly impossible to defeat Mexico - a nation of over 7 million people with many rugged mountains. The ability of Mexico to wage guerrilla war against our supply lines would prevent us from massing sufficient troops to defeat the Mexicans deep in their territory. Mexico could outlast the U.S. without suffering disastrously, while the US would have to wage an extremely costly war, raise a large army and still not be able to defeat Mexico. Eventually the Americans would tire of the war, the never ending casualties, huge military spending and make peace on Mexico's terms.

If Polk was planning to go to war against a strong country like Mexico, he would have begun a massive build up for the military, but he did not. Polk's cabinet recommended an additional 2,600 men for the army and none for the Navy.(A) This is an inconsequential increase. The U.S. did not engage in a serious military buildup until after we were attacked by Mexico. Once Texas joined the Union, Polk had a responsibility to protect their citizens.

The fact is the U.S. didn't have to go to war to acquire California or New Mexico. The U.S. had thousands of immigrants moving west each year. Within a few years, California would have had a heavy majority of Americans and New Mexico would only be a few years behind. So why go to war, if population growth could accomplish the same thing without all the bloodshed and cost of a war?

**Mexico WANTED to go to war with the US because they were convinced they would defeat the US.** Many Mexicans believed their army was nearly invincible. The Spanish Minister in Washington, Calderon de la Barca, said "There are no better troops in the world, nor better drilled and armed, than the Mexicans."(B) The Mexican correspondent to the London Times stated in 1845 that Mexican soldiers "are superior to those of the United States."(B) The Boletin Oficial of San Luis Potosi stated: "We have numerous and veteran forces burning with a desire to gain immortal renown."(B) "Not to speak of our approved infantry, our artillery is excellent, and our cavalry so superior in men and horses that it would be an injustice not to recognize the fact."(B) An editorial in La Voz del Pueblo said, "We have more than enough strength to make war." "Let us make it, then, and victory will perch upon our banners."(C)

Many international observers believed the US would have a tough time defeating Mexico - and many thought the U.S. would lose. The British minister in Texas, Captain Elliot, stated "They [U.S. troops] could not resist artillery and cavalry in a Country suited to those arms."(D) Some foreign observers believed it would take 250,000 US troops to win.(E)

Sources:

A. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.133

B. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.106

C. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.107

D. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.105

E. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.109

p. 150 - "Ordering troops to the Rio Grande, into territory inhabited by Mexicans, was clearly a provocation."

p. 151 - "The Mexicans had fired the first shot. But they had done what the American government wanted, . . ."

**Comment - The real question is this: Who was provoking who? How could the US be responsible for provoking a war with a country that had repeatedly declared war on the US, refused to negotiate, and put an invasion force on the border???? Consider:**

- First, Herrera was overthrown by General Mariano Paredes, whose sole objective was to start a war with the US. This was not just bluster on Mexico's part. Lieutenant Gillespie of the US Marines was in Mexico after Paredes took power and saw large scale war preparations underway. Troops and military supplies were being assembled near Mexico City on a large scale.(A)

- Second, Mexico's obsession for 10 years was with conquering Texas, which they still considered a breakaway province. **Mexican troops did not attack Texas over a boundary dispute. Mexico NEVER said they merely wanted to conquer the land up to the Nueces River.** Mexico intended to conquer all of Texas.

- Third, Mexico apparently accepted the Rio Grande as the boundary. Santa Anna DID sign a peace deal with Texas which placed the southern border at the Rio Grande. Santa Anna DID instruct the remnant of the Mexican Army to position themselves south of the Rio Grande after their defeat by Sam Houston at San Jacinto in 1836, and this is where they stayed.(B)(C) Mexico and Santa Anna both repudiated the peace agreement with Texas, so if Mexico DID consider the Nueces River the correct boundary line, why didn't they place their army there, instead of the southern side of the Rio Grande? President Polk believed the true Texas border was the Rio Grande, not the Nueces River: "The Texas which was ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty of 1819, embraced all the country now claimed by the State of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande."(D)

- Fourth, Mexico's claim that America had no valid claim to land between the Nueces and Rio Grande is NOT true. Doctor John Beales made a contract with the State of Coahuila and Texas in Oct 1832 for colonizing a tract of land between those rivers, comprising three million acres. Beales brought at least two groups of colonists to a settlement named Dolores, north of Laredo between 1834 and 1836. Everyone fled for their lives when Santa Anna's army invaded Texas to put down the rebellion early in 1836. One large wagon train was attacked by Comanche Indians and all the settlers were massacred except two women and their small children, who were taken captive.(E)

- Fifth, Mexico had an invasion force along the Rio Grande with the stated intentions of invading Texas. The US had a much smaller Army there with the stated intentions of defending Texas.

- Sixth, When General Taylor began his march to the Rio Grande River from Corpus Cristi, he informed Mexican authorities that it was simply for defensive purposes. In Oct 1847, a pamphlet written by Mariano Otero, editor of El Siglo XIX and Senator from the state of Jalisco, appeared. **Otero wrote: "The American forces did not advance to the Rio Grande until after the war became inevitable, and then only as an army of observation."**(F)

- Seventh, by refusing to resolve the border issue, Mexico - whether by design or accident - laid a political trap for the US. The boundary only became important AFTER Gen. Taylor's force went south of the Nueces to the Rio Grande. Suddenly, Mexico claimed the U.S. invaded Mexican territory and Mexico was compelled to defend herself and her honor. Mexico thus absolved itself of blame for starting an offensive war to conquer Texas by claiming they were fighting a "defensive" war. This is the EXACT reasoning used by Paredes to justify starting the war.

In his war proclamation of Apr 23, 1846, Paredes stated: ". . .I have commanded the general-in-chief of the division of our northern frontier to attack the army which is attacking us; . . .From this day defensive war begins, and every point of our territory which may be invaded or attacked shall be defended by force."(G)

Mexico even tried to get Britain to help them win their war against the United States. British Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen sent this message to England's Ambassador to Mexico, Charles Bankhead: "She [Great Britain] would find herself engaged in a war with a Nation with whom she would have no personal cause of quarrel, in behalf of a Nation and Government which she has repeatedly warned in the most friendly and urgent manner of their danger, and which, solely in consequence of their willful contempt of that warning, have at last plunged headlong down the precipice from which the British Government spared no efforts to save them." Bankhead was instructed to make these points when informing Paredes why Britain would not become involved in the war.(H)(I)

**Mexico started this war all by themselves.** In a letter dated Apr 18, 1846, Paredes wrote to General Arista “It is indispensable that hostilities begin, yourself taking the initiative.”(J) On April 25, 1846, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and ambushed American troops and started the war they were convinced they would win.

Sources:

- A. General Vallejo by Alan Rosenus (1995) p96
- B. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, by George Lockhart Rives, pg. 136
- C. The Annexation of Texas (1911), by Justin H. Smith pg 20
- D. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, by George Lockhart Rives, pg. 325
- E. <http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/beales.htm>
- F. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.155
- G. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, by George Lockhart Rives, pg. 141,142
- H. War with Mexico, vol2. (1919), Justin H. Smith p. 504
- I. British interests and activities in Texas, 1838-1846 by Ephraim Douglass Adams, pub 1910, p 225
- J. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.155

**p. 150** - “Taylor moved his troops to Corpus Christi, Texas, just across the Nueces River, and waited further instructions. They came in February 1846 - to go down the Gulf Coast to the Rio Grande. Taylor's army marched in parallel columns across the open prairie, scouts far ahead and on the flanks, a train of supplies following. Then, along a narrow road, through a belt of thick chaparral, they arrived, March 28, 1846, in cultivated fields and thatched-roof huts hurriedly abandoned by the Mexican occupants, who had fled across the river to the city of Matamoros. Taylor set up camp, began construction of a fort, and implanted his cannons facing the white houses of Matamoros, whose inhabitants stared curiously at the sight of an army on the banks of a quiet river.”

**Comment** - Lots of propoganda by Zinn in this paragraph. Before leaving Corpus Christi, General Taylor wrote a proclamation to the people of Matamoros in which he alerted them to his march, promised that his intentions were peaceful and vowed to respect their religious freedom and civil rights of the people he encountered. He also vowed to pay market value for any goods purchased.(A) Upon reaching the Rio Grande, General Taylor again wrote letters to both civilian and military authorities across the river at Matamoros, expressing his desire to “enter into any arrangements to secure the peace and harmony of the frontier” until the US and Mexican governments could reach an official accord.(B)

On March 29, the morning after the US Army arrived on the Rio Grande, Mexico put in place one 8 pound cannon aimed at the American camp and began to build elaborate defenses for Matamoros. By April 7, many more cannons were aimed at the US camp from multiple locations on the Mexican side.(C) On Mar 29, after Mexico aimed their cannon at US troops, American troops responded with 3 cannons, one of them pointing at General Mejia’s headquarters. The US didn’t begin construction of their own fort until April 7, which became known as Fort Brown.(D)

The Mexican Army was ALREADY at Matamoros, under the command of Gen. Francisco Mejia. He had about 2,000 troops on hand,(E) including 20 artillery pieces.(F) They were reinforced a few days later by troops from Tampico. Gen. Pedro Ampudia arrived on Apr 11 with about 3,000 additional troops. He replaced Mejia. General Arista took command around Apr 24th, replacing Ampudia. In a letter dated Apr 18, 1846, Paredes wrote to General Arista “It is indispensable that hostilities begin, yourself taking the initiative.”(G)

On April 25, 1846, 1600 Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande, ambushed American troops and started the war they so often said they wanted.

Sources:

- A. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 33
- B. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 69
- C. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 92
- D. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 103
- E. Two Armies on the Rio Grande (2014) by Douglas Murphy, p 98
- F. So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848 (1989) John S. D. Eisenhower pg 61
- G. War with Mexico, vol1. (1919), Justin H. Smith p.155

**p. 151** - "It was shortly after that, in the summer of 1845, that John O'Sullivan, editor of the Democratic Review, used the phrase that became famous, saying it was "Our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." Yes, manifest destiny."

**Comment** - The term "Manifest Destiny" is usually associated with the territorial expansion of the United States from 1803 to 1867, when the United States expanded from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean - largely defining the borders of the United States as they are today. But the idea of a "Manifest Destiny" is as old as civilization itself. Although the "crime" of "Manifest Destiny" has only been applied to the American experience, other countries had and have their own version. Actually, America's version of manifest destiny is pretty small compared to other countries, rulers and religions.

Moslems believe that it is their manifest destiny to conquer the world for Allah.

The Soviet Union believed their manifest destiny was to conquer the world for communism. The American military prevented this from happening.

Hitler's manifest destiny was his belief in Arian superiority and a large German empire for the Third Reich. The American military was largely responsible for preventing this from happening.

The Japanese believed they were racially superior to the rest of the world and that led them to conquer vast amounts of land in Asia and then attack Pearl Harbor to start World War 2 in the Pacific. The US military cut Japan down to size.

The British believed it was their manifest destiny to expand the British Empire around the world.

Spain believed it was their manifest destiny to conquer all of the New World for Spain and Catholicism. In fact, Spain's vision of manifest destiny was immense - far more aggressive than the US. Claiming all of the New World for Spain (except for Brazil) wasn't enough. Spain wanted more. In 1513, Vasco Balboa crossed Panama and was the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the west coast of the New World. With a wave of his arm, Balboa claimed the entire Pacific Ocean and all lands adjoining it for Spain. Although Balboa didn't know it, he claimed modern day United States, Canada, Alaska, Siberia, Japan, Korea, China, The Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia - all for Spain. Spain claimed all islands in the Caribbean although they did not settle all of them and didn't even know how many were there. **Many of Spain's land claims were meaningless.** It was really inevitable that Spain/Mexico's "manifest destiny" would come into conflict with America's more limited expansion. **While Spain/Mexico was claiming land just to claim it - land they had a difficult time putting people on - the US was rapidly expanding based on a growing population.**

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**p. 154** - "Accompanying all this aggressiveness was the idea that the United States would be giving the blessings of liberty and democracy to more people. This was intermingled with ideas of racial superiority, longings for the beautiful lands of New Mexico and California, and thoughts of commercial enterprise across the Pacific."

**Comment** - Early Americans were convinced of the superiority of the American form of government. They only had to look at the chaos in Mexico and other countries around the world to see the superiority of America. This superiority was obvious as millions of people from around the world abandoned their ancestral homelands and immigrated to America - not Mexico.

Despite what Zinn says, America was not near as aggressive as other nations - which Zinn ignores. As noted above, America's expansion was the result of a growing population, while other nations aggressiveness - Japan, Nazi Germany, etc., was due to belief in racial superiority. Russia has always been an aggressive/expansionist nation. Spain/Mexico was certainly far more aggressive in the New World than the U.S. was. They claimed land they couldn't use and made other claims just in case land was there. It was really inevitable that Spain/Mexico's land claims would come into conflict with America's more limited expansion. While Spain/Mexico was claiming land just to claim it - land they had a difficult time putting people on - the U.S. was rapidly expanding based on a growing population.

It's a fact that Spain killed many times more Indians in the Caribbean Islands, Central and parts of South America than were killed in what became the U.S. It's also important to recognize that the southwest US historically does NOT belong to Mexico. This land historically belonged to the Indians. Mexico took this land from the Indians. The US took this land from Mexico after they attacked the U.S. to start the Mexican American war.

A section of O'Sullivan's editorial reminded Americans that they were uniquely positioned to spread democracy throughout the world. Many believed that the United States had embarked upon a special experiment in freedom and democracy - an idea that would remake the world. As Thomas Paine said in Common Sense, *"We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand..."*(A)

Source:

A. The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, ed. Philip S. Foner, vol. 1, p. 45 . Originally published in 1776.

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**Pg 165 -** ". . . The U.S. bombardment of the city (Vera Cruz, Mexico) became an indiscriminate killing of civilians. One of the navy's shells hit the post office; others burst all over the city. A Mexican observer wrote:

The surgical hospital, which was situated in the Convent of Santo Domingo, suffered from the fire, and several of the inmates were killed by fragments of bombs bursting at that point. While an operation was being performed on a wounded man, the explosion of a shell extinguished the lights, and when other illumination was brought, the patient was found torn in pieces, and many others dead and wounded.

In two days, 1,300 shells were fired into the city, until it surrendered. A reporter for the New Orleans Delta wrote: "The Mexicans variously estimate their loss at from 500 to 1000 killed and wounded, but all agree that the loss among the soldiery is comparatively small and the destruction among the women and children is very great."

**Comment** - Even after the U.S. conquered the northern half of Mexico, they still refused to negotiate a permanent peace. So Polk decided that Mexico City would have to be conquered in order to get Mexico to negotiate. Vera Cruz was essential as a supply base for Scott's conquest of Mexico and it had to be done quickly, as the Yellow Fever season was fast approaching. Vera Cruz was surrounded by a 15 foot high, 3 foot thick wall with 89 artillery pieces.(1) Mexican troops buried sharpened stakes to impale anyone who stepped on them in front of the wall.(2) This made an infantry assault suicidal. In order to save lives on both sides, Scott chose to take Vera Cruz by siege.(3) On 21 March 1847, with Vera Cruz surrounded by U.S. forces, American General Scott demanded the city surrender, and requested that non-combatants be allowed to leave the city as their situation was hopeless.(4)(5)(6) Mexican General Juan Morales responded that the city would be defended at all cost.(1) The U.S. then started their bombardment of the city. Much of the bombardment was aimed at Cannons and other military targets in Vera Cruz.(7) The bombardment caused a 50 foot breach in the wall.(6)

The city surrendered on 27 March. At the request of the Mexicans, the U.S. guaranteed private property be respected and religious rights be held sacred.(8) The city had about 3,000 civilians.(2)

The U.S. lost 19 killed and 63 wounded. Mexico lost 80 soldiers killed and about 100 civilians were killed.(8) Scott reported Mexican losses not considerable as most civilians had taken refuge in basements.(9) Santa Anna declared it a "shameful surrender."(8)

1. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848 by George Rives - p385
2. The War with Mexico, Vol 2 by Justin Smith p 22
3. Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott by Winfield Scott p 424
4. Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott by Winfield Scott p 427, 428
5. The Son of Light Horse Harry by James Barnes p 101
6. Hitchcock memoirs p 244,247
7. Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott by Winfield Scott p 426
8. The War with Mexico, Vol 2 by Justin Smith p 33
9. Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott p 429

**p167** - As often in war, battles were fought without point. After one such engagement near Mexico City, with terrible casualties, a marine lieutenant blamed General Scott: "He had originated it in error and caused it to be fought, with inadequate forces, for an object that had no existence."

**Comment** - Zinn does not identify the Marine Lieutenant nor the battle. However, U.S. Grant answered this charge in his autobiography: Mexico is ". . . a country with a population of seven or eight millions, a mountainous country affording the greatest possible natural advantages for defence. . ." (1)

"It has always seemed to me that this northern route to the City of Mexico, would have been the better one to have taken. But my later experience has taught me two lessons: first, that things are seen plainer after the events have occurred; second, that the most confident critics are generally those who know the least about the matter criticised."

General Scott's successes are an answer to all criticism. He invaded a populous country, penetrating two hundred and sixty miles into the interior, with a force at no time equal to one-half of that opposed to him; he was without a base; the enemy was always intrenched, always on the defensive; yet he won every battle, he captured the capital, and conquered the government. Credit is due to the troops engaged, it is true, but the plans and the strategy were the general's." (2)

After predicting a disaster for Scott, the Duke of Wellington wrote, "His campaign was unsurpassed in military annals."

Source:

1. Personal memoirs of U. S. Grant, p 126
2. Personal memoirs of U. S. Grant, p 166

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**p 167** - In the final battle for Mexico City, Anglo-American troops took the height of Chapultepec and entered the city of 200,000 people, General Santa Anna having moved northward. This was September 1847. A Mexican merchant wrote to a friend about the bombardment of the city: "In some cases whole blocks were destroyed and a great number of men, women and children killed and wounded."

**Comment** - More false history from Zinn. Mexico City was NOT indiscriminately bombarded. First, a lot of Mexicans exaggerated greatly in their descriptions of events. Second, knowing the war was lost, Santa Anna and most of the Mexican Army abandoned Mexico City. However, some of the residents and criminals released from prison by Santa Anna began attacking the American Army. U.S. Artillery was used to destroy buildings being used by the attackers. There was artillery duels between the U.S. and remnants of the Mexican Army as U.S. troops fought their way into the capital. After 36 hours, the fighting was over and order was restored. From September 20, 1847 until the end of the war, Mexico City returned to its usual business.