Historians have traditionally portrayed the Mier Expedition as a glorious, but disastrous episode during the days of the Republic of Texas. To the average citizen, this march on Mexico was payback for two raids in which Mexican troops invaded the old Republic and briefly occupied San Antonio—the second time with tragic results. To gain an appreciation for the Mier Expedition, it is important to understand these larger events. See how *The Handbook of Texas Online* (in this dark red font) summarizes the two Mexican invasions and the “Dawson Massacre” that distinguished the second invasion.

What follows below are two interpretations of the Mier Expedition. The first one (in this blue font) represents a summary of traditional accounts. The basic source was the journal Thomas Jefferson Green, a member of the expedition. The second version (in this green font), stripped of its cultural bias, draws from recorded statements and reports filed with the Texas and Mexican governments as well as from letters and other primary sources.

*For further study.* Following the second account (in this violet font) are excerpts from Sam W. Haynes’ introduction to a recent reissue of Green’s journal. Haynes is professor of history at the
MEXICAN INVASIONS OF 1842. Because of Mexico's refusal to recognize the independence of Texas after the Treaties of Velasco, the republic was in constant fear of a Mexican invasion. The fear assumed reality on January 9, 1842, when Gen. Mariano Arista issued a statement from Monterrey telling the Texans that it was hopeless for them to continue their struggle for independence and promising amnesty and protection to all who remained neutral during his planned invasion. Early in March, Goliad, Refugio, and Victoria were occupied, and on March 5 the Mexican troops under Rafael Vásquez appeared before San Antonio. The Texans retreated, leaving the town to the Mexicans, because John C. Hays found it impossible to gather enough men to make a defense immediately. The militia under Alexander Somervell was called out, however, and gathered at San Antonio on March 15, but the Mexican forces had abandoned the town on March 9. Edward Burleson, the leader of the volunteers, had no orders to follow the invaders; so the Texan force remained in San Antonio until it was disbanded on April 2. The most unfortunate result of the raid was the panic that it caused in the western settlements.

Meanwhile Houston had made an appeal to the United States for money and volunteers, and Adjutant General James Davis was sent to Corpus Christi to organize volunteers with orders to hold them until the time was opportune for an invasion of Mexico. On June 7 Davis's forces had a skirmish with Antonio Canales Rosillo, but Canales soon retired to Mexico. During the session of the Texas Congress that met on June 27, ten million acres of land was appropriated to finance a war of invasion against Mexico, but the bill was vetoed by Houston. Davis's forces were dismissed, and Texas was left undefended.

On September 11, 1842, Gen. Adrián Woll, with a force of 1,200 Mexicans, captured San Antonio. By September 17, 200 Texans had gathered on Cibolo Creek above Seguin and marched under Mathew Caldwell to Salado Creek six miles northeast of San Antonio. On September 18 Caldwell sent Hays and a company of scouts to draw the Mexicans into a fight; the battle of Salado Creek resulted. While the fight was going on, Capt. Nicholas M. Dawson approached from the east with a company of fifty-three men. These men were attacked a mile and a half from the scene of the battle and killed in what came to be known as the Dawson Massacre. Woll drew his men back to San Antonio and retreated to Mexico by September 20. The reinforced Texans pursued him for three days and then returned to San Antonio. By
September 25 a large number of Texans had gathered at San Antonio, and plans were made for a punitive expedition, the Somervell expedition, which evolved into the Mier expedition.

*Jack W. Gunn*

*Handbook of Texas Online, "MEXICAN INVASIONS OF 1842,"
http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/MM/qem2.html
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**DAWSON MASSACRE.** After the capture of San Antonio on September 11, 1842, by Brig. Gen. Adrián Woll in the second of the Mexican invasions of 1842, Texan forces gathered on Salado Creek under Col. Mathew Caldwell to repel the raiders. While Texas arms were succeeding at the battle of Salado Creek on September 18, 1842, a calamity was occurring only a mile and a half away. In response to Caldwell's call for volunteers, Capt. Nicholas M. Dawson had raised a fifty-three-man company, mostly from Fayette County, and marched down from La Grange. Believing Caldwell's forces to be in grave danger, Dawson's men chose not to wait for Capt. Jesse Billingsley's company, which was following them, but to disregard the threat posed by numerous heavy Mexican cavalry patrols and to fight their way to the Salado. Near Caldwell's embattled line, between 3 and 4 P.M. on the eighteenth, the company was intercepted by a column of 500 irregular Mexican cavalry commanded by colonels Cayetano Montero, José María Carrasco, and Pedro Rangel and supported by a battery of two field pieces. According to the accounts of several survivors, the Mexican column was commanded by Juan Seguín, but they were no doubt in error. Dawson dismounted his men in a mesquite thicket where Fort Sam Houston now stands and threatened to "shoot the first man who runs." The Texans were quickly surrounded but repulsed a spirited cavalry charge and inflicted a number of casualties on the enemy. The Mexicans then fell back out of rifle range and opened fire on the Texans with their artillery. Billingsley's company, which arrived while the fight was in progress, was too weak to go to Dawson's aid, and Caldwell's men on Salado Creek were heavily engaged throughout the afternoon. Montero once more ordered his cavalry, then dismounted, to charge. After a vigorous but futile resistance, the severely wounded Dawson sought to surrender.
The Mexicans continued to fire, however, striking Dawson several more times. Seeing surrender to be impossible, he gasped out his dying words, "Let victory be purchased with blood." Alsey S. Miller took up the white mackinaw that Dawson had waved in token of surrender and rode with it toward the Mexican lines, only to be fired upon in his turn. Miller then galloped through the enemy toward the town of Seguin. Henry Gonzalvo Woods, after witnessing the death of his father and the mortal wounding of his brother Norman, also escaped. Some of the Texans continued to resist while others laid down their arms. Heroic in the fight was Griffin, a slave of Sam Maverick, who, his rifle shattered, fought on with the limb of a mesquite tree until he was killed. By 5 P.M. the fight was over. Thirty-six Texans died on the field, fifteen were taken prisoner, and two escaped. The prisoners were marched away to Perote Prison in Mexico. Of these men, only nine survived to return to Texas. Thirty Mexicans were estimated to have been killed and between sixty and seventy wounded. Two days later the Mexican army retreated toward the Rio Grande, and the Dawson men were buried in shallow graves in the mesquite thicket where they fell.

Thomas W. Cutrer

*Handbook of Texas Online,* "DAWSON MASSACRE,”  
http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/DD/qfd1.html  
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The Texas State Library includes this traditional version of the Mier Expedition (below) on its “Texas Treasures” website, at:  
<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/republic/mier/mier-01.html>

In the 1840s, the tensions between the Republic of Texas and Mexico entered a new and dangerous phase. Mexico staged several raiding expeditions into Texas, sacking San Antonio twice. Most Texans were outraged and demanded retaliation. President Sam Houston believed that Texas was in no way prepared for another war with Mexico, but to appease these critics, he organized a force under Alexander Somervell to raid Mexico in the disputed borderland between the Nueces and the Rio Grande.

Somervell recruited about 700 volunteers, most of whom had no regular military training. The expedition raided the border towns of Laredo and Guerrero; then Somervell decided to call it quits, fearing that to stage any further action would result in a fatal clash with Mexican troops. Many of
the volunteers were incensed by Somervell's decision, and more than 300 elected to remain on the border with William S. Fisher rather than return home with Somervell.

*Mier Expedition Descending the Rio Grande.* After separating from Somervell's command near Guererro, Captain William S. Fisher and a force of slightly more than three hundred men followed the course of the river en route to Ciudad Mier.

On December 23, 1842, Fisher and most of the men crossed the Rio Grande and entered the town of Mier, where they met no resistance. They demanded supplies from the town, which the town's alcalde promised to deliver. The troops withdrew and waited. In the meantime, a large detachment of Mexican troops arrived in the town. On December 25, the two sides engaged in a bloody battle that lasted almost 24 hours. The Texans sustained thirty casualties and ran out of food, water, and ammunition. More than 200 Texans surrendered to Mexican forces, unaware that they had mauled the Mexican troops to an almost unbelievable degree, inflicting an astounding 800 casualties.
"Texian Charge Upon the Guards..." It was the work of an instant," Green wrote, to take "possession of the outer court, where the arms and cartridge boxes were guarded by one hundred and fifty infantry."

As far as the Mexicans were concerned, the Texans were privateers on an unauthorized raid and entitled to no consideration as military prisoners of war. They were initially sentenced to death, then ordered on a forced march to Mexico City. Fisher was separated from the group, but the men selected a leader from among themselves, a Scottish-born captain named Ewen Cameron. Along the way, Cameron led most of the prisoners in an escape attempt. The Texans tried to make a run back for the border, but they hadn't bargained on the harsh and dry conditions in the mountains. All but three were recaptured and returned to the town of Salado.
When he heard about the breakout, President Antonio López de Santa Anna ordered that the recaptured prisoners, some 176 men, be put to death immediately. The governor of the state of Coahuila, Francisco Mexía, refused to carry out the order and pleaded with foreign ministers in Mexico City to persuade the president to change his mind.

What happened next became known as the "Black Bean Episode," one of the most notorious atrocities of Santa Anna's career. He promised the foreign ministers that he would show mercy, and then modified his decree to order the decimation of the Mier prisoners; in other words, the execution of every tenth man. On March 25, 1843, the prisoners were forced to draw from a jar containing 159 white beans and 17 black beans. At dusk that day, those unlucky enough to draw a black bean were shot to death, as was Cameron as the leader of the escapees.
Texians Drawing the Black Beans at Salado. "The Decimation took place by the drawing of black and white beans from a small earthen mug. The white ones signified exemption and the black ones death."

The remaining prisoners were put to work on a road gang. Then, most were thrown into the notorious Perote Prison in Vera Cruz, though a few were separated from the group and scattered into other prisons around Mexico. Over the next few months, some managed to escape, while others died of wounds, disease, and starvation. Diplomats from the United States and Great Britain worked for the release of the Mier prisoners. They were eventually paroled in piecemeal fashion, with the last prisoner going home in September 1844.
Separation After Escape. Eight of the prisoners who escaped from Perote on July 2nd were soon recaptured. Green and seven others succeeded in making their way back to Texas.

In 1848 the bodies of the men executed in the Black Bean Episode were returned from Mexico and were buried in La Grange, Texas.

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~ by Gary Anderson

General Santa Anna, back in power, ordered a brief nuisance raid on San Antonio; seven hundred mostly mounted Mexican troops under General Rafael Vasquez seized the town for several days in early March, 1842.

...

The “War Hawks” in the Texas Congress forced [President Sam] Houston to act. [Even though he believed it was unwise to retaliate, t]he president ordered General Alexander Somervell…to command the assembling volunteers at San Antonio. Men of all kinds came pouring into town, some shoeless, most horseless, some seeking adventure, and others of the criminal sort, wishing only to sack Mexican towns and villages. As Houston had hoped, Somervell acted indecisively. Soon, considerable looting of Tejano stores in San Antonio,
coupled with out-and-out insubordination, broke up the volunteers before they could march on Mexico and start a major war.

…

[Relations between Texas and Mexico worsened], especially after the Mexican general Adrian Woll and fourteen hundred troops again captured San Antonio in September. Houston once again summoned Somervell to organize and lead the volunteers but hoped that the Texas general would remain north of the Nueces River. But as the army grew to 750 men, even Somervell realized that he would have to act. His volunteers had taken on an identity of their own; had he refused to march, the troops would have left him.

The voluntary force that turned south on November 25 put even some ranger units to shame for its ugly element. A few of the men were legitimate farmers or ranchers, but most were not….A few of the officers, such as Captain William S. Fisher (prominent in destroying the Cherokees), had led troops in several early battles. Anyone who agreed to serve with Fisher would, he said, be rewarded by the richness of the land and the fatness thereof.” Then there was Ewen Cameron, known as the “Attila of Texas,” a huge man who ran a large gang of horse thieves out of Goliad. What made Cameron unusual was that among the three hundred to four hundred criminals in his party, he stuck out. The gangs saw the Somervell expedition as a chance to expand their stealing operations.

The placid Somervell had little chance of controlling this mob. But with his men swept up in the war hysteria, he had to either lead the army south or watch it leave on its own…The Texas volunteers pushed south to Laredo….Somervell placed the Texas flag in the town square and ordered his army to camp in a nearby ravine.

Early that evening…small groups of Texans left camp…and returned to Laredo. Their numbers soon approached two hundred. They looted the commissary stores first but found little in them. Then they turned to the remaining townsfolk, almost all women. They used logs to break down doors of private residences, herded the occupants out, and forced them to turn over all their valuables. Many of the Mexican women were disrobed, some in public. Others were attacked inside residences…Thomas Jefferson Green, one of the most flagrant violators, was overheard on several occasions saying: “Rake them down, boys; rake them down.” [This author assumed this referred to rape.]

Some troops, disgusted with this activity, left for home. Others helped Somervell confiscate at least part of the loot; most of it was clothing, stacked to the height of a good-sized house.

…

The army was slowly breaking up as a result of the disorder and looting. The 500 who remained followed Somervell south to Guerrero, where more pillaging occurred. Here a mutiny erupted in which 189 men followed Fisher, Cameron, and Green into the Mexican town of Mier. These were the most desperate of men, led by the most depraved officers. They ignored Somervell when he tried to stop their depredations. Fortunately, Mexican general Pedro de Ampudia ended the rapine and violence by forcing the Texans to surrender after a vicious fight in the center of town that began on the morning of Christmas Day and lasted into the afternoon hours. After the forces briefly escaped and were recaptured, Santa Anna ordered a peculiar but perhaps appropriate “trial”; the 170-odd prisoners were ordered to select beans from a pot. The 17 who drew a black bean were promptly shot.
Thomas Jefferson Green is not generally regarded as one of the principal figures in the history of Texas. During the years that Texas attempted to establish itself as an independent nation, however, he was anything but inconspicuous. Indeed, only a handful of men played more active roles in the affairs of the Republic, and none displayed such a talent for provoking controversy. Intent on making a name for himself in a sparsely populated land that seemed ripe with opportunity, Green pursued his career with relentless energy and boundless ambition. When he was not engaged in speculative business ventures, he was seeking martial glory, or aspiring to political office. Like many migrants to Texas during this period, however, he did not find in his adopted country the financial rewards he so eagerly sought. Unsatisfied, despite the notoriety that he achieved as second-in-command of the Mier Expedition, Green moved on after nine years in Texas, to continue his restless and aggressive search for the main chance. Ultimately, his was a career marked by disappointment and unfulfilled expectations; a record that, in many ways, seemed to typify the Republic itself.

... [I]t was the failure of the Texas Railroad, Navigation and Banking Company, of which Green was a major stockholder, that seems to have been the principal source of the animosity between Green and Sam Houston, sparking a bitter feud that would span the next twenty-five years. In December, Congress authorized the company to build an internal improvements network of canals and railroads linking the Sabine River and the Rio Grande. According to the terms of the charter, the company would also commence banking operations when one-fifth of the $5,000,000 in capital stock had been purchased. The government was to receive two and one-half percent of all fees and tolls collected by the company, plus an initial bonus payment of $25,000, to be paid in specie.

President Houston signed the bill into law, but the following year, in the wake of the Panic of 1837, which brought about the virtual collapse of the banking industry in the United States, public opinion swung sharply against the proposed bank. Many Texans, long-time admirers of Andrew Jackson, had not forgotten his war on the Second Bank of the United States, and like the former president they were equally suspicious of "the money power." These fears seemed all the more credible when a letter from Green to the founder of the company, Branch T. Archer, fell into the hands of Anson Jones, a staunch opponent of the scheme. In it, Green injudiciously estimated that the potential profits of the corporation were "beyond arithmetical calculation," and called upon the directors to buy up a million acres of Texas lands with company assets. Under the pen name "Franklin," Jones published the letter along with his own scathing indictment of the bank.

With the power to issue bank notes as currency, manipulate land prices, and set transportation rates, the company would have exercised virtual control over the financial and
economic affairs of the young republic. Faced with rising opposition to the scheme, Houston and other Texas politicians spoke out against the operation. But it was the directors of the company, not its critics, who were chiefly responsible for the collapse of the enterprise. Lacking the capital to begin operations, Archer, Green, and the other sponsors no doubt intended to make the $25,000 bonus payment by selling stock in the company. But in the prevailing climate of economic uncertainty, they were unable to raise the sum in specie, as the charter required, and offered instead to pay the government in depreciated Texas paper currency. The Houston administration refused to accept the payment, thereby nullifying the company's charter. Green never forgave Houston for the failure of the Texas Railroad, Navigation and Banking Company.

... With the elevation of Sam Houston to the presidency in December 1841, Green returned to the public spotlight as a member of the opposition. He was particularly strident on the subject of renewing war with Mexico, a policy Houston opposed. The capture of the Santa Fe Expedition and the mistreatment of its members as prisoners in Mexico created a clamor for war and revived calls for an invasion of the lower Rio Grande valley. Support for war was strongest in the western districts of Texas, which had seen a steady stream of settlers abandon the area as a result of the turmoil on the frontier. Only by carrying the war onto Mexican soil, Green and others argued, could Texas force Mexico to cease its policy of border harassment, and thereby guarantee the security of a region that depended on immigration for its long-term prosperity.

In 1842, Green was one of the most zealous of the "war hawks" who championed the cause of an offensive campaign against Mexico. An army under General Rafael Vasquez briefly seized San Antonio in March, prompting many Texans to rush to the defense of the western frontier. Vasquez withdrew before an army could be formed to oppose him, but the war-hungry Texans elected Vice President Edward Burleson to lead a campaign to pursue the retreating Mexican force. Anxious to forestall a headlong rush into war, Houston dispatched the more temperate Alexander Somervell to take command of the troops assembling at San Antonio. At Green's instigation, Burleson initially refused to give up his post, and in the confusion that followed the Mexican army was allowed to withdraw across the Rio Grande unmolested. Burleson eventually resigned, but not before delivering a rousing speech to his men on the grounds of the Alamo mission, a speech believed to have been written by Thomas Jefferson Green, which concluded with the memorable and often-quoted words: "Let it be the boast of Texians, that though Thermopylae had her messenger of defeat, the Alamo had none."

When a second Mexican invasion, under General Adrian Woll, captured San Antonio again six months later, the Houston administration bowed, albeit reluctantly, to the war hawks' demand for reprisal. It was only natural that Green, who had yet to do battle with either Mexicans or Indians - a prerequisite for any politically ambitious Anglo-Texan - would be eager to participate in a foray into northern Mexico. Bad economic times may also have driven him to enlist, as it did many Texans whose sense of adventure was heightened by the lack of prospects at home. Green's business ventures in Velasco had evidently not met with great success, and he joined the campaign "as poor as the poorest," according to one associate, "Coat out at elbows & pockets empty."
Despite his enthusiasm for an invasion of the Rio Grande, Green could be relied upon to thwart any enterprise that bore the stamp and sanction of the Houston administration. Given his antipathy toward Houston personally and his policies in general, it was no surprise that from the outset he sought to undermine the authority of Alexander Somervell, the president's choice to head the campaign. True to form, Green emerged as one of Somervell's principal antagonists, although he held no official rank in the army organized to invade Mexico in the fall of 1842. While there were many men on the expedition who were disgruntled with what they perceived to be Somervell's timid leadership, not all believed Green worthy of high command, either. Said one:

He was possessed with that degree of vanity that prompted him rather to rashness than cool, determined valour. He might be termed, by some, a man of tallent[sic], which he did to some degree possess, but they were of an order that I would believe quite ordinary. Vain, bombastic, fond of praise, and withall, ambitious of military glory, he could well be called darring[sic], even fearless; but he was unfit to command an army....

For his part, Houston regarded his critics as reckless firebrands and feared that an army composed of such men would degenerate into a lawless mob. Such a scenario, he believed, could only end in tragedy and defeat and would destroy what little credibility the Republic still had as a sovereign nation. Although he had succumbed to the outcry for war, privately he seems to have entertained little hope for the expedition's success. The administration's correspondence with Somervell while the army was mustered in San Antonio leaves no doubt that the president wished to discourage his commander from taking up the line of march. Houston could not call off the campaign without provoking a rebellion in the western counties, but the government's inability to provide Somervell with the supplies his army needed may have been a deliberate ploy to prevent the campaign from getting underway.

From the very outset the campaign proved to be a combination of high camp and tragedy. For several weeks General Alexander Somervell kept his soldiers bivouacked outside San Antonio in miserably wet weather, while he waited for supplies that the Houston administration was either unable or unwilling to provide. The Texas troops soon proved to be as insubordinate as Somervell was incapable of commanding them. With morale low and his army dwindling as volunteers packed up and went home in disgust, Somervell at last gave the order to proceed south. Within a few hours the expedition strayed from the road and became hopelessly lost. Seventeen days later, a cold, hungry, and increasingly intractable army descended upon Laredo. When the Texans learned that the impoverished Mexican citizenry could offer little in the way of supplies or spoils, many soldiers ran amok and sacked the town. By this time Somervell may have been looking for an excuse to terminate the mission, and a few days later, after making a brief, half-hearted foray across the Rio Grande, he called off the campaign. There were many on the expedition, however, who had long been dissatisfied with Somervell's leadership and who were anxious for glory, having yet to fire a shot in battle. More than three hundred Texans disobeyed the order to return home, electing William Fisher to lead them into Mexico. As one of the more strident advocates for continuing the campaign, Green assumed the role of second-in-command.

The newly reorganized expedition did not get far. On Christmas Day, one week after abandoning Somervell on the banks of the Rio Grande, Fisher and his men attacked a considerably larger Mexican force in the town of Mier. The battle raged all night and into the next day. The Texans barricaded themselves in a block of houses on the edge of town,
repulsing several attacks until, cut off from escape, they surrendered. The prisoners were marched to Matamoros, then south into the interior of Mexico. Along the way they managed to overpower their guards at the Hacienda del Salado, a ranch house where they had been quartered for the night, but again their efforts met with disaster. In an effort to elude capture, they left the main trail and journeyed into the arid mountains. For six days they marched, then crawled, in search of food and water, before being rounded up by Mexican troops.

The Santa Anna regime decreed that one out of every ten men should be executed as punishment for the escape. At the ranch where they had made their bid for freedom, 176 prisoners drew from a pot containing white and black beans in what would become known in Texas history as the Black Bean episode. Those who drew the fatal black beans were promptly shot. Captain Ewen Cameron, the leader of the escape, drew a white bean but was executed anyway by special order a short time later. The main body was marched to the environs of Mexico City, where they paved a road leading to Santa Anna's suburban estate. Most of the Mier participants were transferred to Perote in the fall of 1843. Disease and the rigors of captivity took the lives of many Texans during the months that followed, while a few managed to escape or obtained their release through the intercession of friends and relatives in the United States. Finally, on September 16, 1844, Santa Anna ordered the release of the 104 remaining Texas prisoners in Mexico.

The book that grew out of Green's experiences on the Somervell and Mier expeditions is not without its shortcomings. Although Green made every effort to provide a complete account, it is important to remember that his travails in Mexico were by no means representative of those of the men who laid down their arms at the Battle of Mier. While the conditions of his captivity left much to be desired, they were substantially better than those endured by the men under his command. As officers, Green and Fisher generally fared better than the rank and file, and during the course of their long march into Mexico, they were usually housed in posadas, rather than the muddy cowpens to which the others quickly became accustomed. Moreover, their circumstances were ameliorated by their access to financial resources unavailable to most prisoners. The U.S. consul in Matamoros advanced Green a total of $700, while his counterpart in Veracruz also loaned him money for his passage back to Texas. He received additional funds from friends in the United States, which he used to purchase food and liquor and to effect his release from Perote. By contrast, those prisoners unable to rely upon the largesse of friends and family at home subsisted largely on the meager rations provided by the Mexican army, unable to pay for the various amenities that made prison life more comfortable. Wrote one Perote prisoner: "I have not got a single shirt to my back nor scarcely anything in the shape of pantaloons. Nor have I any prospect of getting things. Those who received money from friends in the States can get along verry[sic] well but those that have none suffer."

In addition to receiving better treatment, Green was fortunate to have been spared some of the more grueling experiences of the main body of prisoners during the course of its march into Mexico. Separated from the rank and file at Matamoros, Green saw his men again only once, at the Hacienda del Salado on the eve of the Texans' bid for freedom. By the time they arrived at Perote in the fall of 1843, Green had already made his escape from the fortress and returned to Texas. Thus, his account of the most celebrated events of the expedition - the battle at the Hacienda del Salado, the Texans' escape into the mountains, and the "black bean episode" - was culled from other sources. For this part of his narrative, Green was fortunate
to meet in Texas in 1843 another Mier prisoner who had managed to escape from a Mexican prison, Samuel H. Walker. Although Walker, a man of few words, lacked Green's talents as an author and raconteur, he had kept a diary of his experiences in Mexico, describing in a straightforward manner the hardships of the main body of prisoners. Walker gave the diary to Green, providing him with much of the material he needed to chronicle the all-important events that followed his departure from the Hacienda del Salado.

Characteristically, Green failed to mention Walker's contribution to the book, underscoring another problem of his Journal: his overbearing ego and his tendency to ignore or denigrate the role of others. As an eyewitness account of a military campaign, the book ranks in terms of its excessive use of the first person alongside Theodore Roosevelt's chronicle of the Spanish-American War (which, one humorist quipped, should have been titled "Alone in Cuba"). Green failed to do justice to the much maligned William S. Fisher, who led the filibuster expedition and whom many Texans blamed for their defeat at Mier. Although Green did not accuse Fisher of outright cowardice, as some did, he consigned him to an undeservedly minor part in the battle, arguing that a hand wound had left him dazed, nauseated, and unfit to command in the crucial stages of the fighting. Exaggerating the extent of Fisher's injury allowed the author to emphasize his own leadership role. Fisher did not receive much better consideration in the narrative that follows. Although the two men shared the privations of captivity in Mexico for six months, Green referred to his commanding officer only briefly, and Fisher remains, regrettably, something of an enigmatic figure in the literature of the expedition.

Finally, Green's all-consuming hatred of Sam Houston intrudes upon the narrative at every turn, so much so, that at times he seems less interested in recounting the story of the Mier Expedition than in discrediting Sam Houston for his role in the affair. It would, of course, be unreasonable to expect dispassionate objectivity from one so intimately involved with these events. Nonetheless, Green went to extreme and even absurd lengths to indict Houston, blaming him for all the misfortunes that befell the Mier prisoners, and indeed for all the many crises that the Republic suffered during this period.

Despite these flaws, the book has endured; it remains one of the most compelling and illuminating eyewitness accounts of the Republic period. It is also one of the most readable. Although Green is not at his best when waxing splenetic on such topics as Sam Houston and his Mexican captors, on the whole the book is written in a fast-paced and engaging style. No doubt intending to capitalize on public interest in the expedition, Green provided an account that is rich in drama and demonstrates both a keen eye for anecdotal detail and an appreciation for some of the lighter moments of his imprisonment in Mexico. The illustrations, drawn by Charles McLaughlin, himself a Mier prisoner, are a particularly valuable addition to the text.

But Green's Journal is more than a chronicle of one of the more remarkable chapters in Texas history. The author's cultural and racial biases, however unpalatable they may be to present-day sensibilities, tell us much about the way mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans saw themselves and their southern neighbors. In this regard, the final chapter, in which Green offers a lengthy discourse on the inevitability of U.S. expansionism, is of particular significance. Although at first glance a somewhat tedious digression from the narrative, the last chapter constitutes a fitting postscript: a logical denouement of the author's contempt for Mexican sovereignty, his deep-seated conviction that Anglo-American arms
would prevail over a degraded and benighted culture. Beyond its merits as a history of an ill-fated military campaign, Green's *Journal* stands as an important work in the literature of the Manifest Destiny. At the time of its release, the book was considered such a valuable source of information on Texas and Mexico that some of the first copies were delivered to President James K. Polk and members of his cabinet.

... Thomas Jefferson Green is best known in Texas as an agitator and firebrand, as a man who seemed to embody the independent, nonconformist attitude that at times made the Republic a nation bordering on anarchic dissolution. The contempt many Texans displayed toward their institutions of governance during these turbulent years has often been attributed to a spirit of frontier individualism. This may be true, but Thomas Jefferson Green, whose basic instincts were more commercial than primordial, furnishes no evidence of it. Although he spent much of his adult life on the fringes of western settlement, it was profit, not adventure, that lured him to the frontier. Moreover, his brash, impetuous, and often insubordinate behavior cannot be attributed to a backwoods cultural ethos, but stemmed rather from his intense desire to establish himself as a member of a new society's political and entrepreneurial elite. Green's reputation as a trouble maker was well deserved, but he was not disrespectful of authority per se. In fact, he was an ardent supporter of strong government, so long as it could be employed in the pursuit of his own aggrandizement. His obsessive hatred of Sam Houston, who often stood in the way of his career goals, can only be understood in this context. The collapse of Green's business ventures, the setbacks he suffered in his quest for political office and patronage, even his lengthy incarceration after defeat on the battlefield - all these misfortunes, Green believed, could be traced to Sam Houston. Green pursued many avenues in his quest for fame and fortune, but his feelings toward Houston remained constant, serving as the measure of his thwarted ambition. ... Beneath his overweening bravado, however, was an unflappable self-confidence, an inexhaustible reservoir of enthusiasm for every endeavor. Whatever else may be said of him, Green was flamboyant in failure.