

## SAN JUAN AND SECESSION

---

### PERSISTENT FALSE HISTORY.

There are many statements published as history of Washington that are wholly groundless; there are two of them so often asserted that they are accepted as reliable and likely to crystallize into history. One persistently states that Dr. Marcus Whitman, by riding through midwinter's storms and snow, 1842-43, to Washington City, saved Oregon from the British, while the fact remains that nearly 1,000 emigrants had arrived in the country (1842) before the doctor had started. The other is even more persistently affirmed, to the effect that General Harney had saved to the United States the island of San Juan from the grasp of Great Britain by his timely occupation, and the gallant conduct of Captain Pickett.

The military occupation, as a matter of course, would be distasteful to Great Britain, and her minister in Washington City, immediately on hearing "that report had reached the city that troops of the United States had actually taken possession of the island of San Juan," demanded a prompt explanation. And we learn from his answer to the explanation:

"It is satisfactory to her majesty's government to learn as to the past, that General Harney did not act upon that occasion upon any order from the United States government, but entirely upon his own responsibility."

On the 20th of October, 1859, General Scott arrived first at Fort Vancouver, W. T., where he found Captain Pickett, judge advocate, and Colonel Casey, a member of the general court-martial in session there—made possible by the Solferino incident.

In concluding, I wish to say, inasmuch as General Harney is dead, and most all the officers connected with the military occupation, that this compilation may be like kicking a dead lion, but in justification of it I may refer to ex-Secretary of State of Washington Hon. Allen Weir, who, twenty years ago or more, published the Argus, in Port Townsend, and published a long article by me expressing the views herein, refuting his article persisting that General Harney had saved San Juan island to us, and President Buchanan and General Scott did a great wrong to the general through jealousy.

Respectfully submitted,

GRANVILLE O. HALLER,

Colonel U. S. A., retired (Captain and Brevet major, Commanding I Company, Fourth Infantry and Fort Townsend, Wash., in 1859.).

---

[Reprinted from The Tacoma Sunday Ledger of January 19, 1896.]