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GENERAL WADDY THOMPSON, A FRIEND OF MEXICO DURING THE MEXICAN WAR

ERNEST M. LANDER, JR.^o

When Congress declared war on Mexico in May, 1846, the entire South Carolina delegation in Congress voted "aye" except Senator John C. Calhoun. He abstained. Although there were nagging doubts among some leaders, in general public opinion within the state followed the lead of the *Charleston Courier*: "The step has been taken, be it for weal or for woe, and it is but duty now to stand by our country in her hour of peril and danger." In time, however, as the war dragged on inconclusively, considerable opposition arose within the Palmetto state to President James K. Polk's war policies. Senator Calhoun, Joel R. Poinsett, Governor David Johnson, and General Waddy Thompson, Jr., became outspoken critics of the administration. None exhibited more sympathy for Mexico than did Thompson, a former United States minister to Mexico.¹

Waddy Thompson followed an unusual political career. After five years of law practice in Edgefield he moved to Greenville, served in the legislature, supported nullification despite strong unionist sentiment in Greenville District, rose to general in the local militia, and was elected to Congress as a Whig in 1835 to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Warren R. Davis. He served in Congress from September 10, 1835, until his retirement on March 3, 1841. He chose not to run for re-election in 1840. Benjamin F. Perry, his opponent in the 1835 election, called him "a man of rare talents, tact and energy of character. As a political electioneer he can scarcely be said to have a superior."²

Thompson's political skill was clearly shown in his 1838 campaign for re-election. He had broken with Calhoun when the latter returned

^o Alumni Professor of History at Clemson University.

¹ *Charleston Courier*, May 21, 1846. For South Carolina opinion, see Ernest M. Lander, Jr., "The Reluctant Imperialist: South Carolina, the Rio Grande, and the Mexican War," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXVIII (January 1975), 254-70.

² Benjamin F. Perry, *Reminiscences of Public Men* (Philadelphia, 1883), pp. 297-98. For other brief accounts of Thompson's life, see Helen K. Hennig, *Great South Carolinians of a Later Date* (Chapel Hill, 1949), pp. 158-79; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971* (Washington, 1971), p. 1812; Henry T. Thompson, *General Waddy Thompson: Member of Congress, 1835-41, Minister to Mexico, 1842-44* [n.p., n.d.]; J. F. Rippy, "Waddy Thompson, Jr.," *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVIII, 473-74.

have no witnesses of it, but their own. For no one Else could imagine Prayers would be there on those days & no one likely to come in by chance, no House being near the Church.

The fortune of the Young Woman was, I believe, as Mr. Hunt says, mostly in the hands of Mr. Allen a Merchant & one of the Guardians: But he is a Person of a fair Character as to business & reputed at least worth 20,000 ££ Sterling, so cannot reasonably be suspected to be against the Match purely on the Account of parting with the fortune.

This manner of proceeding in Mr. Hunt hath given great offence in the Province, where no such practices have been used & where great care hath been always taken to prevent such irregular Marriages. The Clergy in my time, & I believe since, strictly conforming to the instructions given by your Lordships Predecessour, not to do any offices in other Parishes than their own without the consent of the Minister who is presumed to have the best knowledge of affairs within [his own] Parish.

What Mr. Hunt mentions of his Debts & arrestments I know nothing of, but what he says himself, so have nothing to object.

I am much surprised that Mr. Hunt in his letter should mention Mr. Garden to your Lordship as a Person, whose worth [&] Charity Mr. Bull could inform your Lordship of, whereas I have of[ten] declared otherwise, & do solely again, that I am firmly p[er]suaded Mr. Garden is a person worthy of your Lordship's favour & the most proper of any in the Province to represent your Lordship, as one that will not be guilty of an unjust ac[tion] either out of prejudice, favour, or affection, or any other motive. & What Mr. Hunt affirms at the Conclusion of his Letter, that Mr. Garden came into the Province by chan[ce], neither sent by your Lordship or Predecessour, is altogether false. He was sent by your Lordship's immediate Prede[cess]or, & that particularly to the church of St. Philip, Charl[es]Town, & was duely licensed & regularly admitted into that Living. This I am positive [of] in having had the perusal of all his Credentials, whilst I had the honour of the Late Lord Bishop of London's Commission in Carolina. Mr. Garden was before Curate to Dr. Gascarth at Barking Church near the Tower & came immediately from thence to Carolina, having taken the Degree of Master of Art in the University of Aberdeen, as Mr. Hunt Insinuates.

I hope your Lordship will pardon this hasty Epistle. I am, my Lord, your Lordships Most Obedient Servant

WILLIAM TREDWELL BULL

(To be continued in April.)

to the Democratic Party to support President Van Buren's subtreasury plan. The senator was thus determined to use his prestige to unseat the Whig congressman in his own election district. He accused Thompson, along with Whig Senator William C. Preston, of having done "much mischief—more than they ever can repair, if they were to live 100 years." One opponent, Tandy Walker, took the stump against Thompson but soon withdrew. In his stead Judge J. N. Whitner was persuaded to challenge Thompson. Calhoun's hopes rose, shortly to be dashed, for Thompson soundly defeated the judge, who was no match for him in stump speaking. Calhoun ruefully explained that Whitner had entered the contest too late. Thompson had visited all the militia musters "and told his own story without opposition, or contradiction."³

In the presidential contest of 1840 Thompson supported the Whig ticket of William Henry Harrison and John Tyler. A few days after President Harrison's inauguration he offered Thompson the mission to Mexico. Harrison's sudden death, however, left the position open, and President Tyler hesitated to renew the offer. He and Thompson differed over Henry Clay's proposed bank. But even more compelling was his fear that Thompson's appointment might offend the Mexicans. Thompson had been an outspoken advocate of American recognition of the Republic of Texas in 1837. Nevertheless, with the dead Harrison's wishes in mind and urged by influential Whigs, Tyler appointed Thompson "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" to Mexico. The South Carolinian served in that capacity from February 10, 1842, to March 9, 1844.⁴

When appointed to his post, Waddy Thompson could speak no Spanish. Realizing its importance to his mission, he procured some Spanish books and began an intensive self-study program. By the time he landed at Vera Cruz he had become proficient in the language. Thompson later recalled that he was "regarded with distrust and dislike" when he arrived in Mexico. This attitude was a result of his part in the congressional debates over the recognition of Texas. Nevertheless, Mexican officials were at least courteous if not cordial, and President Santa Anna received the new minister with proper ceremony and without delay. In his first address to the Mexican cabinet Thompson spoke in Spanish. Perhaps this helped to warm the atmosphere. Perhaps it

³ For more details on the 1838 election, see Ernest M. Lander, Jr., "The Calhoun-Preston Feud, 1836-1842," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, LIX (January 1958), 31-32.

⁴ Thompson, *General Waddy Thompson*, pp. 9-11; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, p. 1812.

was Thompson's tact and pleasant personality. In any event, he soon won the friendship and respect of the Mexicans, including Santa Anna.⁵

Thompson took up his post in Mexico City at a time when relations were strained between the United States and Mexico. However, his mission met with considerable success. He secured the release of some 300 prisoners, citizens of Texas and the United States, captured during the quasi-war between Mexico and Texas. He also secured minor commercial concessions, made progress toward settlement of American claims against Mexico, and persuaded Santa Anna not to exclude American immigrants from California. By the time Thompson resigned his post he had become a confirmed friend of Mexico.⁶

Thompson's views toward Mexico were ably presented in his *Recollections of Mexico*, written shortly before the war began. He was sympathetic with Mexico's problems and suggested certain reforms to General Mariano Paredes, who had come into power in January 1846. First, the new president should call around him men of unquestionable honesty and patriotism such as Almonte and Bustamente. This would assure the public of the government's purity. Next, the president should reduce the Mexican army to no more than 5,000 men, for the army had never done anything but make revolution. Finally, Thompson advocated a curtailment of the Catholic Church's revenues and the power of its priests. He believed the clergy were notoriously immoral and preyed upon the ignorance of the masses.

While deploring the evils of peonage, the ignorance and laziness of the masses, and the corruption in church and government, Thompson believed in the ultimate success of republican government in Mexico. He viewed the better classes as intelligent, patriotic, and potentially great. As for Santa Anna, Thompson found him to be cordial, able, patriotic, and "not the sanguinary monster" which some supposed him to be. Yet he admitted the Mexican leader had the great vice of avarice.⁷ His warm feelings for the Mexicans were expressed in the closing remarks of his "Preface":

I was treated with so much kindness by people of all classes, from the leper in the streets up to the President, that it would be a source of deep pain to me to know that I had wantonly wounded the feelings of

⁵ Waddy Thompson, *Recollections of Mexico* (New York and London, 1847), pp. 154-55; Hennig, *Great South Carolinians*, pp. 163-64.

⁶ Rippy, "Waddy Thompson;" Hennig, *Great South Carolinians*, pp. 158-65; Thompson, *Recollections of Mexico*, pp. v-vi.

⁷ Thompson, *Recollections of Mexico*, *passim*. See especially, pp. 6, 20, 65, 80-81, 109, 115, 242-51. The "Preface" was dated February 2, 1846.

any one person in the broad circumference of the Republic. I assure them in all sincerity that I take a deep interest in their continued advances in the great career of civil liberty, and their ultimate success in establishing Republican institutions on a permanent basis.⁸

When war erupted in May, 1846, the former minister made no public statements. Privately he was probably distressed at the belligerent tone of the editorials in his home district's newspaper, the *Greenville Mountaineer*. Its editor lost few opportunities to castigate Mexico in the severest terms. He blamed Mexico for the conflict and declared that the United States had "long borne with her insults and her outrages" upon American citizens. In response he called for an invasion to subdue "the haughty pretensions" of America's southern neighbor. This sort of belligerent editorial policy continued for the remainder of the year. In time the *Mountaineer* not only advocated chastising Mexico and seizing California and New Mexico, but it reviled President Polk's Whig opponents for obstructionist tactics and abolition sentiments.⁹

Why Thompson retained his silence during the early months of the war is not known. But for whatever reason, any anti-war sentiments he may have harbored at that time were so little known to the public that he was mentioned as possible commander of the Southern volunteers. A nearby editor claimed that Thompson's acquaintance with Mexico and his military talent amply qualified him for the office.¹⁰ Nonetheless, there is no evidence that he sought any military command during the war. Ironically, his brother-in-law, ex-Governor Pierce M. Butler, was chosen colonel (and commander) of the South Carolina Volunteer Regiment and died in battle before Mexico City.

Waddy Thompson's first public statement on the war appeared on February 5, 1847, in the *National Intelligencer*, the Whig journal in Washington. It had become evident by that time that support for the war was flagging in South Carolina, especially in the western districts.¹¹ Perhaps for that reason Thompson felt the time had arrived to speak

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁹ *Greenville Mountaineer*, May 15, October 2, December 18, 25, 1846, January 1, 1847.

¹⁰ *Anderson Gazette*, December 18, 1846.

¹¹ Thompson's article was reprinted in the *Greenville Mountaineer*, March 12, 1847. The northwestern bloc of seven districts (counties), including Greenville, failed to recruit a single volunteer company. See Ernest M. Lander, Jr., "The Palmetto Regiment Goes to Mexico," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*, 1973 (Anderson, 1974), pp. 83-93.

out. Perhaps he was worried about General Winfield Scott's expedition to Vera Cruz.

Thompson's article was a lengthy excoriation of the administration's war policy. As recently as December, he noted, the president had denied that conquest of Mexican territory was an American object. Now, he learned, Senator Ambrose Sevier, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, was claiming that the United States would never make peace without the cession of New Mexico and California. Much alarmed, Thompson said the United States had no right to those territories or to force Mexico to sell them. He asked: "What will the world say of this now openly confessed war of conquest?" In addition, the Mexican constitution forbade its officers to alienate any portion of the national domain.

Thompson considered the war "not only inexpedient, but unjust." The talk about Mexican spoliation of American citizens' property was an afterthought and a poor excuse for war. He doubted that public opinion in America supported the war, and he knew that Mexican opinion universally considered America's part as "flagrantly and criminally unjust." Looking ahead, the former minister predicted that in time America would probably need a strong and friendly Mexico as an ally against some powerful European nation.

Thompson also predicted no speedy peace unless the United States reduced Mexico to defenselessness by "a vigorous prosecution" of the conflict. Such an approach would encounter great difficulties. To supply and provision an army in an assault on the Mexican capital and to garrison its approaches would cost \$100 million. He was reminded that the small-scale Seminole War had cost \$42 million. Moreover, American forces would have to remain in Mexico for at least a year to produce the desired effect. Meanwhile, casualties from disease and Santa Anna's attacks might reach 20,000. Such anticipated results gave him grave concern both for the widows and orphans in America as well as "the horrible consequences" to the Mexicans.

Sooner or later, Thompson warned, America would have to cease operations in Mexico. The administration could never do so more gracefully than at the present time. The United States had control of the disputed territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande and should press "a gallant enemy" no further. Finally, he proposed a public declaration of what territory the administration intended to hold. In this the nation should be "generous and forbearing" and pay for that territory which we had "no better title than the right of conquest." The United States

should establish defensive border posts and cease operation beyond that line. In time, he believed, Mexico would be inclined to peace.

The *Mountaineer* did not approve Thompson's article "entirely" but deemed it "fair and right" to reprint it, especially since it came from "a distinguished source." A Charleston correspondent for the *Columbia South Carolinian* reported that the article had attracted "considerable attention among many of our people who have great confidence in the judgment and peculiar competence of the writer." The correspondent further noted "a remarkable coincidence" between Thompson's views and Calhoun's. He believed the two men had worked together.¹² They probably did not collaborate at that time, but Thompson's article undoubtedly influenced Calhoun, for the senator on February 9 delivered an hour-long speech in the Senate during which he too proposed a defensive line policy. However, Calhoun would have his "line" include New Mexico and California, to which Thompson objected.¹³

On April 8 Thompson further amplified his views in a letter to the *Mountaineer*. He repeated his suggestion that the United States confine its advance to the Rio Grande. Even so, he doubted that an impartial tribunal would sanction American occupation of territory beyond the Nueces. But his main thrust concerned the Wilmot Proviso, for he firmly believed "that slavery [would] never exist in any State beyond the Rio Grande, whether restricted or not by Congressional legislation." For South Carolinians this was a frightening consideration.

Thompson also said that he wished to refute the story that he had advised the expedition to Vera Cruz. He added: "Everybody is tired of this war, and anxious for peace . . . but actual peace, with or without a treaty." He doubted that a weakened Mexico would attack the frontier line he proposed. In sum, national honor did not require "further prosecution upon a feeble, vanquished, but gallant enemy."¹⁴

Regardless of the strength and logic of his protest, Thompson's latest effort was unlikely to gain additional support at that time. The nation was glorying in recent victories at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, and Buena Vista. In honor of American success Governor David Johnson had

¹² *Greenville Mountaineer*, March 5, 1847; *Columbia South Carolinian*, February 17, 1847.

¹³ *Charleston Courier*, February 13, 1847. *Greenville Mountaineer*, February 19, 1847, disagreed with Calhoun's plan as being too defensive.

¹⁴ Letter published in *Greenville Mountaineer*, May 7, 1847. Even Thompson's brother-in-law Colonel Butler wrote that "the universal voice" of the military personnel in Mexico was in favor of "terminating this contest." To them peace would be "most welcome news." Butler to Gov. David Johnson, April 9, 1847, in *Columbia South Carolinian*, May 12, 1847.

proclaimed May 6 as a day of Thanksgiving throughout the state. It was the following day that the Greenville editor published Thompson's letter and with a scornful remark: "The 'blunders' of the Administration of which Gen. Thompson says it is so often guilty, have certainly achieved the most successful and brilliant results in Mexico, and we trust will soon 'conquer a peace'."¹⁵

For several months Waddy Thompson remained silent. Meanwhile, American arms, despite heavy casualties from disease, won notable victories. With General Scott's capture of Mexico City in September, South Carolinians were jubilant. Throughout the state victory parades and other appropriate ceremonies were held. Shortly thereafter Thompson again voiced his opposition to American conquest.

The occasion was an anti-Wilmot Proviso meeting in Greenville. In the fall of 1847 South Carolina was seething with discontent over the Wilmot Proviso, and probably every courthouse town in the state held a rally to voice opposition to the hated abolitionist resolution. The Greenville rally took place at the courthouse on October 4, well attended by local citizens and the leading politicians of the district. A number of anti-Wilmot Proviso resolutions were offered, debated, and adopted, including one calling for the establishment of a pro-Southern newspaper in Washington.

Thompson was one of several speakers, and, except for the resolution endorsing the establishment of a pro-Southern journal, he heartily approved the proceedings of the meeting. He expressed satisfaction that his sentiments were "in coincidence" with those of the district "for the first time in many long years."

The former minister then turned his attention to the Mexican War, which he considered to be the source of their anxiety. The extension of American territory in the Southwest would not benefit the South, he said. The territory beyond the Rio Grande was "no promised land." It was either barren or populated with an alien people difficult to govern. He warned that should America annex any Mexican territory beyond the Rio Grande it would become free territory. To re-inforce his argument he noted with alarm that some 300,000 immigrants had entered the United States the previous year. These people, with sentiments hostile to the South's welfare, had settled in the North and West.

At the climax of his speech Thompson vigorously asserted that he would stake his life that no part of the territory could or would be occupied by slaveholders. In fact, he would consent to be gibbeted, or,

¹⁵ *Greenville Mountaineer*, May 7, 1847.

if dead, to have his bones "be dug up and made manure of" if ever a slaveholding state were formed out of any portion of it. But he had a remedy for the Wilmot Proviso "evil" and that was to acquire no more territory. Going one step further, he preferred to leave the area between the Nueces and the Rio Grande as a wilderness.¹⁶

A correspondent for the *Charleston Courier* wrote that Thompson had spoken with "much ability" and that passing events "seem to be setting the seal of prophecy" on his views. Not so, claimed the *Greenville Mountaineer*. While its editor approved Thompson's stand on the Wilmot Proviso as "becoming a Southern Statesman," he regretted to see the general "separating himself from his State and . . . his country, in advocating as he does the doctrine of no more territory." Such a policy, invented by the Whigs, was a "virtual surrender" to the demands of the abolitionists. The editor further called Thompson's prediction of no slaveholding beyond the Rio Grande "a great mistake."¹⁷

Later in October Thompson approached his old political antagonist John C. Calhoun in an attempt to coordinate their anti-war efforts. Convinced that "this most disastrous war" had to be stopped, he asked the senator to lead the opposition. Thompson repeated his well-known views that slavery would not exist beyond the Rio Grande and that the United States had "no pretense of title" to the disputed land beyond the Nueces. Except in the West, people everywhere, he wrote, were "sick of carnage & slaughter and fruitless victories." Now that the American army was in Mexico City the nation's troubles were "just commencing." He added that South Carolina's other former minister to Mexico, Joel R. Poinsett, agreed with "all these views."¹⁸

Calhoun replied: "We do not disagree, as to the cause of the war, nor as to its certain disastrous consequences in the end. . . . We also agree in the opinion, that the war ought to terminate, and that my position requires me to use my best efforts to bring it to an end." But he reminded Thompson that large majorities of both parties stood committed by their recorded votes to the proposition that Mexico was guilty of aggression. Furthermore, recent military victories had weakened the opposition, strengthened the administration, and made it "impossible to

¹⁶ *Charleston Courier*, October 9, 1847; *Greenville Mountaineer*, October 8, 15, 1847.

¹⁷ *Greenville Mountaineer*, October 15, 1847; *Charleston Courier*, October 15, 1847.

¹⁸ Thompson to Calhoun, October 22, 1847, Calhoun Papers (Clemson University).

terminate the war in the manner you propose." He therefore urged caution.¹⁹

By the time Congress convened in December Calhoun had reason to alter his views. The Mexicans showed no inclination to make peace despite their resounding defeats. More alarming was a growing movement in America to annex all of Mexico. The senator therefore welcomed any support he could get in taking the offensive against the administration. On December 15 he introduced resolutions in the Senate opposing the conquest and holding of Mexico, while Congressman I. E. Holmes, of the Charleston area, introduced similar resolutions in the House. Privately, Calhoun confessed his fear of the growing bellicose mood in America. To annex Mexico would have a "fearful result" for the nation's institutions.²⁰

Thompson supplied Calhoun with information about the cost of the war, the difficulty of subjugating and incorporating Mexico into the Union, and the evil of extinguishing Mexican nationality. He believed the climate and terrain would prevent profitable cotton growing and the raising of livestock. But above all, he feared that the territory would furnish room for numerous free states. "Woe to the Southern man who lends his aid in doing that," he added.²¹

The senator incorporated much of the former minister's argument in a carefully-prepared speech, delivered in the Senate on January 4, 1848, in opposition to the administration's "Ten Regiment Bill." The measure called for an increase in the size of the army, hence its opponents feared additional troops would be sent to Mexico. Calhoun, though much in agreement with Thompson, was unwilling to go so far as to support his no-annexation view. Instead, Calhoun proposed a defensive line along the Rio Grande to El Paso and thence westward to the Pacific.²²

Behind the scenes Thompson continued his anti-war agitation. Under the pseudonym "Lowndes" he published two lengthy essays in the *Courier*. The editor identified the first only as an "eloquent article" from "a distinguished source." In it Thompson once more railed against "the utter groundlessness and iniquity" of America's claim to the country be-

¹⁹ Calhoun to Thompson, October 29, 1847, in *American Historical Review*, I (January 1896), 314-15.

²⁰ *Columbia Daily Telegraph*, December 20, 21, 1847; Calhoun to Mrs. T. G. Clemson, December 26, 1847, Calhoun Papers (Clemson).

²¹ Thompson to Calhoun, December 18, 1847, Calhoun Papers (Clemson). Calhoun also had support from Governor David Johnson. See Johnson to Calhoun, October 27, 1847, Calhoun Papers (Clemson).

²² *Charleston Courier*, January 12, 1848.

yond the Nueces. He proposed leaving uninhabited the area between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. It could thus serve as a barrier against the escape of slaves into Mexico. On the other hand, if the area were taken and settled, it would leave no obstacle to runaway slaves but a shallow and narrow river. In such case, he predicted that slaves would escape by the hundreds. But now he modified his earlier stand against any annexation. He favored acquisition of upper California if Mexico were willing to sell without coercion.²³

A week later Thompson continued his attack, this time with the "All Mexico" movement in mind. He stated: "It is my deliberate opinion that the annexation of Mexico to this country will be a fatal blow to the institution of slavery." He dwelt at great length on the evils of annexing eight million people of an alien culture, and he spoke out strongly against sending additional troops to Mexico. "We have been told over and over again," he said, "that the occupation of the Capital would be followed by an immediate peace." Instead of peace American conquests had failed of their desired end and thus, he concluded, "the uncertain effects of further conquests can scarcely be worth the blood and treasure which they will cost."²⁴

Thompson and Calhoun both gained support for their efforts. Joel R. Poinsett, Henry W. Conner, Colonel James Gadsden, *Charleston Mercury* editor John E. Carew, Senator A. P. Butler, and others spoke, wrote, and worked toward the same general goal: a defensive line policy. By mid-February hardly a newspaper in the state still favored "conquering a peace." Even the *Greenville Mountaineer* had belatedly resigned itself to Calhoun's defensive policy.²⁵ But their efforts soon be-

²³ *Ibid.*, January 7, 1848.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, January 14, 1848. "Lowndes'" identity was known to Calhoun supporters in Charleston. H. W. Conner to Calhoun, January 17, 1848, Calhoun Papers (Clemson).

²⁵ Conner assured Calhoun that the entire Charleston press supported him and that Carew was then in Columbia lining up Columbia and back country newspapers. Conner to Calhoun, January 17, 1848. See also, Henry Gourdin to Calhoun, January 17, 1848; James Gadsden to Calhoun, January 8, 17, 23, 1848; B. F. Perry to Calhoun, February 23, 1848; Calhoun to James Calhoun, January 22, 1848, Calhoun Papers (Clemson); *Greenville Mountaineer*, February 4, 1848. Of the South Carolina press only the Abbeville *Banner* and the Camden *Journal* openly stood behind the president by this time, and the *Journal* changed its position in mid-February. Abbeville *Banner*, January 19, 1848; Camden *Journal*, February 16, 1848. Privately, some politicians agreed with James H. Hammond that the United States "must conquer Mexico." To "Dear Major," January 14, 1848, Hammond Papers (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). Senator Andrew Pickens Butler was also a brother-in-law of Thompson.

came superfluous, for on the night of February 19 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo reached Washington. Although illegally negotiated by Nicholas Trist, the terms of the treaty were generally acceptable to President Polk. He asked for and received Senate approval. Doubt lingered in some minds whether or not Mexico would give final approval. Nevertheless, most South Carolinians considered the war finished. Thompson made no further public statements.²⁶

How did Thompson view the treaty? We have no record of his views, but undoubtedly he felt Mexico had been wronged. We may suppose that in time he grudgingly accepted the results, in view of his belated conversion to the desirability of upper California. Yet, the large Mexican cession must have worried him as he witnessed his prophecy of no slave states beyond the Rio Grande being translated into reality.

In sum, Waddy Thompson, influenced by friendship with Mexico, by his belief that America was wrong, by his concern over the evils of war, and finally by a fear that annexation would undermine slavery, spoke out boldly against the war. He made a more courageous and determined effort to be fair to Mexico than any other South Carolina leader dared to emulate.

²⁶ Calhoun remained doubtful of Mexico's acceptance as late as May 26. Calhoun to T. G. Clemson, May 26, 1848, Calhoun Papers (Clemson).