

Outline of the Thornton Affair

- I. Background and Context:
 - a. Mexican-American War: The war had begun in 1846 over border disputes and territorial claims, primarily related to the U.S. annexation of Texas.
 - b. Location: The Thornton Affair took place along the north bank of the Rio Grande, near the town of Matamoros in Mexican territory.
- II. U.S. Leadership:
 - a. Commanders: The U.S. forces were led by Captain Seth B. Thornton, who commanded a detachment of the U.S. Army's 2nd Dragoons.
- III. Events of the Thornton Affair:
 - a. Mexican Opposition: Mexican forces, led by General Anastasio Torrejón, opposed the presence of U.S. troops near the Rio Grande.
 - b. Mexican Attack: On April 25, 1846, Mexican troops attacked Thornton's detachment, leading to a skirmish.
- IV. Skirmish and Consequences:
 - a. Skirmish: The skirmish between U.S. and Mexican forces resulted in casualties on both sides.
 - b. Thornton's Capture: Captain Thornton and a significant portion of his detachment were captured by Mexican forces.
- V. Significance:
 - a. Escalation of Tensions: The Thornton Affair further escalated tensions between the United States and Mexico, contributing to the outbreak of full-scale war.
 - b. Political Impact: The incident was a rallying point for pro-war sentiment in the United States, and it was cited as one of the justifications for the U.S. government's decision to go to war with Mexico.
 - c. Preceding Conflict: The Thornton Affair occurred prior to the larger battles and campaigns of the Mexican-American War, serving as one of the early military confrontations.
- VI. Impact on the Mexican-American War:
 - a. Prelude to War: The Thornton Affair marked one of the initial military clashes between U.S. and Mexican forces, setting the stage for more significant battles and campaigns that would follow.