



Texas Navy Association

Historical Article



The government of Yucatan furnished Commodore Moore with means to get to sea, with which and the aid of friends in New Orleans, he sailed from that port on the 15th of April, 1843, in command of the sloop-of-war Austin, mounting eighteen (medium) twenty-four-pounders, and two eighteens, accompanied by the brig Wharton, Captain Lothrop, mounting sixteen (medium) eighteen-pounders. With these two vessels, which were well manned and thoroughly equipped, Commodore Moore sailed for Campeche, where he arrived on the 30th of April, and attacked the whole Mexican fleet, which after an action of over an hour, hauled off—but renewed the fight again during the interim of calm between the land and sea breeze; their steam giving them great advantage, besides their great superiority in weight of metal. Commodore Moore had in the meantime been joined by four gun-boats, which came out from Campeche; the action this time lasted but little over half an hour, when the Mexicans again hauled off. On the 16th of May another engagement took place, which lasted more than four hours,

the particulars of which would exhibit, in the Texan naval forces, the existence of the gallantry which has ever characterized the same arm of the public service of the United States.

Commodore Moore made repeated efforts to engage the enemy prior to the last action, (May 16th), which was fought by Commodore Don Thomas Marine, Admiral Lopez having been arrested and sent to Vera Cruz for trial, for not capturing the two Texan vessels. Commodore Moore had one-fourth of his force killed and wounded, but he made repeated efforts to bring on another battle, which Commodore Marine, the Mexican commander, avoided, his steam enabling him to do so whenever he chose.

On the night of the 26th of June, the Mexican army embarked on board of their vessels of war and a few transports (it having been reduced full one-half by the vomito and desertions), and fell back to Tabasco, where General Ampudia remained until the summer of 1844 ; when he was transferred

after his barbarous course towards the gallant Sentmanat.

The following was the force of the Mexican navy:

Steamer Montezuma, two sixty-eights and six forty-twos, Paixhan guns.

Steamer Guadalupe, two sixty-eight Paixhans and two long thirty-twos.

Steamer Rejenerador, one long thirty-two and two long nines.

Schooner Eagle, one long thirty-two and six eighteens, all Paixhans.

Brig Yucateco, one long eighteen and sixteen eighteen-pound carronades.

Brig Yman, one long twelve and eight six-pounders.

Schooner Campecheano, one long nine and two six pounders.

This is the first time that steam and sail vessels had ever come in contact, and Commodore Moore beat these three steamers (two of them armed with heavy Paixhan guns), they having a sail force co-operating with them, fully equal to the force of the two Texan vessels. It was also the first time that Paixhan guns had been used in a naval combat.

The reason why Commodore Moore ventured on such an unequal contest, was to save Galveston, the principal port of Texas, from an attack as soon as Yucatan had surrendered, which she was on the eve of doing, the preliminaries having been agreed on between General Ampudia and Governor Meredez, of Yucatan, who was in command of the troops at Campeche, and the articles of compromise were to have been signed the very day, April 30th, 1843, that Commodore Moore arrived off Campeche, and defeated the Mexican squadron.

Comment is useless upon the value that the little navy of Texas was to that republic, in her struggle for independence, by keeping

her ports open, and the entire coast clear of all Mexican cruisers, from the year 1839 to the treaty of annexation, when the Texas navy was laid up in ordinary, (protection having been then guarantied by the government of the United States.) Although two proclamations of blockade of the ports of Texas were published by the Mexican authorities, one in 1839 and the other in 1840, the Mexican vessels of war were kept in their own ports, and many of their merchant vessels were captured by the Texan cruisers under Commodore Moore, who was all the while off the Mexican coast with some of the vessels under his command, up to the summer of 1842. At this time he went into New Orleans to refit, which he was prevented from doing by the extraordinary course of President Houston, already mentioned, who withheld the appropriations of congress for that purpose, and left Commodore Moore to keep up the navy with his own means and resources, which he did for upwards of nine months, and finally fitted them out for a cruise without a dollar from his government. He was proclaimed a traitor and pirate by the president of Texas for this course, but

nobly sustained by the people and congress of the republic.

MEXICO AND HER MILITARY CHIEFTAINS, FROM THE REVOLUTION OF HIDALGO TO THE PRESENT TIME. COMPRISING SKETCHES OF THE LIVES OF HIDALGO, MORELOS, ITURBIDE, SANTA ANNA, GOMEZ, FARIAZ, BUSTAMENTE, PAREDES, ALMONTE, ARISTA, ALAMAN, AMPUDIA, HERRERA, AND DE LA VEGA

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Published by E. H. Butler & co., 1847

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