

# GENERAL BEAUREGARD AND GENERAL BLANCHARD IN THE MEXICAN WAR

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Address of Hon. Milo B. Williams at the Beauregard Centennial, New Orleans, May 28, 1918.

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Hades is paved with good intentions. That, distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen, is the taunt hurled at us, at our President, at our country by the Germans. In how far is this statement correct? Is it really true? Or, is it but another slander born of a maniac's brain? Are we after all but a nation of boasters and bluffers? After you have heard my few remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I leave the answer to your own good judgment. I doubt not what it will be, for you are Louisianians, and therefore, true Americans.

You know that our nation is an indivisible union of States. You know that this union works in splendid coordination. You know that Louisiana is one of this union. But, do you know how well Louisiana has borne her part? Do you know what glorious niches her sons have carved for themselves in the Hall of Fame? Of course you do! Yet, you will grant me leave to remind you, I know, of the noble deeds of some of our brave Louisianians. I could select almost any chapter in the history of our country and the tale would be the same. However, my own ancestry and the object of these ceremonies limit me to but one chapter, the Mexican War.

We are all familiar with the dramatic beginnings of that war for the freedom of Texas. But, how few of us know the important role played by Louisiana! How few of us know that artillery from New Orleans was the first volunteer unit on the firing line! How few of us know that that same artillery enabled General Zachary Taylor to hold his own at Corpus Christi! At the outset of the war, the call for volunteers met a hearty response in Louisiana. The men of the Pelican State came forward in such vast numbers that there was not room enough in the ranks for all! But, the rejected ones soon had their chance. On April 26, 1846, Gen. Taylor called upon Louisiana for 5,000 more troops. The fervor of the first response had not abated. The men came forward as eagerly as before, to offer their lives for the Stars and Stripes. The rapidity of the

enrollment was so great that, within one week from the call to arms, the Washington Regiment embarked from New Orleans. Such promptitude was unparalleled in history! Louisiana had backed up her intentions by deeds. Within a short time, five more regiments were on their way to the front, and all were consolidated in the Louisiana battalion, commanded by General Persifer F. Smith.

With this little army from Louisiana were two of her sons, destined to become shining lights in her military history, Gen. Albert Gallatin Blanchard and Gen. Pierre Gustave T. Beauregard. Gen. Blanchard was then a captain of the 2nd Regiment, commanded by Col. J. H. Dakin, and Gen. Beauregard was a lieutenant of the Engineer Corps. Both of these young men had laid firmly and well the foundations of their chosen careers.

Gen. Blanchard was born at Charleston, Mass., on September 6, 1810. He entered West Point at an early age, and graduated in 1829, a youth of nineteen, and the youngest graduate in the history of that institution. While at the Academy, he was a class-mate of Robt. E. Lee and Jos. E. Johnston. He served on the frontier as 1st Lieutenant of the 7th Infantry Regiment from 1829 to 1840, when he retired to private life. At the outbreak of hostilities with Mexico, he again entered the service as captain of Col. Dakin's Regiment of Louisiana Volunteers. Then followed a period of distinguished service.

In August of 1846, all Louisiana volunteer companies were mustered out of the service. The Washington Regiment resumed its artillery organization and became the "Washington Artillery." All returned home save Capt. Blanchard, who remained with a few picked men and formed the famous Phoenix Company. This brave band was all that remained of the Louisiana militia.

Capt. Blanchard and his two lieutenants, the brothers of ex-Gov. Nicholls of Louisiana, led their men with a dash and vigor. At the storming of Monterey, all of the officers and many of the privates were especially mentioned for bravery. At Vera Cruz, Capt. Blanchard was the first to rush into the fortress. At Cerro Gordo, the Phoenix Company charged undauntedly up the mountain spur in the face of a galling fire from 15,000 Mexicans. At Contreras, Churubusco and Molino del Rey they fought like furies. And, at Chapultepec, they were the first to gain the summit of the hill. It would take page upon page to recount the exploits of Capt. Blanchard and his intrepid little band. Let it suffice for me to say, that the brave captain was brevetted a major, and a grateful people voted him a

sword for his gallant service. Louisiana had again backed up her intentions by noble deeds.

And then, there was Gen. Beauregard. His life history is well known to every Louisianian. Yet, it might be well to recount his acts during the Mexican War.

At Tampico, it was he who constructed the defenses. At Vera Cruz, it was his engineering genius that brought the siege to a successful close. He was brevetted a captain for his conduct at Contreras and Churubusco. At the battle of Chapultepec, he was wounded in action. Again, at the storming of the "Causeway Battery," he distinguished himself, only to fall wounded once more. His wound deprived him of immediate honor, but his people have not forgotten him. We are assembled here tonight to honor his memory. We are assembled here to commemorate the birth of a brave Louisianian, of a Louisianian, of an American who executed his good intentions by prompt, forceful, and unerring actions. Of such firm character are the sons of Louisiana.

Do we today appreciate the hardships suffered by those sturdy soldiers of yesterday? Do the boys and men of today realize how heroically their fathers fought for the Stars and Stripes? A tale more graphic than Ben. Blanchard's now historic Mexican War diary cannot be found. Tears cannot be restrained as one reads of the tramp, tramp, tramp of that undaunted army. With battle flags shrieking in the wind, drenched to the skin, caked with mud, wallowing in slush, still they pushed on. Up the steep mountain passes, with their packs and rifles slung on their backs, slashing their feet on the jagged, cruel rocks they climbed unafraid. Across burning deserts, with parched and aching throats, in the face of a relentless sun, on and on they marched. Hungry, thirsty, foot-sore and weary they tramped on and ever on.

Down from the mountain heights swoops the Mexican horde. Does our little army turn back? No! Straight into that vast host they fly. Leaping eagerly to the fray, they fire volley upon volley into that oncoming flood. They meet the shock with fixed bayonets and flashing swords; they fight like true Americans. Above the scream and drone of shot, above the clamor of mighty conflict, above the shrieks and groans of the dying rises the stentorian shout: "Remember the Alamo!" With that battle-cry ringing on the air, no army can withstand them. Soon the Mexican retreat becomes a frantic flight. Surging up the mountain slopes like an angry flood, our army beats the enemy back, steadily back. The tide cannot be stemmed. The Stars and Stripes carry all before them.

Louisianians, Capt. Blanchard's Phoenix Company, were with that army. Do we appreciate them? If we do not, why do we erect monuments to those dead heroes? Why are we now exerting our every effort to preserve the historic home of the famous "Washington Artillery?" Why are we now assembled here tonight to celebrate the natal day of our greatest military engineer? It is because we do appreciate those brave Louisianians of yesterday who backed up their good intentions by noble deeds, even as we Louisianians of today back up our good intentions by noble deeds.

With such examples as these before our eyes, how can we Louisianians be anything but true Americans? Gen. Blanchard, the model of the brave, modest, honest, and God-fearing old warrior. Gen. Beauregard, the model of the dashing, courageous, chivalrous and magnificent soldier.

But, in this Union of ours, Louisiana is no exception. Everyone of the forty-eight States has its own heroes, its own Gen. Blanchard, its own Gen. Beauregard. Those states honor and strive to emulate their heroes, even as we honor and strive to emulate ours. Their heroes have fought and died, even as ours have fought and died. Their sons will fight and die, even as our sons will fight and die. All this for our country. For we are Americans.

Hades and Germany may be paved with good intentions, but, our glorious republic rests upon firmer foundations. Her good intentions are supported by the deeds of her loyal, and patriotic citizens. Columbia, the queen of democracy, is crowned with a golden band of Union. And among the forty-eight gems that bedeck that brilliant crown, not one shines forth with greater splendor than that of the "Pelican State," Louisiana.

