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# DRUMS OF FREEDOM

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After discovering that his country will soon be at war, a humble yet brilliant "Drummer Boy" earns his nation's newly formed Army's Band-leader role, to support the President and his Generals in the freedom-fight against slavery, and the U.S. expansionist desire to annex Costa Rica.



1 DE ENERO DE 2022  
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**Director's Historical Note:** The "Federal Republic of Central America" existed from 1821, when it declared independence from Spain, and it continued until 1841. The republic was made up of the present-day countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and **Costa Rica**. By 1842, the Federation had dissolved, but General Francisco Morazán, ex-President of the Central American Federation, was eager to regain power and restore the Federation, regardless of opposition or cost. Spain, Britain, and the United States, from one point to another, wanted control over Central America, and Francisco Morazán with his unionist views, was seen rather more like a facilitator/dictator, than a liberator by Costa Ricans.

Between 1845 and 1848, an American named John Louis O'Sullivan was a famous Pro-Democrat columnist (exclusively regarded amongst elite southern slave-owners) who popularized the term "Manifest Destiny" to promote the annexation of Texas and the Oregon Country to the United States. The term was widely used to express the belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout all the American continents, was both justified and imminent. James K. Polk (the 11<sup>th</sup> President of the United States), a powerful slave-owner almost all his adult life, and strong supporter of Manifest Destiny, often used the term to justify the American Mexican war. During his term he secured the annexation of Texas, the acquisition of Oregon, California, and the Territory of New Mexico.

Also in 1848, during the Californian gold rush, U.S. interests were seeking to establish a faster route across the Isthmus, allowing Americans to travel from East to West coast with ease, by considering the possibility of a canal. The San Juan River in Nicaragua, was an ideal money-making solution, considering that travel time by boat around South America's Cape Horn could take between 5 and 7 months. A big difference when measured against 30 to 40 days via the Central American Isthmus.

Records show that in one year, twenty-four thousand passengers traveled between the eastern states of the U.S. and California, by way of Nicaragua. A large portion of the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, runs on the southern bank of the San Juan River. A tyrant called William Walker thought about taking advantage of all of that.

In the era of "Manifest Destiny" as a doctrine, portraying himself as a sort of "renaissance man", William Walker was a doctor, lawyer, journalist, and mercenary. Walker coordinated "unofficial" military crusades into Mexico and Central America, with the main goal of settling private U.S. colonies. This type of venture as a business was known back then as "filibustering".

Towards the end of the 1840's world-wide, the musical instrument most associated with any military was a snare drum. Military drummers handled crucial duties during warfare throughout history. Soldiers engaged in fighting to the sound of drums and were led by drummer's beats to regulate the loading and re-loading of any weaponry during battle. The main drummer's role was not only the band's leadership, but also to raise MORALE throughout the corps! Then, one exceptional Costa Rican changed America's history...