



Attack and Counterattack: The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1842

Joseph Milton Nance

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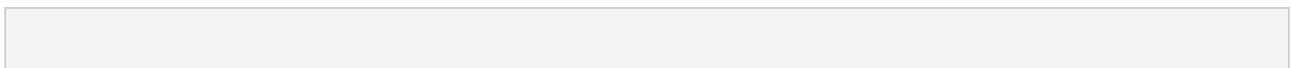
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It is 1842—a dramatic year in the history of Texas-Mexican relations. After five years of uneasy peace, of futile negotiations, of border raids and temporary, unofficial truces, a series of military actions upsets the precarious balance between the two countries. Once more the Mexican Army marches on Texas soil; once more the frontier settlers strengthen their strongholds for defense or gather their belongings for flight. Twice San Antonio falls to Mexican generals; twice the Texans assemble armies for the invasion of Mexico. It is 1842—a year of attack and counterattack.

This is the story that Joseph Milton Nance relates, with a definitiveness and immediacy which come from many years of meticulous research. The exciting story of 1842 is a story of emotions which had simmered through the long, insecure years and which now boil out in blustery threats and demands for vengeance. The Texans threaten to march beyond the Sierra Madres and raise their flag at Monterrey; the Mexicans promise to subdue this upstart Texas and to teach its treacherous inhabitants their place. With communications poor and imaginations fertile, rumors magnify chance banditry into military raids, military raids into full-scale invasions. Newspapers incite their readers with superdramatic, intoxicating accounts of the events. Texans and Mexicans alike respond with a kind of madness that has little or no method. Texas solicits volunteers, calls out troops, plans invasions, and assembles her armies, completely disregarding the fact that her treasury is practically empty—there is little money to buy guns. Meanwhile, in Mexico, where gold and silver are needed for other purposes, "invasions" of Texas are launched—but they are only brief forays more suitable for impressive publicity than for permanent gains.

Still, the conflicts of threat and retaliation, so often futile, are frequently dignified by idealism, friendship, courage, and determination. Both Mexicans and Texans are fighting and dying for liberty, defending their homes against foreign invaders, establishing and maintaining friendships that cross racial and national boundaries, struggling with conflicting loyalties, and—all the while—striving to wrest a living for themselves and their families from the grudging frontier.

Attack and Counterattack, continuing the account which was begun in *After San Jacinto*, tells from original sources the full story of Texas-Mexican relations from the time of the Santa Fe Expedition through the return of the Somervell Expedition from the Rio Grande. These books examine in great detail and with careful accuracy a period of Texas history that had not heretofore been thoroughly studied and that had seldom been given unbiased treatment. The source materials compiled in the notes and bibliography—particularly the military reports, letters, diaries, contemporary newspapers, and broadsides—will be a valuable tool for any scholar who wishes to study this or related periods.



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