

THE DREAM OF AARON BURR REALIZED

There are few people, perhaps, who know that the great Southwestern scheme and dream of Aaron Burr actually came to naught on the Sabine river through the alleged treachery of Gen. James Wilkinson, at one time lieutenant general of the army of the United States.

If history is true, the idea of Burr was to establish somewhere in the southwest a republic or empire, in which it was to have been the chief ruling spirit, and around which Mexico and probably all the central American states were to have been Americanized and added at the proper time.

Burr's ambition in this direction seems to have been the two-fold result of political disappointment and a desire for revenge. It could not be proven at his trial that he intended to disrupt the American union by any specific act that could be called overt, but on the contrary to establish an independent government on the Mississippi and foreign territory, to which, under the conditions then existing in the Mississippi valley, the people of the southern part of the United States would come, ultimately.

The treaty of Paris, in 1763, placed the western boundary of the United States at the Mississippi river, but Spain owned the territory of Louisiana at this time and this territory crossed the Mississippi and took in a large slice of country on its eastern bank. In the treaty, therefore, Great Britain had no authority to guarantee the right of American navigation on the Mississippi river below her pre-revolutionary line. During the pre-constitutional period—that is to say, from 1783 to 1789, American pioneers had been pouring through the passes and water gaps of the Alleghenies and settling in the fertile valleys of what is now Tennessee and Kentucky. These people were not adventurous squatters, but were actual settlers, who came with their ax and hoe to build homes, clear farms, subdue the wilderness and by and by time add new stars to the American constellation, which they had helped to make beyond the mountains.

These valleys became quite populous and an immense amount of produce of various kinds was made ready each year by the colonists. There was but one market for all this region, and that was New Orleans, the Spanish town at the mouth of the Mississippi river. New Orleans, though small, was still a great entrepot for vessels from the eastern shores of the United States, as well as various other parts of the world, and through it all the traffic of the Mississippi valley must pass or perforce take the long, tedious and dangerous route over the Allegheny mountains to the cities on the Atlantic seaboard. Realizing the condition of things and acting possibly through a spirit of revenge the Spanish Governor of New Orleans laid a prohibitory embargo upon all American commerce, or traffic that came from the territory up the river. The effect of this embargo was to paralyze trade and retard development of all kinds in the Mississippi valley, because it was from New Orleans that these people got their supplies and to New Orleans that they sold their produce.

A protest was placed before Congress with the request that Spain be made to raise the embargo at New Orleans.

For some reason not definitely understood, Congress paid little attention to the matter, and to make matters worse, John Jay, who was at that time American minister at Madrid, actually entered into a treaty with Spain, by the terms of which the United States agreed to abandon all claims to the right of free navigation at the mouth of the Mississippi for a period of twenty-five years.

The report of this proposed treaty fell like a thunder bolt upon the settlers of the Tennessee and Kentucky country, who saw in its fulfillment the ruin to their hopes and homes

and ultimate abandonment of the great valley in which they had settled. Their surprise quickly grew to a murmur long and loud.

If the United States government refused to protect its citizens in the pursuit of "life, liberty and happiness," why not look elsewhere?

That was the question, and these hardy pioneers were not a bit sentimental in its solution.

To add to these difficulties, Spanish agents had been among the people from time to time no doubt inciting them as far as they dared to join their fortunes with the Spanish government in the South and Southwest.

For a great master spirit that could ferment discord in the Mississippi valley and bring up revolution in the distant Southwest times and conditions were propitious. Aaron Burr saw the opportunity and acted accordingly.

Leaving New York in the autumn of 1805 Burr set his face westward and finally arrived at the residence of Herman Blennerhassett, on an island in the Ohio river. From there he proceeded southward, visiting both Henry Clay and Gen. Jackson on the way and ultimately arriving at the headquarters of Gen. Wilkinson at or near New Orleans. Having held a conference with Gen. Wilkinson, Burr proceeded on his return to Blennerhassett's island.

A short time after his arrival it was reported that extensive preparations were going on in the neighborhood of the island for some kind of military exploit down the river.

In the meantime Burr had purchased from Baron de Bastrop 400,000 acres of land between the Quachita and Mississippi rivers, in what is now Morehouse, West Carroll and Richland parishes, in North Louisiana, as a place of rendezvous for all the immense hosts he thought to gather around him when the proper time arrived to cross into the Mexican province of Texas that lay just across the river from the place of rendezvous.

From certain events and circumstances connected with that period of time, as well as what has since transpired, it is almost certain that Gen. Wilkinson fully understood the plans of Burr and intended to co-operate with him when the time arrived.

Certain events which had transpired in East Texas just prior to the visit of Burr to New Orleans had served to place the suspicious Spanish government on its guard, as a consequence of which the garrisons at Nacogdoches and other points had been strengthened and the commandant given strict orders to watch every movement of the Americans east of the Sabine river.

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Hearing of this movement the United States government ordered Gen. Wilkinson at New Orleans to also proceed to the Sabine, take up his position there and repel the crossing of the Spaniards.

There is no doubt that the quick action of the Spaniards in marching at once to the threatened point, entirely upset the possibility of Burr and Wilkinson acting in harmony in the

establishment of the Southwestern republic.

So, without being able to confer with Burr, who was somewhere in the north, Williamson set out from New Orleans and, having landed at Natchitoches, proceeded to march his soldiers to the Sabine.

A few miles west of Natchitoches and near where the town of Roseburg now stands, the advance guard of the two armies met and, as the Americans continued to advance, the Spaniards fell back and took post on the west bank of the Sabine.

The Americans reached the river late in the evening and went into camp on the east bank. The armed forces of the United States and Spain then confronted each other, and it looked as if war was inevitable.

But during the night Wilkinson summoned Herrera to cross the river and repair to his tent on important business matters.

Herrera did so, and early the next morning, Oct. 2, 1806, Gen. Wilkinson issued orders to counter march to Natchitoches. During the night a treaty had been entered into between Wilkinson and Herrera, by the terms of which all the territory between the Sabine river and the Arroyo Hondo was to be considered neutral ground and neither to be claimed nor occupied by the United States nor Spain till a definite boundary treaty could be arranged between the two countries.

The Arroyo Hondo is a large creek that rises north of Natchitoches and flows into the Red river. The continuation of this line since has been understood as being Calcasieu river from its source to where it empties into Lake Calcasieu, and thence into the Gulf of Mexico.

The neutral ground therefore included all of Sabine, Natchitoches and Vernon parishes and a large part of Calcasieu and Cameron—vast areas of country which, thus abandoned by all authority, became at once the most prolific breeding ground for crime of any country perhaps on earth at that time.

It was a veritable "No man's Land" in which criminals high and low from the United States and Mexico found safe refuge. Gutierrez, the celebrated Mexican revolutionist, lived there quite awhile, and assisted Lieut. A. W. Magee in organizing the famous republican army of the North in 1812.

This was the first attempt on the part of Americans to wrest Mexico from Mexico and establish a free government in place of despotism. And this attempt was organized in the neutral ground, in the present State of Louisiana.

In addition to the treaty entered into between Wilkinson and Herrera, it has since been ascertained that Herrera, on his own authority, and without waiting to consult his government, agreed to pay Wilkinson \$200,000 if the latter would use his influence in thwarting the designs of Burr.

The offer was accepted and \$120,000 in cash paid at once. Walter Burling was sent by Wilkinson to Mexico to get the remaining \$80,000. There is an old-time legend connected with Burling's mission to Mexico that is still remembered by people now living in East Texas. It is to the effect that Burling received the money, which was all in coin, and on his return trip was followed by robbers. On reaching the Attoyac river, a small stream in Nacogdoches County, Texas, and seeing he was about to be overtaken, he threw the money into the river, making, as well as the money, a rough map of the locality. He then escaped and finally reached Natchitoches.

In 1846 Dr. John R. Sparks of Nacogdoches hired a number of hands and having turned the course of the Attoyac at the place where the treasure was supposed to have been buried, set to work digging in the dry bed. When about twenty-five feet below the surface he struck an old-time Spanish pack saddle in a good state of repair. Nothing else was found, however, and the search was finally abandoned.

Later, near the same place, a pair of six the copper halfpenny molds have been found. These molds are of foreign make, are very antiquated in appearance and weigh twenty-four bullets at one time. The molds weigh five pounds.

Wilkinson returned to New Orleans and a short time afterward Burr was arrested on a charge of conspiring against the government of the United States. His scheme died from the hour that Wilkinson and Herrera held the secret conference on the bank of the Sabine, and it failed no doubt through the fact of Wilkinson's defection.

In 1813 the United States and Spain settled their boundary differences in the Southwest, but till this day the absolute status of lands in the neutral ground has not been determined so far as perfect title is concerned.

The city of Bastrop, in Morehouse parish, is on the land that Burr purchased from Baron de Bastrop. The name and family of Gen. Wilkinson is strangely connected with pioneer enterprise and adventure in East Texas.

James Long, who conducted an expedition to Texas in 1819 and established headquarters at Nacogdoches, was a nephew of Gen. Wilkinson, having married Miss Jane Wilkinson when she was only fourteen years old. Mrs. Long journeyed to Texas from Tennessee to join her husband while he was at Nacogdoches, and most of the trip was made on horse back.

SAN ANTONIO'S GREAT FAIR.

This Year It Will Surpass All Former Ones.

Judge Charles M. Barnes, who is representing the San Antonio International Fair which will be held from October 22 to November 2, was among the arrivals in Beaumont yesterday evening. He called on the Enterprise and stated that...

There will be a greater number and variety of exhibits gathered from all over Texas and some of them from the Mexican republic. Numerous attractions have been secured. Among these are some which have formed interesting objects at the St. Louis World's Fair. Prominent among the latter are Helen May Butler's military band and orchestra comprised of 60 very pretty women. Everyone of them is a talented musician and quite a number of them are soloists. This band furnishes superb melody and will be a very popular attraction at San Antonio.

Pain's Fireworks is another of the attractions which has been drawing large crowds at the Louisiana Purchase which will be at the San Antonio Fair during its entire 12 days season. The destruction of the ancient city, Pompeii, will be depicted in a very realistic and vivid manner which will prove very thrilling.

The railways have granted lower rates than ever from all Texas points which will result in securing an unprecedentedly large attendance from all over the state. Beaumont is in this city always sending a considerable contingent to enjoy the sights at the sunset city's great show. The railways have likewise granted a \$10 round trip rate from St. Louis to San Antonio and return which doubtless will take a great many visitors to San Antonio and other Texas cities, these visitors coming from many of the northern and eastern states.

While here Mr. Barnes called on the Chamber of Commerce and in the name of the directory of the San Antonio International Fair Association invited the business men of Beaumont through the Chamber of Commerce to place an exhibit of the manufactures and industries of Beaumont at the San Antonio International Fair. This will afford an opportunity of advertising Beaumont of which the Chamber of Commerce shows a great interest.

There are many manufactures and industries here which need such exploitation. No better place in Texas could be chosen than the San Antonio Fair.

RULES FOR CAR PER DIEM.

No Radical Changes to Be Reported to American Railway Association.

It is understood that no radical changes in the present per diem rules and the rules governing the use and detention of freight cars will be reported to the American Railway Association at its next semi-annual meeting. Last winter there was talk of increasing the per diem and penalty charges, but nothing was proposed at the spring meeting. At present these charges are 20 cents a day and \$1 a day per car after 30 days.

In the beginning, the substitution of per diem for mileage was an experiment. It has since proved the merit of the change. An advancement in the charges was urged during the experimental period. The system is now regarded as a permanent footing of operation and it is believed no further changes will be suggested.

It was suggested recently that the matter of penalizing a road for holding a car be made automatic instead of requiring the owners of the car to notify the road using the car that it had been held the 20 days. It was desired by some to make the penalty effective without any notice. This was met, however, with the statement that a road should be sufficiently interested in maintaining its cars, and the request to make the penalty automatic was turned down.


"The Village Parson."

This highly interesting play has been meeting with great success throughout the country, and much praise and favorable comment has been lavished upon it. The plot is well constructed and the characters are intelligently conceived and presented in a plausible manner. The play is put on in a complete manner, and the scenic, mechanical and light effects are of the best and most modern kind. "The Village Parson" is one of the dramatic hits of the year.

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Fifty varieties of agricultural products are shown in the Texas exhibit in the Palace of Agriculture at the World's Fair. This is exclusive of the various vegetables, which are only counted as one variety. The display includes the semi-tropical products of rice, sugar, tobacco and cotton, as well as all products that grow in the northern climate.

"Lord and Lady Alg." is to be reserved for the opening of Lillian Lawrence and John Craig, with the Dressmaker company, October 16, and White Whittlesby was appear during his five week, as Armand in "Camille," with Eugene Thais Lawton in the title role.