LARGE-FORMAT TONED LITHOGRAPH OF THE U.S. TAKEOVER OF PEROTE CASTLE

429. [MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR]. [SHANNON, James Thomas (attributed)]. Castle de Perote, Mexico. | Surrendered April 22nd, 1847 to the U.S. Army, Commanded by Genl. Winfield Scott. | Col. F.M. Winkoop, 1st. Regt. Penna. Vol. Civil & Military Governor. | Garrisoned by F.L. Bowman | A. Co. 3rd Artillery, Capt. G. Taylor U.S.A. | B. Co. Capt Nagle Co. | C. Mounted Rifle. Capt. Walker. | E. ""Binder | F. Co. Capt. Bennett. | H. ""Scott. N.p., n.d. [U.S., 1847 or after]. Chromolithograph on maize ground, in black, shades of grey, white highlights (interior of Perote Fort architecture, with soldiers on review and onlookers). Image dimensions: 34.8 x 59.5 cm; overall sheet size (trimmed): 43.5 x 59.5 cm. Trimmed to image, with possible loss of legend at lower left and lower right. Moderate waterstaining to upper left. Several closed tears neatly repaired on verso (minor losses in sky area). Right side has been reattached and two voids in sky area have been in-filled (one is minor, but the other is 9 x 5 cm). The lower edge in text area has been expertly reattached. Light uniform browning. We find no copies on OCLC or in sales records.

This large print, which exhibits a high degree of proficiency, shows the interior of Perote Castle (originally the Castle of San Carlos), located in the Mexican state of Veracruz, which was built over a seven-year period in the 1770s by the Spanish authorities in Mexico to guard one of their main trade routes and to serve as a depository for treasure awaiting shipment to Spain. The stone fortress, covering an estimated twenty-six acres and surrounded by a moat, was used by the Mexican government as a prison. Perote Prison has a special resonance to Texans because it was there that the prisoners of the Santa Fe Expedition and various detachments of the Mier Expedition were incarcerated. Here the military scene is quite different, with the mighty Mexican fortress surrendered to Major General Winfield Scott on his white steed. The architecture is well delineated, and in addition to the parading regiment with rifles and bayonets, are figures of human interest, such as bystanders and ladies selling food and/or drink. Various soldiers and civilians lounge around, including one soldier resting his leg on a spent cannon. Ato the iconic Mexican castle waves the flag of the United States.

Although publication information is not on this copy, it bears striking resemblance both in printing and artistic technique to James Thomas Shannon’s Siege of Puebla (see following item herein). It is possible the present litho was a trial print that was never published publicly. There are a few other Mexican-American prints that were run off on Mexican presses. The information about the occupying U.S. force concerns the First Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, which was the unit to which Shannon belonged. (According to the Official Army Register of the Volunteer Force of the United States Army for the Years 1861-1865, Captain James T. Shannon died of wounds received on September 12, 1862, at second Battle of Bull Run, Virginia. At that time he was Captain of Company C, 9th Pennsylvania Reserves). Shannon was from Pittsburgh.

Shannon’s original notebook with art work of sketches during the Mexico campaign (now owned by University of Texas at Arlington) was described in the Sotheby-Parke Bernet Sale 3982:125 as “a rare and historical item possibly being a ‘missing link in the Mexican
“Among those sketches is the Castle of Perote, where he was stationed with his regiment. Shannon’s original sketch should be compared to the present print. According to footnote 4 on p. 350 of the Amon Carter Museum’s *Eyewitness to War*, sketches found in Oswandel’s *Notes of the Mexican War* (1885) followed Shannon’s sketches as models for some of the illustrations in the book. The Oswandel sketches should be compared to the present print.

Mentioned in the title is legendary Samuel H. Walker (1817-1847), Texas Ranger extraordinaire, who came to Texas in 1842, survived several Texas expeditions against Mexico (including the “Black Bean Episode” at Perote), and boldly participated with his Texas Rangers in the Mexican-American War. When the First Regiment, Texas Mounted Riflemen, was organized in June 1846, Walker was elected lieutenant colonel, and it was the only Texas unit in those successful battles. Revenge can be both sweet and lethal. Charles D. Spurlin, “Walker, Samuel Hamilton,” *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwa23):

Walker was detailed on May 27, 1847, to the First Pennsylvania Volunteers, stationed at Castle San Carlos de Perote to counter Mexican guerrilla activities between Perote and Jalapa. On October 5, 1847, Walker left Perote with Gen. Joseph P. Lane to escort a supply train to Mexico City. According to J.J. Oswandel, author of *Notes on the Mexican War*, who wrote about the incident, Walker grew increasingly embittered against the enemy: “Should Captain Walker come across guerillas, God help them, for he seldom brings in prisoners. The captain and most all of his men are very prejudiced and embittered against every guerilla in the country.” En route Lane was informed of a sizable enemy force at Huamantla and ordered an attack. With Walker’s Mounted Rifles in the lead, the assault force reached Huamantla on October 9. During the spirited contest that followed Walker was either shot in the back or killed by a man on foot carrying a lance. Following his death his unit took revenge on the community of Huamantla.

($2,000-4,000)