

After the Civil War, Some Confederates Emigrated into Exile

Tuesday, July 14, 2015 - by Chuck Hamilton, "The Chattanooga"

After the end of the War of the Rebellion, many former Confederates emigrated into exile, mostly in Latin America.

Mexico

The first ex-Confederates in Mexico immigrated there with Maj. Gen. John Shelby and the Iron Brigade. Some of these settled in the northern states along the border (Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas), while others moved south to join the larger group.

Under the direction of former COMO Matthew Fontaine Maury of the Confederate Navy, ex-officers and troops established the New Virginia Colony in the state of Veracruz in Mexico at the invitation of Emperor Maximilian. Located in the province bordering the Gulf of Mexico, its central city was Carlota, named for Maximilian's empress. Slaves were not allowed, slavery still being against Mexican law.

When the republican Juaristas (supporters of Pres. Benito Juarez, whom the French ousted in 1864) overthrew Maximilian's government in 1867, these former Confederates returned north.

Interestingly, in 1851 Maury had once formulated a plan to both eradicate slavery from within the borders of the U.S. and slow or end Brazil's slave trade with Africa.

Central America

Other former Confederates settled in what was then British Honduras (now Belize), a group of Virginians under the Rev. B. R. Duval establishing New Richmond near San Pedro, the seat of the community, as well as Toledo, Manatee, and eight others on the New River south of Orange Walk Town (most of these being Louisianans) and around the town of Punta Gorda, in addition to the majority of the former Confederate expatriates who remained in Belize City. Within a few decades, these groups had assimilated and lost their distinctiveness.

Former Confederate cavalry Major Abednago Greenberry Malcolm led another group of mostly Kentuckians to establish a colony they called Medina in Spanish Honduras.

Two other communities of ex-Confederate exiles lasted for a while in Cuba and in Costa Rica.

South America

Upon being hired as a rear admiral in the Peruvian navy, ex-Confederate RADM John Tucker led a group of former Confederate expatriates into Peru to establish New Manasses. At first the navy's commander-in-chief, he resigned that post but retained his rank. After resigning entirely, he was assigned to chart the Amazon River.

Dr. Henry Price, former major in the Confederate medical corps, took another group into Venezuela to occupy large areas of the state of Guyana called the Price Grant, where they set up the short-lived settlements of Orinoco City, Las Tablas, Santa Cruz, Caroni, Paragua, Carratel, and Pattisonville. Within four years, the effort collapsed entirely.

Los Confederados de Brasil

Of all these, Los Confederados de Brasil is the only former community whose descendants still survive as a distinctive ethnic group. The best account I have seen of these expatriate groups is the 2007 master's thesis of Justin Horton at the East Tennessee State University: "The Second Lost Cause: Post-National Confederate Imperialism in the Americas"; it is online.

Between ten and twenty thousand former Confederates emigrated to the Empire of Brasil at the invitation of Dom Pedro II, who wanted to encourage the growth of cotton. The now multi-racial Los Confederados are extremely proud of their history and send young people to the American South every year to see the former homeland. The original settlers included an ancestor of former First Lady Rosalyn Carter.

A large number of Los Confederados stayed in Rio de Janeiro. Led by Col. William H. Norris of Alabama, others founded Norris Colony near Santa

Barbara (now Americana); Col. Charles Gunter founded Gunter Colony on Lake Jurapaña and Rio Doce; Dr. James McFadden Gaston of South Carolina founded Gaston Colony near Xiririca; the Rev. Ballard S. Dunn founded Lizzieland on the Juquia River; Frank McMullen established New Texas on the Sao Lourenco River; Col. M. S. Swain founded Parangua on the Assunguy River; and Lansford Warren Hastings organized Santarem at the confluence of the Amazon River and Rio Tapaj.

Brasil abolished slavery in 1888. Former slave owners, backed by the military, overthrew the imperial government in 1889. A military dictatorship ruled the country till civilian republicans came to power in 1894.

Other groups

A small group of Confederates became expatriates in Ontario, the community including former Confederate generals John B. Hood, Jubal Early, and John C. Breckenridge (also former Secretary of War).

A few found refuge in England, many choosing there to settle because that is where they were at the time of the surrender.

Some fifty former Confederate officers, along with a like number of former Union officers, obtained employment with the army of Ismail Pasha, Khedive (viceroy) of Egypt and Sudan. The khedivate was an autonomous entity under the Ottoman Empire based in Constantinople. Their service to the khedive ended in 1878.