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## ALABAMA'S POLITICAL LEADERS AND THE ACQUISITION OF FLORIDA

by HUGH C. BAILEY

**I**F MANY AMERICANS were concerned with western expansion in 1819, it is equally true that many were greatly interested in expansion to the south. America's spirit of "manifest destiny" was by no means blunted with the purchase of Louisiana, and at the time of Alabama's admission to the Union the question of the acquisition and disposition of Florida had become a major issue. Nowhere was the concern greater than among the group which dominated the early years of Alabama's political life, "the Georgia Machine." Composed of former Georgians, many of whom originally came from Virginia, the "machine" was nurtured and directed from Washington by Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford. He and such Alabama "Georgians" as the former Georgia senators Charles Tait and William Wyatt Bibb were quite familiar with the efforts which had been made for Southern expansion.<sup>1</sup>

They knew that as early as 1805 Jefferson had asked Congress for a two million dollar appropriation to be used as an aid in the negotiations to obtain West Florida. Contact with Napoleon, however, had produced no results, but between 1810 and 1813 revolution and military force procured West Florida from the Perdido River to the Mississippi for the young nation.

American nationalism had been accentuated by the War of 1812 at a time when Spanish strength was declining as a result of the Spanish-American revolutions. The Spanish foreign minister, Pizarro, "feared that some sudden move of the United States might bring on a war that would ruin Spain in America once and forever."<sup>2</sup> Therefore he decided to let the United States have Florida in return for which he hoped to receive a pledge from

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1. The author has dealt fully with the dominance of the "Georgia Machine" in "John W. Walker and the 'Georgia Machine' in Early Alabama Politics." *The Alabama Review*, VIII (July, 1955), 179-195.

2. Samuel Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, (New York, 1949), 307.

the American government not to recognize any of the revolted provinces in Spanish America. To achieve this goal, the Spanish Minister to the United States, Don Luis de Onis y Gonzales, opened negotiations early in 1818.

These negotiations were interrupted in the spring of 1818 by Andrew Jackson's Florida expedition. Late in 1817 the hero of the Battle of New Orleans had been commissioned by the United States government to punish the Seminoles whose raids into American territory and provision of haven for escaped slaves had become quite an annoyance, and was authorized to pursue them across the Spanish border if necessary. With characteristic vigor, Jackson seized the posts of St. Marks and Pensacola, tried and executed two British citizens, deposed the Spanish governor, naming an American in his place, and burned the Spanish archives.

Onis demanded a return of Florida to Spanish authority, an indemnity for the episode, and punishment of Jackson. Yet he continued to discuss the potential treaty with Secretary of State John Quincy Adams on the assumption that Florida would be restored.<sup>3</sup>

Secretary of War John C. Calhoun wrote his good friend, Charles Tait, former Senator from Georgia and now Alabama's first United States District Judge, that Jackson's action was "unauthorized, and done . . . on his own responsibility." Such being the case the captured areas would, of course, be returned to Spain. Though not a pacifist, Calhoun was extremely anxious to avoid war over the Florida question. "We have nothing to gain in a Spanish War and much to lose," he declared. "Should the contest be confined to Spain and us, our commerce must pass from us to the neutral powers, particularly England. Should other powers be involved, and the war general, the wisest man cannot see its result. We must suffer. We want Time. Let us grow."<sup>4</sup> Tait later was to mirror this same reasoning in his advice to John W. Walker, Alabama's "Georgia" member of the United States Senate.<sup>5</sup>

3. Bemis, *op. cit.*, 300-316.

4. John C. Calhoun to Charles A. Tait, July 20, 1818, Charles A. Tait Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, hereinafter cited as Tait Papers, Montgomery.

5. In order to quiet opposition Alabama's "Georgia Machine" allowed the second U.S. Senator from the state to be chosen outside its ranks. The office went to William Rufus King, who was elected Vice-President of the United States in 1854.

Holding these views, Secretary Calhoun was greatly concerned over any provocative action such as that taken by Jackson. Once he had received Tait's views on the subject, he spoke more freely, but in a confidential manner. <sup>6</sup> "It is indispensable that the military should on all occasions be held subordinate to orders: and, I know of no excuses except necessity that ought to exempt from punishment disobedience to orders," Calhoun held. If this were true why had Jackson not been punished?

Calhoun's answer to this question does not indicate his stand in the cabinet for court martialing Jackson. He diplomatically informed Tait that the reason for the administration's action was "adversity of opinion, as to the character of his (Jackson's) conduct." Some held that the General had received orders which he believed were from the President authorizing the action he had taken. "When to this was added the misconduct of the Spanish authority in Florida and the relation of this country with Spain, it was thought it would be highly improper to order any proceedings against the General." "Such was the diversity of view taken on this subject," Calhoun wrote, that it would "render it, perhaps, improper, to take the high toned course; as that ought not to be resorted to, but in a case free from doubt." <sup>7</sup>

Reflecting an adverse attitude toward Jackson which was always held by many of the "Georgia" political clique, Territorial Governor William Wyatt Bibb of Alabama disagreed with Calhoun. "In apologizing for General Jackson," he held, the governmental leaders "have erred most egregiously." Bibb felt that they would gain nothing by it with Jackson's friends, and, at the same time, that they would "lose much with the thinking part of the Nation." "Not a moment should have been lost in arresting the Genl. and thereby showing a just regard to the preservation of our constitution," the Governor wrote. "No man should be permitted in a free country to usurp the whole powers of the whole government and to treat with contempt all authority except that of his own will." <sup>8</sup>

6. Calhoun to Tait, September 5, 1818, Tait Papers, Montgomery. "Your train of reflections in relation to Jackson and Pensacola is such as I expected," the Secretary wrote. At the end of his letter he observed, "I have spoken to you freely on this interesting subject. You will consider it between ourselves."

7. *Id. to id., ibid.*

8. William W. Bibb to Tait, September 19, 1818, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

In this opinion Bibb undoubtedly reflected the views of the great national patron and godfather of Alabama's "Georgia Machine," Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford. A leading presidential candidate even in 1818, Crawford had joined Calhoun in staunch opposition to Jackson in the cabinet dispute over the Florida fiasco. Jackson, however, lay under no such misapprehensions as to Crawford's attitude as he did in the case of Calhoun. Therefore the bitterness between Crawford and Jackson became of immediate political import.

The election of a United States Senator in Tennessee in 1819 "was conducted with particular reference to the supposed quarrel between the Genl. and myself," Crawford wrote. "What ought to be done with this Man? He is not inferior to the Georgia Genl. [John Clark] <sup>9</sup> in depravity and vindictiveness, and superior to him in talents and address."

The Treasury Secretary avowed that he had no direct quarrel with Jackson. Searching his own actions, he could find the only source of offense to be his indifference to the anger Jackson had shown toward him, evidently produced by Crawford's stand on the Florida episode. <sup>10</sup>

Although before 1824 Crawford personally tended to discount Jackson's political strength, <sup>11</sup> some of his followers did not share these views and regretted that the "Florida Dispute" was not better exploited politically. As late as March, 1822, Georgia Congressman Thomas W. Cobb wrote that he believed that Jackson was the third person in a trio composed of Georgia's Governor John Clark, Calhoun and Jackson formed to defeat Crawford's presidential ambitions. "A glorious chance to dissolve this confederacy has been lost." Had wisdom guided the investigations

9. John Clark was the leader of the "popular" party in Georgia which opposed the powerful Crawford-Troup forces which was widely known as the aristocratic party of "the Virginians and their allies." See John E. Shipp, *Giant Days or the Life and Times of William H. Crawford, Embracing also Excerpts from His Diary, Letters and Speeches, together with a Copious Index to the Whole*, (Americus, 1909), 30-33, 68; also E. Merton Coulter, *Georgia, A Short History*, (Chapel Hill, 1947), 239-240.
10. William H. Crawford to Tait, November 15, 1819, Tait Papers, Montgomery.
11. *Id.* to *id.*, September 17, 1822, *ibid.* Crawford held that the nomination of Jackson by the Tennessee Legislature "can produce no effect whatever, unless it should effect the election of Colonel Williams to the senate. I am fearful that it was intended more for that purpose than any other. There is no other state in the Union that will take him for President."

of "the late Florida transactions Jackson would have been ruined," the congressman felt.<sup>12</sup>

Though Jackson had severe critics in the cabinet and the Congress, Secretary of State Adams eloquently defended his actions, in effect contending "Spain must either exercise responsible authority in the derelict province or cede it to the United States." With this warning, Florida was returned to Spain. Shortly thereafter, the Marquis de Yrujo, the new Spanish Foreign Minister, instructed Onís to grant Florida to the United States and to settle the "whole territorial question as best he could preferably by running the [western] boundary along the Missouri to its source and thence to the ocean *as far north as possible*."

The Spanish envoy received this *carte blanche* on January 4, 1819. Sensing the weakness of his position, he fought a valiant rear-guard action. Finally on Washington's birthday, February 22, 1819, he formally signed the Adams-Onís Treaty which ceded Florida to the United States and fixed a transcontinental boundary line between the United States and Spanish territory west of the Mississippi River. Two days after this, the Senate, by unanimous consent, gave its approval to one of the greatest diplomatic triumphs in American history.<sup>13</sup> It appeared that the Florida question had been settled, but, as Senator John W. Walker prepared to assume his position in the Senate upon the admission of Alabama, the entire affair was again thrown in the hands of the American government.

Although the powers under which Onís signed the treaty contained a pledge that the Spanish King would approve any treaty negotiated by his plenipotentiary, the Council of State objected when the document reached Madrid. It pointed out that it contained no guarantee against the recognition of the independence of the Latin American states, no promise of the United States to better enforce its neutrality laws, while in the Council's opinion, too much territory had been ceded. Overawed by such a report, the King dispatched General Francisco Dionisio Vives to Washington to see if he could obtain more favorable terms.

As time passed the impatience of the American people grew greater. Senator Walker from his Washington vantage point was sensitive to this and conscious of its influence on the govern-

12. Thomas W. Cobb to Tait, March 8, 1822, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

13. Bemis, *op. cit.*, 317-340.

mental officials. Secretary Adams was disgusted, feeling that the President's "sympathetic Latin-American Policy" had destroyed his fine handiwork. He urged Monroe to advise Congress to occupy the Floridas by force. Henry Clay, at this time Speaker of the House, was jubilant since he felt Spain had saved the United States from an unprofitable deal. From the House chamber, he demanded that the United States occupy both Florida and Texas.<sup>14</sup> The cry for action was heard everywhere. Secretary of the Treasury Crawford felt (November, 1819) that there was no intention of making Spanish refusal to ratify the treaty a cause of war; yet he believed that the Floridas would be occupied and, at the same time, a declaration would be issued stating "that war is not intended - that we shall limit our views to the accomplishment of what Spain ought to have done for us." By this means he presumed war would be avoided.<sup>15</sup>

Judge Charles Tait, who shared his wisdom with Senator Walker on every major issue, viewed the question with the greatest solicitude. He sincerely hoped that war, "the last resort of nations," could be avoided; yet, if it should come, he felt that the United States must be ready to respond with "promptitude & . . . unanimity." He feared, reflecting Calhoun's views, that such a war would be "disastrous" to the United States since its navigation would be sacrificed and its commerce would "become the *prey* of the privateering interests of all Europe"

He felt that the American Navy was much too small to protect the country's maritime interests, "spread," as they were "over every sea." Nor had it been ten times its current strength, it could not have protected American shipping. Should war come, "the British, the Dutch, the Dane, the Swede &c" would use the Spanish flag to attack American shipping, until, Tait feared, within a few years, "the American flag would (except on board a national ship) be a rarity on the Ocean."

Tait felt that great pressure would be exerted for war by all the Florida speculators, "all persons who expect contracts & fat jobs; all the military by land & sea who honestly pant for action & an opportunity to distinguish themselves," and many others. But he wondered if these special groups represented "the interest of the nation."

14. *Ibid.*, 350; John W. Walker to Tait, December 20, 1819, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

15. Crawford to Tait, November 15, 1819, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

The former Senator, however, was no advocate of "peace, at any price." He proposed the occupancy of so much of Florida "as may be necessary to secure us against Indian depredation." Once this was done American negotiation could go forward "on a solid basis," since the republic would have "one foot on Florida & the other on Texas bestriding the gulf of Mexico."<sup>16</sup>

Senator Walker deprecated a Spanish war, but felt that Tait's views were "perfectly correct." Should war come he could foresee only an annihilation of American commerce, since it would be "a war not so much of Spanish, but of commercial Europe." He felt that, "every rascal pecaroon of every nation would hoist the Spanish cross." The course of wisdom, then, was for the United States not to loose a Spanish war if it could be avoided with honor.

The Alabama senator believed that no one "seriously proposes that it [war] shall be proclaimed by us, but it may grow out of the measures which we adopt."<sup>17</sup> On December 7, 1819, President Monroe, in his annual "State of the Union" message, asked Congress for authority to take over Florida, whereupon the House Committee on Foreign Affairs reported such a bill. This policy was countered by Henry Clay who introduced two resolutions in the "Committee of the Whole" stating that only Congress has power to cede territory which belongs to the United States (referring to Texas, in this instance) and that the equivalent in the Adams-Onis Treaty for that part of Louisiana west of the Sabine River was inadequate and that that area should not be transferred to any foreign power or the treaty renewed.<sup>18</sup>

Walker wondered what would be the result of an attempt to execute the President's policy, and, if something of this nature were not done, if the government would abandon the treaty, and "consider ourselves remitted to our ancient title, and take possession of Texas by virtue of the Louisiana treaty."

Both courses had their advocates. Walker felt sure that if Monroe's policy were adopted, it would be done with modifications; perhaps, a time would be set for Spanish concurrence beyond

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16. Tait to Walker, November 15, 19, 1819, John W. Walker Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, hereinafter cited as Walker Papers, Montgomery.

17. Walker to Tait, December 20, 1819, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

18. See Bemis, *op. cit.*, 351.



which no explanation [*sic*] will be allowed, no grace accorded." Meanwhile one could only wait and hope.<sup>19</sup>

Clay's resolutions never emerged from the "Committee of the Whole." They may have influenced the President's thinking, however. On Adams' advice, he sent a special message to Congress on March 27, 1820, suggesting that it delay action on his recommendations until the next session, allowing time for a new Spanish minister to arrive. Simultaneously, Secretary Adams informed the Georgia leader, John Forsyth, the United States' new Minister to Spain (1819-1823), that if Spanish approval of the Adams-Onis Treaty were withheld "the United States would insist upon further indemnity, and would reassert 'and never again relinquish' its rights to a western boundary at the Rio Grande del Norte."<sup>20</sup>

Forsyth's mission proved notably unsuccessful. Israel Pickens, the future Alabama governor, though a friend of Forsyth, felt that had he "used a little more of the *suaviter in modo*, & left the *fortiter* to the government at home" he might have obtained better results.<sup>21</sup>

Judge Tait believed that his former colleague had permitted himself "to depart from the usual style, & temper, & courtesy in Diplomatic affairs." Tait did not question his motives, and, in an obvious reference to Jackson, wondered why "sh. not the same rule be applied to the man who runs riot in civil matters as to him who violates all Laws in Millitary [*sic*] affairs." He hoped that Forsyth would be permitted "to go off even with *eclat* in consideration 1st that he has only bullied Spain & 2d because his motive was good."

On a bit more reflection, Tait came to feel that Forsyth should be called home at once, since he could do no possible good in Madrid. The former senator was sorry for him since he had "subjected himself to the imputation of hunting for popularity through his diplomatic agency." He hoped that the government would "take care" of the "diplomat" after his return home.<sup>22</sup>

When Senator Walker heard reports that Forsyth was returning home, he was sure that the diplomat must have been re-

19. Walker to Tait., December 20, 1819, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

20. See Bemis, *op. cit.*, 351 ff.

21. Israel Pickens to Walker, January 27, 1820 Walker Papers, Montgomery.

22. Tait to Walker, February 29, 1820, *ibid.*

called; at least, he felt, he should have been. Shortly after this Don Francis de Dionysio do Vives arrived in Washington (April 9) and a rumor flooded the city to the effect that he had brought the ratified treaty with him. By the 17th, however, it was agreed by the "secret-finders" that the Don had not brought the treaty "ratified by his *adored* master." Rumor then began to hold that he had received the power to agree to a new treaty which would enable the "instant possession of the Floridas" to be given the United States upon its concurrence.<sup>23</sup>

General Vives soon made known Spain's demands for ratification. These included a strengthening of the neutrality laws, a guarantee of Spain's possessions in the western hemisphere and a pledge by the United States not to recognize any of the revolting Spanish-American colonies. Secretary Adams flatly refused these terms, holding that the United States had pursued a neutral policy and that to give pledges never to recognize the independence of the revolting colonies would be a violation of neutrality.<sup>24</sup>

Senator Walker preferred to wait and see what would happen, but he had no fear of war during the current session of Congress. "No body is mad enough just now to fight for Florida," he wrote. Besides, "Our *sinews* are unstrung. Our war-chest is as empty as an exhausted receiver [reservoir]. The treasury . . . is *minus* even for the peace establishment." In such a condition, the United States would not precipitate war.<sup>25</sup>

As the session closed in May, 1820, the Alabama senator bemoaned the fact that no major developments had taken place on the Florida issue. Not only had the nation not taken Florida, but it did not "rest authority in the President to do so contingently. 'Our poverty, and not our will, consents'," Walker wrote, as he returned home.<sup>26</sup>

But again European distresses came to America's aid. Soon after Vives left Madrid, a liberal revolution took place. This, together with the danger that the United States might seize Florida - and even Texas should Clay's views prevail - led to a reversal of policy. Isolated in Europe and threatened in America, the Council of States now favored ratification, and the "new

23. Walker to Tait, April 17, 1820, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

24. Bemis, *op. cit.*, 351-352.

25. Walker to Tait, April 17, 1820, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

26. *Id.* to *id.*, May 14, 1820, *ibid.*

constitutional Cortes" gave its approval in secret on September 30, 1820, at the same time annulling its Florida land grants. The King signed the treaty October 24, 1820.<sup>27</sup>

The revolution would appear also to have had effects on American policy. Had it not occurred, Secretary of War Calhoun believed that "there would have been little, or no diversity as to the course to be pursued on the termination of the correspondence with General Vives." In the opinion of Calhoun, "The occupation of the country in dispute would have followed."<sup>28</sup> Happily this was not necessary.

When Congress reconvened in the fall of 1820, the rumors that the cession had been made were repeated in the London journals and private letters from Madrid, though the government had received nothing official on the subject.<sup>29</sup> By the end of January, 1821, however, there was "no doubt . . . of its approval by the King with advice and consent of the Cortez." A policy of watchful negotiation had paid off.<sup>30</sup>

Since the terms in the original treaty had provided that ratification must be exchanged within six months, President Monroe was forced to place its fate once more in the hands of the Senate. Senator Walker feared that "unctious politicians, [who] look with more solicitude to Texas" than to Florida, would impede its progress. Fortunately these fears did not prove to be correct. On February 19, 1821, the Senate again gave its approval, this time with four dissenting votes. These were cast by Senators James Brown of Louisiana, a brother-in-law of Henry Clay, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, William Allen Trimble of Ohio and John Williams of Tennessee.<sup>31</sup>

With the acquisition of Florida, the next question which became of paramount interest to Alabama's leaders was the disposition of the western portion of the area. The Alabama Constitutional Convention, led by Senator Walker and other "Georgians," had memorialized Congress praying that so much of the country as lies west of the Apalachicola River should be added to Alabama

27. Bemis, *op. cit.*, 352.

28. Calhoun to Tait, May 20, 1820, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

29. Walker to Tait, December 17, 1820, *ibid.*

30. *Id.* to *id.*, January 28, 1821, *ibid.*

31. *Id.* to *id.*, *ibid.*

upon the ratification of the treaty of annexation.<sup>32</sup> The memorial pointed out that much of the area lies along the southern border of Alabama and that Pensacola "must become" the main seaport for at least the portion of the state "which lies south of [the] chain of Mountains dividing the waters of the Tennessee River from that of Mobile Bay." Unless the area should be given to Alabama, it held, "2/3's of Alabama will be blocked by a strip of territory 50 miles in breadth."

The convention pointed out that this portion of Florida was held to be composed of barren soil, while Eastern Florida "appears of itself sufficiently extensive to form a state." It requested the Congress to examine the condition of all concerned. If it did so and acted accordingly, the convention had no fear as to what the results would be.<sup>33</sup>

Judge Tait sincerely hoped that the Congress would comply with the request of the convention. "Our Geographical symetry [*sic*] will be marred unless this annexation takes place," he wrote. He trusted that "the local divisions of this State our northern & our southern interests will not operate to obstruct a measure which cannot but be for the interest of this community."<sup>34</sup>

In February, 1821, Senator Walker presented the memorial of the Alabama Convention to the Senate, where it was referred to the Foreign Relations Committee. Unfortunately Secretary Crawford and the other national leaders of the "Georgia" clique did not identify the cause of their Alabama brethren with their own, therefore shortly thereafter the Senate committee was discharged from the consideration of the measure.<sup>35</sup>

Walker did not give up his struggle, however, nor did his friends and potential constituents give up hope. In February, 1822, Judge Tait planned the possible rearrangement of his court sessions should West Florida be added to his district. Since Pensacola was "as healthy in Sept. as in Jany.," he felt that he could retreat to it during the sickly season in South Alabama. He hoped

32. In Clarence E. Carter (ed.), *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, XVIII, *The Territory of Alabama, 1817-1819*, (Washington, 1952), 664-666.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Tait to Walker, November 16, 1821, Walker Papers, Montgomery.

35. *Journal of the Senate of the United States of America*, 16 Cong., 2 sess., (Washington, 1822), 211, 217, 226, hereinafter cited as *Sen. Jr.*

the annexation would take place since he deemed it "necessary for them & for us."<sup>36</sup>

As late as July, 1822, Senator Walker received a request from J. H. Chaplin as to when a new memorial should be sent to Congress from the residents of Pensacola. Chaplin reported that the previous year when he presented a memorial on the subject, "the measure was unpopular," and he obtained only about two-hundred-thirty signers. At the time of his letter, however, he was convinced that "3/4's are now in favor" of annexation to Alabama. He was at a loss as to whether to memorialize the next session or delay yet another session before presenting another petition to Congress.<sup>37</sup>

In the interim, however, the Senate had passed a bill establishing a territorial government for Florida. When this measure was under debate, Walker offered an amendment providing for the annexation of West Florida to Alabama, which was defeated 25 to 19. Walker and William R. King were joined by only two other Southern senators in voting for the measure.<sup>38</sup>

Walker made "sundry eloquent languages" on the subject and felt that he had demonstrated that the annexation would be best for both Alabama and Florida. He received "a great many fine compliments" for his exertions, but these did not produce votes for his doomed amendments.

"It failed chiefly from the fears of the South," he wrote, but he felt that the failure was only temporary. "It must finally succeed," he held. "The Country belongs to us by position and common interests. Nature has given it to us, and Congress will not always withhold [it]." Walker found this to be the opinion of three-quarters of the Senate. The peninsula was "competent of itself" to become a state, and once this fact became established

36. Tait to Walker, February 22, 1822, Walker Papers, Montgomery. Tait also requested that if his judicial district were enlarged that he should receive an increase in salary, so that his stipend would be the same as that of the Mississippi Judge.

37. J. H. Chaplin to Walker, July 13, 1822, Walker Papers, Montgomery.

38. *Sen. Jr.*, 17 Cong., 1 sess., (Washington, 1823), 166-167. The boundary proposed for the territory to be annexed to Alabama was as follows: "Beginning at the mouth of the Perdido river; thence, up the same, to the thirty-first degree of north latitude; thence, along the said degree of latitude, to the middle of the Chatahouchie river; thence, along the middle of the said river Chatahouchie, or Apalachicola, to the Gulf of Mexico; thence, westwardly, including all adjacent islands dependent on the late province of West Florida, to the place of beginning."

in the statesmen's minds, "the natural union of West Florida and Alabama will [be] no longer forbidden." Though he was convinced that the present "is the best and wisest time" for annexation, Alabama's premier senator had to place his faith in the future. For once his trust was in vain.<sup>39</sup>

The denouement of the Florida saga came in the spring of 1822. On March 8, President Monroe sent a message to Congress, accompanied by documents, advocating the recognition of the independence of the revolutionary Latin American republics. Walker felt that there would be no difficulty whatsoever in obtaining House approval. Though the Spanish minister strongly protested, he felt that the matter would rest there, and that the Senate would follow the lead of the lower chamber. "Less sensation has been excited by this measure than you would imagine," he wrote. "Many *great-men*, it is said, are ready and willing to visit these new powers in quality of ambassadors &c."<sup>40</sup>

Senator Walker's crystal ball proved to be correct. Within less than two months the independent republics had received American recognition, and for all practical purposes, the Florida episode was at an end.

39. Walker to Tait, March 19, 1822, Tait Papers, Montgomery.

40. *Id.* to *id.*, *ibid.*