

# Edgefield Advertiser.

"We will cling to the Pillars of the Temple of our Liberties, and if it must fall we will Perish amidst the Ruins."

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**BY WM. F. DURISOE,**  
**EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.**

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## REMARKS OF MR. CALHOUN IN REPLY TO MR. BENTON.

In Senate, February 24, 1847.

Mr. Calhoun rose and said: One thing, Mr. President, at least, may be inferred from the unprovoked attack of the Senator, and the great solicitude he evinced to trace the authorship of the war to me—and that is, that the war is unpopular.—There can be no mistake. He felt that the tide of public sentiment had turned against it, and hence the anxiety exhibited to place its responsibility on my shoulders, and take it from those on whom it ought justly to rest. Had he supposed the opposite—had he believed that the war was necessary and unavoidable, and that its termination would be successful—I am the last man to whom he would attribute any agency in causing it. I am gratified that the Senator has furnished this evidence.—It affords reasonable hope, that those who are responsible for it, will exert themselves, and I hope with success, to bring it to a speedy termination.

He traces the authorship to me, because, as he asserts, I am the real author of the annexation of Texas, and that annexation is the real cause of the war. Mr. President, there will be no dispute hereafter as to the real author of annexation.—Less than twelve months since, I had many competitors for that honor: the official organ here claimed, if my memory serves me, a large share for Mr. Polk and his Administration, and not less than half a dozen others from other quarters claimed to be the real authors. But now, since the war has become unpopular, they all seem to agree that I, in reality, am the author of annexation. I will not put the honor aside. I may now rightfully and indisputably claim to be the author of that great event—an event which has so much extended the domains of the Union, which has added so largely to its productive powers, which promises so greatly to extend its industry, and given security to our most exposed frontier. I take pride to myself as being the author of this great event.

But the Senator objects that I so conducted the question of annexation as necessarily to lead to the war. On what does he rest this charge? He rests it on the ground that I selected the Resolution as it came from the House of Representatives, as the basis of the annexation, instead of giving the Texas Government the choice between the House Resolution and the amendment of the Senate originally moved by the Senator himself. He complained bitterly that the Senate Resolution—passed at the very heel of the session, under the expectation that it would be carried into effect by the present Administration, then just coming into power, and not by Mr. Tyler's Administration, then about to expire—had not been adopted.

He seemed to think that the then Administration had no right to act upon it, and that, undertaking to do so, was depriving its successor of some of its rights. He accused me of acting with the greatest promptness. The fact is so: The Resolution, if I recollect, was signed by the late President about the first of March. I saw the importance of acting promptly, and advised the President to act without delay, that he had the constitutional right of doing so, and that I deemed it necessary that he should act in order effectually to secure the success of a measure which had originated with his Administration. His cabinet was summoned the next day, and concurred in the opinion. That night I prepared the despatch for Mr. Donelson, our Charge in Texas, and the next day, late in the evening of the third of March, it was forwarded to him. It was my last official act of any importance as Secretary of State.

I selected the Resolution of the House in preference to the amendment of which the Senator from Missouri was the author, because I clearly saw, not only that it was every way preferable, but the only certain mode by which annexation could be effected. My reasons for thinking so were fully set forth in my despatch, which may be found among the public documents accompanying the first annual message of the present Executive. They will speak for themselves; they never have been controverted, and never can be successfully. Indeed, I never considered the Senator's amendment as expressing the

deliberate sense either of the Senate or House of Representatives. It is well known that he, and a few of his friends, had the power of greatly embarrassing the passage of the Resolutions of the House, if not of defeating them; and that his amendment was moved, not so much as an improvement of the Resolutions, as to gratify him and them. That the course I adopted did secure annexation, and that it was indispensable for that purpose, I have high authority in my possession. That which all would admit to be the highest, if I could with propriety introduce it; and for this prompt and decided act, if for nothing else, I might claim the authorship of annexation.

Now, can any thing be more absurd than the assertion that the war with Mexico resulted from not selecting the House resolution, instead of the amendment of the Senator? He has ventured the bold assertion, without the shadow of an argument to sustain it. What possible difference could it make with Mexico, whether the annexation was made upon one or the other? Why should the one not be as offensive to her as the other? Indeed, I doubt much whether, even to this day, the Government of Mexico knows whether the resolution was passed with or without an alternative. Such is the baseless ground on which he has charged me with being the author of the war. I had heard, for several days past, that he had prepared to make an elaborate attack on me. Some of my friends asked, rather justly, if I did not expect to be annihilated. After these givings out, and such laborious preparation, I did suppose the Senator would make some show of a formidable charge; but of all the attacks I have ever witnessed in this or any other legislative body, I have never known one so empty and ridiculous. Every one of his charges is founded either in gross error or partial statement of facts, or on some forced and absurd conclusion. I may begin with the very first that he made. He had the assurance to assert, in the presence of the Senate, that I was the first to introduce the question, who was the real author or cause of this war? Now, I appeal to every Senator, and every other individual who was present on the occasion, whether the Senator from Tennessee, [Mr. Turney] did not first charge me with being the author of this war, and whether I did not

by showing that it originated in the order to Gen. Taylor, to march from Corpus Christi, to take position on the Rio del Norte? I go further, and ask, is there a Senator here ignorant of the fact, that the question of who was the author or cause of the war, had been long before elaborately discussed in this body—in the House of Representatives, and throughout the whole country, from its declaration up to that time. In the face of all this, the Senator rises up in his place, after a long and laborious preparation, and asserts, that it was I who originated the enquiry, as to who was its author. This is a fair sample of the accuracy of the senator, in his numerous allegations to show that I was the author of the war. I might go on and take them up one by one, and show that every one of his positions and deductions is equally unfounded in fact or false in conclusion. I do not deem it necessary. A large portion of his speech was but the stale repetition of what he said in the session of 1842-43, when the treaty which I had concluded with Texas, was under discussion in this body. All the documents now brought forward were then before the Senate, and he went over the same topics very elaborately, and with much more power than on the present occasion, without making any impression on the country. The country was against him then, and still remains against him, and it is in vain that he undertakes to disturb its settled conviction. It will remain ever unchanged, in spite of all that he can do. Under this conviction, I will not weary the Senate, by repelling assaults then made and then repelled. The most prominent of the charges—the orders given by the administration to place a fleet in the Gulf of Mexico, and a portion of the army on the frontier of Texas—was repelled by my then colleague, (Mr. McDuffie,) of whom he speaks so highly on this occasion. In repelling it, he said, that if the orders to which the Senator then and now objects, had not been issued, the Executive would have been guilty of great dereliction of duty.

The Florida treaty, forming another subject of attack, figured also on that occasion, in connection with annexation, and what he said now is but a repetition what he said then. He then, as now, made me responsible for that treaty, although I was but one of six members of Mr. Monroe's cabinet, and the youngest of its members—responsible, without advancing a particle of proof to show that I ever gave it my support or approbation. He rests the charge on some disclaimer, as it seems, that the then Secretary of State, (Mr. Adams) has, at some time, made, that he was not responsible for the treaty. The Senator may be right as to that; but how can that, by any possibility, show that I was responsible? But I am prepared to take my full share of responsibility as a member of Mr. Monroe's cabinet, without having any particular agency in forming the treaty or influence in inducing the cabinet to adopt it. I then thought, and still think, it is a good treaty; and so thought my Memory does not deceive me, it received nearly every vote of the Senate. [A Senator. "Yes, every vote."] It then received the unanimous vote of the

Senate, promptly given. Of course, if that treaty was the cause of the war with Mexico, as the Senator seems to suppose, this body is, as much the author and cause of the war, as the individual on whom he is now so anxious to fix it.

I have said it is a good treaty, not without due reflection. We acquired much by it. It gave us Florida—an acquisition not only important in itself, but also in reference to the whole south-western frontier. There was, at that time, four powerful tribes of Indians, two of whom, the Creeks and the Choctaws, were contiguous to Florida, and the two others—the Chickasaws and Cherokee—were adjoining. They were the most numerous and powerful tribes in the United States, and, from their position, were exposed to be acted on and excited against us from Florida.—It was important that this state of things should terminate, which could only be done by obtaining the possession of Florida.

But there were other and powerful considerations for the acquisition. We had a short time before extinguished the Indian title to large tracts of country in Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia, lying upon streams and rivers which passed through Florida to the Gulf—lands in a great measure valueless, without the right of navigating them to their mouths. The acquisition of Florida gave us this right, and enabled us to bring into successful cultivation a great extent of fertile lands, which have added much to the increased production of our great staple—cotton. Another important point was effected by the acquisition. It terminated a very troublesome dispute with Spain, growing out of the capture of St. Mark's and Pensacola by General Jackson, in the Seminole war; and finally, it perfected our title to Oregon, by ceding to us whatever right Spain had to that Territory.

Such is the treaty on which the Senator has lavished so much of his abuse; but there were other reasons for adopting the Sabine as the boundary, and of which I was ignorant at the time the treaty was formed, and to the knowledge of which I have come within the last few years. Mr. Monroe, if I am correctly informed, in adopting that line, acted under circumstances which left him little option. I am not at liberty to state them—the information I received confidentially. It is sufficient to state that he had ascertained that the Senate would not ratify a treaty with a boundary farther west. It was communicated to him, by Senators of first respectability. Their reason for refusing to ratify a treaty which would extend the boundary beyond the Sabine, I do not choose to go into, although it was communicated to me with the information to which I have alluded.

But if we take out of the speech of the Senator what he has stated in relation to annexation, and the Florida treaty, in which, as I have stated, he has repeated old and stale charges, that made not the slightest impression on the country at the time, what is there left of his present attack upon me? It is surprising that a man of his experience and sagacity should suppose that the repetition of these threadbare charges, regarded as futile when made, should make any impression now. Indeed, I may consider myself obliged to him for repeating them, after such elaborate preparation, as it affords the most conclusive proof how exempt my course has been from any just censure during the long period of time in which he has attempted to trace it.

To make good his allegation that I am the author of annexation, and that annexation caused the war, he asserts that I was in favor of the annexation of Texas as far back as 1836, immediately after the battle of San Jacinto, and the capture of Santa Anna, to prove which, he read an extract from the speech which I delivered on resolutions from Mississippi, presented by her Senator now Secretary of the Treasury, instructing the Senators to obtain an immediate recognition of the independence of Texas.

It is true that I then advocated an early recognition of the independence of Texas, and its admission into this Union; but I was not alone in that, nor did I take a leading part in the discussion; the two most prominent advocates of her cause at that time were the Senator from Mississippi, and my then colleague, (Mr. Preston,) but they were seconded by a large portion of this body at the time. The distinguished Senator from Massachusetts bore a part in the debate, and expressed his opinion in favor of recognition at an early period, and of the vast importance of the future condition of Texas to our country. I have not had time to examine the discussion; but find that I was among those who advised delay under further information could be obtained, and many were for prompt action; but the Senator from Missouri has thought proper, in the face of these facts, to hold me up as the only individual disposed for a prompt and immediate action. He has done more. He has suppressed the fact, very important to be known, that before the close of that very session the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations—recommending the acknowledgement of the independence of Texas as soon as satisfactory information could be obtained that it had successfully established a government—was adopted by the unanimous vote of the Senate, including the Senator himself; and that at the very next session her independence was recognized.

Sir, I admit, at that early period, I saw that the incorporation of Texas into this Union would be indispensable both to her

safety and ours. I saw that it was impossible that our country could stand as an independent power between us and Mexico, without becoming the scene of intrigue of foreign powers, alike destructive of the peace and security of both Texas and ourselves. I saw more; I saw the bearing of the slave question at that early stage, and that it would become an instrument in the hands of a foreign power of striking a blow at us, and that two-contingent slaveholding communities could not co-exist without one being yielded to the destruction of the other. The Senator is right. What I then said was intended to shadow forth the future; that future which actually came, when I was called, by the unanimous voice of the country, to take charge of the State Department, in reference to these very events. I saw, with General Jackson, that the golden opportunity had occurred when annexation must take place in order to avoid interminable difficulties and great disasters; and seeing it, I did not hesitate to undertake the duty which has been assigned me, notwithstanding the difficulties, and that too, without war; and all the elaborate efforts of the senator from Missouri, never can deprive me of that credit to which I am entitled, in reference to the great question of annexation.

On a review of the whole, my course, I may say, exhibits not only some foresight in reference to it, but also some powers of averting the dangers, and securing the end which I desired.

Every measure towards the accomplishment of annexation had been consummated before the present administration came into power. No war followed, although the act of annexation had been completed more than a year before the rupture between us and Mexico took place; nor would war have followed at all had we acted with ordinary prudence. That Mexico was chafed, and irritated; that she threatened much and blustered much; talked about war, and even the existence of hostilities—were all true. It was, however, but talk. The strong should always permit the weak and aggrieved to talk, to bluster and scold, without taking offence; and if we had so acted, and exercised proper skill in the management of our affairs, Mexico and ourselves would, by this time, have quietly and amicably settled all difficulties, and been pursuing the opposite course, and are in war.

Every senator knows that I was opposed to the war, but none knows but myself the depth of that opposition. With my conceptions of its character and consequences, it was impossible for me to vote for it. When accordingly, I was deserted by every friend on this side of the house, including my then honorable colleague, among the rest, [Mr. McDuffie,] I was not shaken in the least degree in reference to my course. On the passage of the act recognizing the war, I said to many of my friends that a deed had been done from which the country would not be able to recover for a long time, if ever; and added it has dropped a curtain between the present and the future, which to me is impenetrable; and for the first time since I have been in public life, I am unable to see the future. I also added that it had closed the first volume of our political history under the constitution, and opened the second, and that no mortal could tell what would be written in it. These deep impressions were made upon my mind, because I saw from the circumstances under which the war was made, a total departure from that course of policy which had governed the country from the commencement of our government until that time, and that, too under circumstances calculated to lead to most disastrous consequences. Since then, less than a year has elapsed, but in that short period enough has already been developed to make what was then said look like prophecy.

But the senator charges, entertaining as I did these impressions, that I did not take a stand and arrest the march of Gen. Taylor to the Rio del Norte. I have already stated the reasons; on another occasion—why I did not; and however unsatisfactory they may be to the senator, they are satisfactory to myself, and I doubt not they will be to the community at large. He also intimated that I ought to have communicated my views to the President. I was guilty of no neglect in that respect; I did not fail to state in the proper quarter explicitly what I thought would result from the order given to Gen. Taylor, but I found very different views from mine entertained there.

Those in power were quite as confident that the march of Gen. Taylor to the Rio del Norte would not in its consequences involve war, as they were that notice without compromise in reference to the joint occupancy of Oregon would not involve war with England.

In looking back upon these matters I have the satisfaction to feel that I fully performed my duty both here and elsewhere with reference to these important questions.

With my view of the character and consequences of the war, I have foreborne much. I have suffered a little in the estimation of my friends both in and out of Congress for refusing to vote for the bill recognizing the existence of a war made by the act of Mexico. I have been urged by them to explain the reasons for my course on that occasion; but I persisted in declining to do so, because I could not see that it would be of any service to the country; while it might weaken the hands of those who are

charged with the prosecution of the war. I adopted the only course which, according to my opinion, I could with propriety—to take no active or leading part in reference measures intended for carrying on the war, but to give a quiet and silent vote in favor of all which did not seem to me decidedly objectionable; but in the mean time, to look out for the first favorable opportunity of presenting my views how the war should be conducted to bring it most advantageously to a successful termination. I accordingly embraced the opportunity on the discussion of the three million bill now before the Senate to present my views, not in the spirit of opposition, but of kindness, to the administration, reserving to myself the expression of my opinion as to the causes of the war for some suitable occasion. It seems, however, that the friends of those in power were not satisfied with this course on my part; it became an object of assault both in this chamber and without its walls. The senator from Tennessee immediately on my right [Mr. Turney] commenced the attack here by directly charging me with being the author of the war, and it has since been followed by the senator from Missouri on this occasion. I have thus been forced, in self-defence, to depart from the line which I had prescribed for myself and to enter into the question. Who is the author of the cause of the war? The responsibility is not on me, but on those who have compelled me to make the departure. Thus far I have limited what I have said strictly to self-defence, as I shall also do on the present occasion.

In looking to the causes which led to the war, I go one step further back than the senator from Maine, [Mr. Evans,] who discussed the subject in this respect with great accuracy and ability. He began with Mr. Slidell's mission and negotiation. I go a step further back, to the management of the negotiation prior to that period. When this administration came into power there were two great questions on hand connected with our foreign relations—the Oregon and the Mexican. As different as they were in their character, and as remote as the two powers were from each other, there was intimate connexion between them which could not be overlooked in conducting the negotiation, without falling into a great and dangerous error. Such at least is my opinion. I wish to say nothing to wound the feelings of any individual who had

charge of the negotiation, but it seems to me that he fell into a great error in consequence of overlooking the connexion between the two subjects. To my mind it is one of the clearest of propositions, that there could be no well founded hope of adjusting our difficulties with Mexico until the Oregon question was finally settled. Why so? The reason is obvious. Mexico knew that we had heavy claims against her which she was little able to pay. Debtors without means are usually shy of their creditors. She could not but see that there was a chance of escaping our demands against her provided a conflict should ensue between us and England in reference to Oregon. She could not but see more—that it might possibly afford her an opportunity of recovering either a part or the whole of Texas by an alliance with England, and availing herself of the aid of British strength and resources in waging a war against us. At all events, she would look with confidence to her being protected as an ally of England in the treaty by which the war should be terminated. Whatever objection may be made to England, she never deserts an ally in war. It seemed to me, under these circumstances, that it was a great error to suppose that the differences with Mexico could be adjusted while those with England were pending. Our true policy, then, according to my opinion, was to suspend all attempts at opening negotiation with Mexico until that question was finally settled. When that was effected, and Mexico could no longer look to the support of England in her controversy with us, she would see the folly of declining to adjust the difference between us, and enter into conflict with a power every way so vastly her superior.

There would, then be another advantage; which would greatly favor a settlement of our difficulties with Mexico. The eloquent senator from Louisiana has truly said that Mexico, at least so far as capital is concerned, was a British colony. The immense interest which England has in the country, would have enlisted her on the side of peace, and the whole of her vast influence would have been exerted to induce Mexico to enter into a satisfactory arrangement with us. I cannot doubt that under the influence of these powerful causes, with a little forbearance and prudence on our part, all the causes of difference between the two countries would, ere this, have been settled by a treaty satisfactory to both.

An opposite course was however, unfortunately taken; both negotiations were pushed at the same time; and that with Mexico, with at least as much zeal, and as strong a pressure as that with England. The then President of the republic of Mexico (Herrera) was friendly to the United States, and anxiously disposed, on that account, as well as others to settle the differences with us. Acting under these feelings, he acceded to the proposition to receive a commissioner, without duly reflecting, as the events proved, on the great impediments in the minds of the Mexicans treating with us. The result was as might have been anticipated. Paredes took advantage of the error, and buried Herrera from power; and the effect

of this premature attempt at opening negotiation, was to overthrow a friend, and place an enemy in power, deeply committed against settling the differences between the two countries, and thereby—as ought to have been foreseen—greatly to increase the difficulty of any future settlement of the questions. What followed from this unfortunate step until it ended in war between the two countries, has been so clearly traced by the senator from Maine, as to supercede the necessity of my touching upon it.

The overlooking of the intimate connexion of these two questions, was not only the first link in that series of causes which finally terminated in this war, but it came near preventing the settlement of the Oregon question. Had the action of Congress, which finally led to the settlement of the Oregon question been delayed until it was known that the skirmishes had taken place between our forces and the Mexicans on the Rio Grande, (but a short period,) there is every reason to believe the Oregon question would not have been closed. I speak upon high authority—the escape was a narrow one. Fortunately, the British government promptly acted upon the notice, and tendered a proposition to our minister on which the settlement was finally made, which he received and forwarded to our government but a few days before news was received in England of the skirmishes on the Rio Grande. But while they fortunately occurred too late to prevent a settlement of the Oregon question, they unfortunately occurred too soon to preserve peace with Mexico. But if the policy which the administration first adopted after annexation, had been pursued, the frontier of Texas with our military forces to the extent of country which she held at the time of annexation, and no further—there is every reason to believe that on the settlement of the Oregon question the peace of the two countries would have been preserved.

It is true Mexico claimed the whole of Texas, but it is equally true that she recognized the difference, and showed a disposition to act upon it, between the country known as Texas proper, and the country between it and the Del Norte. It is also true that we and Texas recognized the same difference, and that both regarded the boundary as unsettled—as the result of annexation, which provides that the boundary between Texas and Mexico shall be determined by the United States, clearly shows. It is worthy of remark in this connexion, that this provision in the joint resolution is

quene of the ground taken at the preceding session by the senator from Missouri on discussion of the treaty, that the Nueces was the western boundary of Texas, and that to extend that boundary to the Rio del Norte would take in part of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and New Mexico. What, then, ought to have been the course of the Executive after annexation under this resolution? The very one which they at first pursued—to restrict the position of our troops to the country actually occupied by Texas at the period of annexation. All beyond, so far as the Executive was concerned, ought to have been regarded as subject to the provision of the resolution, which authorized the government to settle the boundary. They are but two modes of settling a disputed boundary—one by the joint consent of both parties, that is by treaty, of which the President and the Senate are the organs—the other, by the determination of one of the parties for itself after failing to obtain the consent of the other, and that, under our government, can only be done by Congress. Indeed, when we speak of our government, it is understood to mean Congress, and the Executive, acting jointly—the one passing an act or resolution, and the other by its approval. And in Congress, taken in this sense, all discretionary power under our system of government is vested. It is only by this power that a disputed boundary can be determined by the government for itself, and without the consent of the other party. The President had no more right to determine of his own will what the boundary was, than I had, or any other senator.—Such, indeed, appeared to be the conviction of the President himself. It is only on such a supposition that we can explain his course in attempting to open a negotiation with Mexico, with a view of settling all differences between the two countries, among which the settlement of the boundary was considered a paramount question. Why negotiate, if it were not an unsettled question? Why negotiate, if the Rio del Norte—as it was afterwards assumed—was the clear and unquestionable boundary? And if not, upon what authority, after the attempt to open negotiation had failed, could he determine what was the boundary; viewing it as an open question? Was it not his plain duty, on such an occurrence, to submit the question to Congress, which was then in session, and in whom the right of establishing the boundary and declaring war was clearly invested? Had that course been adopted, I greatly mistake if the sense of this body would not have been decidedly opposed to taking any step which would have involved the two countries in a war. Indeed, I feel a strong conviction that, if the Senate had been left free to decide on the question, not one-third of the body would have been found in favor of war. As it was, a large majority felt themselves compelled, as they believed, to vote for the bill recognizing the existence of war, in order to raise the supplies of men and money necessary to rescue the army under General Taylor, on the Del Norte, from the dangers to which it was exposed.

But to bring the matter home, the senator himself is in no small degree responsible for the war. I intend no attack on him. I have made none, and will make none. The relations between him and myself, personal and political, have long been such, that self-respect and a sense of propriety forbid my alluding to him, except when unavoidable, and then in a courteous manner; and I now allude to his course only because it is necessary, to explain mine, and the motives which governed me on the occasion.

The Senate will remember that when the President's message was received recommending Congress to recognize that a war existed between us and Mexico, and raise the necessary means for its prosecution, the senator from Mississippi, whose seat is immediately on my right, but who is now absent, [Mr. Spaight] moved to print 20,000 copies of the message