

Colorful Characters, continued

John T. Pickett - the crude, insolent, bar-fighting individual sent by the Confederates to be their man in Mexico.

- Pickett wanted to expand the Confederacy into all of Mexico and to turn the Gulf into a “Confederate Lake.” Asked if he were seeking diplomatic recognition, he said he was there to recognize Mexico if he could find a government that could stand still long enough. (Pages 92-94.)
- Angered by the deal allowing Union troops to cross through Mexican territory, Pickett threatened that if Mexico didn’t cooperate, Confederate forces would seize the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas and join forces with the French. (Page 102.)
- Frustrated by Mexico’s close relationship with the government in Washington, DC, Pickett writes home to his Confederate superiors that: “We should at once occupy a military position on the Rio Grande and march upon Monterrey.” He’s kicked out of Mexico after beating up an American businessman in his office at Mexico City. (Page 109)

General Jo Shelby - led his Missouri Confederate Cavalry into Mexico to start a new life. They were the only unit not to surrender in the US Civil War. They planned to offer their services to Emperor Maximilian.

- Arriving outside Monterrey, Shelby sends a note to the French commander asking if they can be invited in as a courtesy from soldier to soldier. If not, he says, he plans to attack. The French commander responds by staging a banquet in Shelby’s honor. (Pages 256-258.)
- When a drunk French commandant at Parras, about 75 miles west of Saltillo, misunderstands Shelby’s intentions, he begins shouting and reaches for his sword. Shelby challenges him to a duel—pistols at ten paces—the next morning, but a higher French officer arrives in time to cancel the event. (Pages 260-261.)
- In Chapter 19, “The Legend of Inez Walker,” Shelby’s troops hear from a local goatherder that an American woman has been held captive for years at a local hacienda. In the middle of the night, they break down the doors with a tree trunk and rescue her, killing her captor. (Pages 263-264)

The Mexican Robin Hood - Nicolas Romero was known for his raids within 100 miles of Mexico City after the fall of Puebla in 1863. The common people saw him as their champion, a leader who robbed foreigners, reactionary conservatives and the wealthy to give to the poor.

- French authorities found Romero’s gang in the state of Michoacan, capturing and hanging 20 of them.
- Romero climbed a tree to hide, but later a soldier chased a rooster up into the very same tree. Romero later faced a firing squad in Mexico City. (Pages 240-243.)