



The Lost Cause: The Confederate Exodus to Mexico

Andrew F. Rolle

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In the midst of the heartbreak, confusion, and rumors that followed Appomattox, some Southerners resolved to emigrate rather than surrender, and emigrate they did—to South America, Europe, Canada, and Mexico.

Mexico's Emperor Maximilian, trying to secure his shaky throne against Juarez' opposition, encouraged these recalcitrant Confederates to settle in Mexico. But, doomed to defeat by the internal crisis in Mexico and by the Southerners' failure to face reality, the Confederate colonies were established and destroyed within two years' time. Later, many of the colonists who survived the ordeal tried to forget that they had ever gone into exile.

Among the emigrants were many prominent Southern leaders, barred from holding public office and, in some cases, facing possible arrest: General Jo Shelby, the hero of the Confederacy, who later became so reconciled to the victory of the North that he voted for a Republican; Commodore Matthew Maury, internationally recognized oceanographer and naval astronomer, who was welcomed to Mexico by Maximilian himself; Henry Watkins Allen, "the single great administrator produced by the Confederacy," who founded the English language *Mexican Times*; and Thomas Caute Reynolds, former lieutenant governor of Missouri, who encouraged Maximilian to stay in Mexico but who himself left. In all there may have been between eight and ten thousand Confederates in Mexico.

The exodus, exile, and repatriation of the Confederates constitute a hitherto incompletely known incident in American history. In this fully documented account, Andrew F. Rolle reveals the hope, humor, disappointment, and defeat of Americans who believed that the only way to save their way of life was to leave their homeland.

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