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NEW MEXICO DURING THE CIVIL WAR*

By WILLIAM I. WALDRIP

I Confederate and Union Interest in New Mexico

AT THE outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, it was conceivable that the conflict would have slight bearing on the Territory of New Mexico, which at that time was a remote, sparsely populated and relatively little known section of the United States. Yet the opportunity to acquire potential mineral wealth, military equipment and personnel, and a route to other richer territories proved attractive to the Confederate States.

Texas was especially interested in New Mexico, not only because of the contiguity of New Mexico, but because of animosities aroused by the ill-fated Santa Fe-Texas Expedition of 1841. Texas had considered the Rio Grande as her western boundary, and intended, if possible, to make good her claim. If this were not possible, the expedition expected to open trade with Santa Fe.¹ The Texans were captured by General Manuel Armijo and unceremoniously taken to Mexico City before being released.² Although the boundary matter was settled by the Compromise of 1850,³ the memory of 1841 undoubtedly rankled in Texas hearts.

*Master of Arts thesis, Department of History, University of New Mexico, 1950.

1. Herbert E. Bolton and Eugene C. Barker, editors, *With the Makers of Texas* (New York: American Book Company, 1904), in *Objects of the Santa Fe Expedition* by George Wilkins Kendall, pp. 236-8.

2. Ralph E. Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1911-1917), II, 78-9.

3. J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1937), p. 124.

The mineral wealth of the West was a further incentive for Confederate conquest. Colonel John R. Baylor, a Confederate military leader, recognized the value of "the vast mineral resources of Arizona. . .,"⁴ while the gold of California would assuredly be important to the South which was cut off from such precious metals.⁵ However, before minerals from these areas could be made available to the Confederacy, New Mexico must necessarily be conquered. The North was not insensible to western gold. President Lincoln considered it ". . . the life blood of our financial credit."⁶

Aside from metallic ores, there was other wealth in the West. Secretary of War John B. Floyd⁷ of the Buchanan administration sent vast quantities of supplies to western and southwestern forts, and New Mexico received its share.⁸ The suggestion was made to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that

Now might it not be well, secretly of course and at an early moment, to fit out an expedition to New Mexico. . . ? The stores, supplies, and munitions of war within New Mexico and Arizona are immense, and I am decidedly of opinion that the game is well worth the ammunition. This movement, if undertaken soon enough, would undoubtedly have the effect to overawe and intimidate the Mexican element, which comprises at least nineteen-twentieths of our population.⁹

The South needed manpower as well as money and supplies. Major T. T. Teel of the Confederate forces believed

4. U. S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901), I, 4:23. Baylor to Van Dorn, August 14, 1861. (The Records hereafter are cited as O. R.)

5. William C. Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: New Mexico Campaign in 1862* (Denver: The State Historical and Natural History Society, 1906), p. 12. (Preface by Jerome C. Smiley)

6. Charles S. Walker, "Causes of the Confederate Invasion of New Mexico," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 8:85, April 1933. Citing Latham Anderson, "Canby's Services in the New Mexican Campaign," *Battles and Leaders*, II, 697.

7. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, editors, *Dictionary of American Biography, under the Auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), VI, 482-3. Floyd, a former governor of Virginia, transferred a large number of flint-lock muskets to southern arsenals to make room for a new type percussion rifle. Although attempts were made, it was not possible to sell all of the older type weapon, thus the transfer. Floyd, until his retirement from the position of Secretary of War, was a strong opponent of secession.

8. Whitford, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

9. O. R., I, 4:97. McWillie to President Davis, June 30, 1861, quoted in letter from A. T. Bledsoe to General Ben McCullough, August 1, 1861.

that “. . . there were scattered all over the Western States and Territories Southern men who were anxiously awaiting an opportunity to join the Confederate army; . . .”¹⁰ Baylor also believed that the South would be able “. . . to get hundreds of good Southern men, well armed and mounted, who are anxious to join our cause. . . .”¹¹ To allow for this possibility, authorization was given “. . . to take into the Confederate States service all disaffected officers and soldiers on the original commissions of the former and enlistments of the latter.”¹²

Material resources were important to the South, but the intangible assets of prestige and political advantage were no less so. The Union military leadership in New Mexico itself believed that “the conquest of it [New Mexico] is a great political feature of the rebellion. It will gain the rebels a name and prestige over Europe, and operate against the Union cause.”¹³

A Union leader in reflecting on the invasion concluded that

the remote and unimportant territory of New Mexico was not the real object of the invasion. The Confederate leaders were striking at much higher game—no less than the conquest of California, Sonora, Chihuahua, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.¹⁴

However, even if New Mexico was not the main target, its conquest was necessary if the larger scheme was to be achieved. Aside from New Mexico being necessary as a gateway to California it also contained the shortest, easiest, and cheapest route to the Coast.¹⁵ Too, New Mexico was bounded on the south by Mexico, the only neutral country from which the Confederates could gain supplies by land, and also export goods.¹⁶

10. Whitford, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

11. *O. R.*, I, 4:135. Baylor to McCullough, November 10, 1861.

12. *Ibid.*, I, 4:93. Cooper to Sibley, July 8, 1861.

13. *Ibid.*, I, 9:634. Report from N. M. Hq. to General Halleck, February 28, 1862.

14. Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

15. Sylvester Mowry, *Arizona and Sonora: The Geography, History, and Resources of the Silver Region of North America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1866), pp. 223-4.

16. Frank L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 88.

Although Bancroft judged that an invasion gave the Texans, who were primarily involved in such a move, a chance to display their patriotism,¹⁷ possibly the attempt would not have been made if there had not been indications that conquest would prove simple. As early as September, 1861, Baylor wrote optimistically that "New Mexico can now be easily taken."¹⁸

One of the primary reasons for this optimistic outlook lay in the passage of an act by the legislature to protect slave property in the Territory.¹⁹ Although repealed in December, 1861, superficially its passage indicated slavery sentiment; the law was branded in Congress as one that "... would mantle with blushes the face of Caligula."²⁰

Southern leadership was well aware of the dissatisfaction among the regular Federal troops because of "want of pay," and also of the lack of Union reinforcements.²¹ Canby urgently requested supplies,²² and complained especially of the lack of funds to pay regulars and volunteers alike.²³ He cited the "very great embarrassments" caused by lack of money for troop payments.²⁴ Complaints were heard too of alleged attempts "by secret agents of Texas" to encourage desertion in the Union ranks.²⁵

Brigadier-General H. H. Sibley, the Union leader who went over to the Texans, regretted his "sickly sentimentality" in not bringing his old command with him.²⁶ Captain Smith Simpson, U. S. A., who doubted if any success would have crowned such an attempt, stated that, "I don't think he [Sibley] tried any missionary work with anybody, for

17. Hubert H. Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888* (San Francisco: The History Company, Publishers, 1888), p. 686.

18. *O. R.*, I, 4:109. Baylor to Van Dorn, September 24, 1861.

19. *Laws of the Territory of New Mexico. Passed by the Legislative Assembly, Session of 1861-62* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Putnam O'Brien, Printer, 1862), p. 6.

20. *Congressional Globe*, 36th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 515.

21. *O. R.*, I, 4:128. Baylor to Hart, October 24, 1861.

22. *Ibid.*, I, 4:65. Canby to Western Dept. Hq., August 16, 1861.

23. *Ibid.*, I, 4:75. Canby to Paymaster-General, November 18, 1861.

24. *Ibid.*, I, 4:79. Canby to Washington Hq., December 8, 1861.

25. *Ibid.*, I, 4:39. Major G. R. Paul to N. M. Hq., June 16, 1861. However, Horace Greeley in his *American Conflict* says that "of the 1,200 regulars in New Mexico, one only deserted during this time of trial, and he, it is believed, did not join the enemy."

26. *O. R.*, I, 4:55. Sibley to Loring, June 12, 1861.

there were men who had their opinion on the North and the South."²⁷

The Indians were an important element in any invasion attempt. Bancroft held that the Apaches and Navahos were factors in the war, not as partisans, but because troops were necessarily diverted against them.²⁸ Secretary of the Interior Smith accused "disloyal" Texans of stirring up the Indians in New Mexico.²⁹ Whether the above was true or not, the Indians north of the Red River were considered allies of the Confederates.³⁰ The ubiquitous M. H. McWillie suggested the use of Cherokees and Choctaws against the native population.³¹

Finally, the South placed some reliance upon what they believed was a strong secession movement in the West, which they hoped to encourage. The Mormons in Utah were depended upon because of their differences with the Federal government over polygamy,³² while there were known secessionists in Arizona³³ and Colorado.³⁴ The native New Mexicans were expected to do their part,³⁵ and Confederate hopes were so high farther West that Baylor requested that troops be placed in Arizona, as "California is on the eve of a revolution."³⁶ A soldier with Sibley recalled that a group of "renegades in California and Oregon" asked that 3,000 Texans be sent to Tucson where 10,000 westerners would meet them and the whole group

. . . . would switch off down in and take Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango and Tamaulipas and add them to the Confederacy.

27. Edwin L. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days, 1809-1886*. (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1935), II, 676.

28. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 686.

29. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, November 30, 1861, Appendix, p. 12.

30. *O. R.*, I, 1:628. Major E. Kirby Smith to Secretary of War, April 20, 1861.

31. *Ibid.*, I, 4:97. McWillie to Davis, June 30, 1861.

32. C. H. Claudy, editor, *My Story by Anson Mills: Brigadier General, U.S.A.*, (Washington, D. C.: Press of Byron S. Adams, 1918), p. 106. Mills, in a conversation with Brigham Young after the war, was told that the U. S. Flag flew over the temple every day during the conflict.

33. Whitford, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Whitford held that Arizona was almost unanimously for the Confederacy.

34. *O. R.*, I, 4:73. Governor Gilpin of Colorado to Canby, October 26, 1861. Gilpin placed the number of secessionists at 7,500.

35. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 686.

36. *O. R.*, I, 4:149. Baylor to Secretary of War, November 2, 1861.

Whereupon Mr. Jefferson Davis commissioned one H. H. Sibley . . . as a Brigadier General, . . . to proceed forthwith without the loss of time or failure to swipec the whole thing.³⁷

While the South was aware of the importance of the Territory of New Mexico and was planning its seizure, Washington apparently lacked a similar interest, or was perhaps too occupied elsewhere. Secretary of Interior Caleb B. Smith, however, wrote to Secretary of War Simon Cameron calling attention to the danger to which New Mexico was exposed, and also reporting that disloyalty was evident in the Union army there.³⁸ The reply, which was not entirely satisfactory, stated that “. . . measures have been or will be taken commensurate with its [New Mexico’s] importance.”³⁹ Cameron received further advice when it was suggested to him that if that “. . . imperfectly loyalized region of our country . . .” was to be saved, protection against both Indians “. . . and the rebellious domestic foe . . .” must be provided.⁴⁰ Smith continued these efforts,⁴¹ but the Territory was largely ignored.⁴²

Poor communications with the East were further cause for neglect of the Territory. There was not a railroad or telegraph within a thousand miles of southern New Mexico.⁴³ The nearest telegraph, a single wire, served Colorado, the northern neighbor of the Territory.⁴⁴ This wire reached Julesburg, Colorado, in 1861, but was not extended farther west until the end of 1863.⁴⁵ If the East was indifferent and uninformed, New Mexico too found herself relying largely on rumors as to what actually was transpiring on the outside.⁴⁶

37. Theophilus Noel, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of Theophilus Noel* (Chicago: The Noel Company Print, 1904), pp. 56-57.

38. *O. R.*, I, 53:490. Smith to Cameron, May 11, 1861.

39. *Ibid.*, I, 1:605. Cameron to Smith, May 20, 1861.

40. *Ibid.*, I, 4:53. Perry E. Brocchus to Cameron, July 3, 1861.

41. W. W. Mills, *Forty Years at El Paso, 1858-1898* (El Paso, Texas, 1901), p. 71.

42. A. A. Hayes, Jr., *New Colorado and the Santa Fe Trail* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), p. 165.

43. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

44. Whitford, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

45. Ovando J. Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Samuel Bowles and Company, 1867), p. 124.

46. Loomis M. Ganaway, *New Mexico and the Sectional Controversy, 1846-1861* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1944), p. 93. Citing Rencher to Bates, June 4, 1861. [Vol. XII, Historical Society of New Mexico, Publications in History.]

II Confederate Successes

Shortly before actual hostilities began in the East, Colonel W. W. Loring, a native of Florida, when assuming command of the New Mexico Department for the Federal government, reported unrest among both the troops and the civilians.¹ Nevertheless orders were received in New Mexico for the transfer of a large part of the regular troops to Leavenworth. Lieutenant-Colonel Edward R. S. Canby was to accompany them.²

As the North and South squared off for battle, the Territory shared in the alignments of loyalty which were taking place over the nation. Loring, placing Canby in charge, left for Fort Fillmore to await action on his request for discharge.³ Although Canby assumed command, there were reports that Frederick P. Stanton, a former acting governor of Kansas, had received the appointment as commanding general in New Mexico and was on his way West.⁴

Canby, warming to his task, soon began to alert Washington as to the possible danger which the Territory must face. He reported that

. . . it is positively known that a considerable force of Texan troops is now on the march for El Paso or that neighborhood, with the ostensible object of garrisoning Forts Quitman and Bliss.⁵

A week later a similar report was sent, although the attack was then anticipated along the Canadian River.⁶

While keeping higher headquarters informed as to the situation, Canby at the same time warned his own outer defenses. Major Isaac Lynde at Fillmore was relied upon to exert his "zeal and judgement" in defending his post, and

1. O. R., I, 1:599. Loring to Thomas, March 23, 1861.

2. *Ibid.*, I, 1:604. Special Order No. 86½, May 17, 1861.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 1:606. Canby to Wash. Hq., June 11, 1861.

4. Office of Indian Affairs, *Letters Received* (National Archive, Washington, D. C. Microfilm copy in Library, University of New Mexico). (Hereafter cited as L. R.) Micro. No. 155, F. M. Army to Charles E. Mix, June 26, 1861. *Dictionary of American Biography* mentions that Stanton, a former congressman from Tennessee, had gone to Kansas as secretary of the territory with a pro-slavery background. He later became a Free-State party member, partially because of his dismissal from office, XVII, 523-4.

5. O. R., I, 4:44. Canby to Wash. Hq., June 23, 1861.

6. *Ibid.*, I, 4:50. Canby to Wash. Hq., June 30, 1861.

also encouraged to attempt the seizure of El Paso.⁷ A short time later he was advised that “. . . it is positively known that movements against New Mexico are on foot, . . .”⁸ Although emphasis was placed on possible attack from the south, Fort Union to the northeast was prompted against possible assault on Union wagon trains arriving from Missouri.⁹

Granting that valiant efforts were made by the Federal leadership in the Territory to save New Mexico to the Union, the number of troops involved was scarcely commensurate with that effort. The aggregate reported by the New Mexico Department for the middle of June, 1861, totaled only 2,466,¹⁰ although by the end of the year, 5,646 were listed.¹¹ Realizing that his own troops were few, Canby complained that the Texans had 4,000 men in Arizona and New Mexico early in 1862. He further emphasized the need for concentration of troops against any possible attack, while pointing out that the invader was under no such restriction.¹²

The number of volunteers from the Territory itself was estimated at 1,000,¹³ but fear was voiced that “our Mexican volunteers, . . . are far from being certain in a contest with Texans.”¹⁴ Because of this doubt as to how the volunteers would react, and inasmuch as part of the regulars were expected to be recalled, a request was made upon Colorado to supply troops for Fort Garland.¹⁵

Rumors of a Confederate invasion were not unfounded as New Mexico learned when Fort Bliss was occupied in July, 1861, by Lieutenant-Colonel John R. Baylor.¹⁶ Although the occupation was achieved with little difficulty, a

7. *Ibid.*, I, 4:45. N. M. Hq. to Lynde, June 23, 1861.

8. *Ibid.*, I, 4:51. N. M. Hq. to Lynde, June 30, 1861.

9. *Ibid.*, I, 1:605. N. M. Hq. to Commanding Officer, Fort Union, June 10, 1861.

10. *Ibid.*, III, 1:301. Abstract of Returns, Dept. of N. M., June 30, 1861.

11. *Ibid.*, III, 1:775. Abstract of Returns, Dept. of N. M., December 31, 1861.

12. *Ibid.*, I, 4:87. Canby to Connelly, January 21, 1862.

13. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Cameron Report to President, Appendix, p. 16.

14. *L. R.*, Micro. No. 160. Collins to Dole, July 20, 1861. Twitchell in his *Leading Facts of New Mexican History* says that Canby like other American generals “. . . had a very erroneous idea of the Mexican character,” but was probably influenced by “Americans” living there. II, 375, note.

15. *O. R.*, I, 4:53. Canby to Gov. of Colorado, July 6, 1861.

16. Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

resident and loyal Unionist, W. W. Mills, considered that in El Paso “. . . there was a strong latent Union sentiment even among the Americans, and with the Mexicans it was universal; . . .”¹⁷

Baylor, expecting an attack upon El Paso, decided to take the initiative, and with 258 men proceeded toward Mesilla, New Mexico.¹⁸ Mills, arrested as a spy, from his vantage point in the guardhouse, observed the leader of the Texans launch his attack, believing that it would succeed even though he (Baylor) was outnumbered.¹⁹ On July 25, Baylor forced Major Lynde, the Union commander at Fort Fillmore, to retreat from Mesilla, and on the twenty-seventh was able to capture his entire force.²⁰

The defeat and subsequent surrender of Lynde created a storm of protest from all sides. The Major was made the scapegoat, although possibly there were extenuating circumstances surrounding the whole affair. Mills, who was familiar with the Mesilla region, had written, prior to the Texas attack, to John S. Watts, Territorial Representative, about the disloyalty of both the military and the citizenry, and this information had been relayed to the Union commander in the Territory.²¹ Mills also had personally told Canby of the unwillingness of Captain Lane, Lynde's predecessor, to attack El Paso and of his alleged disloyalty. Lane was relieved, and Major Lynde, in whom Canby had a great deal of confidence, was placed in charge of Fillmore.²²

Lynde adopted a confident manner in his early messages to his superior. Although doubting a Texas attack, Lynde reported, “. . . but if they do, I think we shall give them a warm reception.”²³ When actual contact with the enemy developed, this confidence apparently dissipated.

17. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

18. *O. R.*, I, 4:17. Baylor Report, September 21, 1861. Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 174, states that Sibley was ordered to El Paso from San Antonio by A. M. Jackson, Assistant Adjutant General of the Army of New Mexico, and former secretary of the territory. Canby believed that the invasion had been arranged by Jackson.

19. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

20. *O. R.*, I, 4:16. Baylor Report, August 3, 1861.

21. Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

23. *O. R.*, I, 4:59. Lynde to Canby, July 7, 1861.

On July 24, Lynde learned from a deserter (sent by Mills)²⁴ that the Texans were coming up the Rio Grande. The next day the Union troops were ordered to Mesilla, but the enemy was already on the ground. An indecisive skirmish ensued, and Lynde decided to return to Fillmore. He had ordered the Texans to surrender, but they suggested that he take the town instead. Asserting that the Texans numbered 700, Lynde placed his own troops at only 380.²⁵

On the twenty-seventh Lynde decided to abandon Fillmore²⁶ because of its alleged "indefensible" position, and its lack of water. En route to Fort Stanton via St. Augustine Springs the troops "... suffered severely with the intense heat and want of water. . . ." With the Confederates in hot pursuit, his men in bad condition with only one hundred fit for duty, Lynde felt that

Under the circumstances I considered our case hopeless; that it was worse than useless to resist; that honor did not demand the sacrifice of blood after the terrible suffering that our troops had already undergone, and when that sacrifice would be totally useless . . . I surrendered command to Lieutenant-Colonel Baylor. . . .²⁷

Baylor, in jubilantly reporting the successful pursuit and capture of the thirst-crazed foe, found that "the road for 5 miles was lined with the fainting, famished soldiers, who threw down their arms as we passed and begged for water." With the disregard for accurate figures characteristic of both sides, Baylor claimed the seizure of 700 by a mere 200 Confederates.²⁸ In addition to the troop capture, Baylor was gleeful over taking \$9,500 in "Federal drafts" from Fort Fillmore,²⁹ and the creation of ". . . a stampede among the

24. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

25. *O. R.*, I, 4:4. Lynde to N. M. Hq., July 26, 1861.

26. Colonel M. L. Crimmins, "Fort Fillmore," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 6:333, October, 1931. Crimmins notes that Fillmore was never reoccupied by the Federal government.

27. *O. R.*, I, 4:5-6. Lynde to N. M. Hq., August 7, 1861.

28. *Ibid.*, I, 4:18-19. Baylor Report to Hq., September 21, 1861. Crimmins in his "Fort Fillmore" states that hospital whiskey was placed in Union canteens rather than water. This possibly accounts for the extreme thirst of the Union troops (p. 332).

29. *Ibid.*, I, 4:157. Baylor to Secretary of War Benjamin, December 14, 1861.

United States troops . . ." at Fort Stanton which was abandoned.³⁰

The Union troops involved in the surrender officially were exonerated as having "proved themselves with a few dishonorable exceptions, loyal and faithful soldiers of the Union."³¹ It was further reported that these victims of "cowardice and imbecility" wept "like children" at the news of the surrender.³² The opinion as to the conduct of the officers was divided. Captain Biggs of the Union spoke of the unanimous protest which arose when the surrender was made known,³³ but Mills believed that "none, so far as I know, . . . ever did much fighting."³⁴

Although the officers and men were partially or wholly cleared, the commanding officer for the Union was roundly condemned from all sides. The "d--d old scoundrel [who] has surrendered us!"³⁵ was not deemed so much a traitor, but more an incompetent.³⁶ Captain McNally considered that 300 could have held Fort Fillmore against 3,000.³⁷ Mills believed that Lynde ". . . was not treacherous, he was weak, and he was deceived to his ruin and the disgrace of his flag."³⁸ Lynde, in attempting to defend himself, asserted that "surrounded by open or secret enemies, no reliable information could be obtained, and [with] disaffection prevailing in my own command, . . ." he was helpless to prevent the disaster which overtook him and his troops.³⁹

This defeat was a crushing blow to the Union cause in New Mexico. The Texans now had a good foothold in the Territory, and Federal prestige had been lowered. To explain the defeat and also to serve as a warning, it was neces-

30. *Ibid.*, I, 4:19. Baylor to Hq., September 21, 1861.

31. *Ibid.*, I, 4:3. General Order No. 31, August 27, 1861.

32. *Ibid.*, I, 4:11. Assistant Surgeon J. Cooper McKee Report, August 16, 1861.

33. *Ibid.*, I, 4:8. Captain Alfred Biggs Report, August 6, 1861.

34. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

35. *O. R.*, I, 4:13. Captain C. H. McNally Statement, August 16, 1861.

36. George Griggs, *History of Mesilla Valley or the Gadsden Purchase* (Mesilla, New Mexico: n.n., 1930), pp. 61-2. Griggs quoting Mrs. Lydia Lane, wife of the Captain, whom Lynde replaced.

37. *O. R.*, I, 4:13. McNally Statement, August 16, 1861.

38. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

39. *O. R.*, I, 4:6. Lynde to N. M. Hq., August 7, 1861. Lynde in corresponding with Mills in 1891 said that he did ". . . not believe then that my junior officers would act toward me as they did." *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

sary to place responsibility for the loss on the shoulders of someone. Lynde was selected. Canby considered the report of the Major as “. . . in all respects unsatisfactory, . . .” although he considered the defeat as having one favorable aspect—the news supposedly aroused the natives from their lethargy.⁴⁰

A resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives by the delegate from New Mexico, John S. Watts, requesting that the Secretary of War report the action taken concerning the St. Augustine fiasco.⁴¹ The Army, however, had acted and Major Lynde was “. . . dropped from the rolls of the army. . . .”⁴²

Both sides now renewed their efforts after the Confederate victory. Baylor set about organizing a government for what he termed the Arizona Territory. This area consisted of southern present-day Arizona, and included much of what is now southern New Mexico as well. The Arizona region was provided with a military government because of the war and unsettled conditions, and “. . . all that portion of New Mexico lying South of the thirty-fourth parallel of north latitude” was incorporated within it.⁴³

Canby, aroused by the surrender, requested four companies of volunteers from Governor Henry Connelly of New Mexico,⁴⁴ and a little later a like number from Governor William Gilpin of Colorado.⁴⁵ Washington, although still desiring the regular troops stationed in the Territory, was willing to wait until a sufficient number of volunteers were raised to replace them.⁴⁶ Canby reported that “the greatest exertions are being used to organize a respectable volunteer force, . . .” but that he was disappointed over the progress that was being made.⁴⁷

In the meantime Sibley, who was preparing an army at San Antonio, was expected to begin his march West to rein-

40. *Ibid.*, I, 4:2. Canby to Wash. Hq., August 4, 1861.

41. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, December 5, 1861, p. 16.

42. *O. R.*, I, 4:16. General Order No. 102, November 25, 1861.

43. *Ibid.*, I, 4:20. Baylor Proclamation, August 1, 1861.

44. *Ibid.*, I, 4:61. Canby to Connelly, August 2, 1861.

45. *Ibid.*, I, 4:69. Canby to Gilpin, September 8, 1861.

46. *Ibid.*, I, 4:62. Washington Hq., August 11, 1861.

47. *Ibid.*, I, 4:3. Canby to Washington Hq., August 11, 1861.

force Baylor.⁴⁸ Baylor, fearing that Canby would soon be upon him, sarcastically suggested that if reinforcements were not forthcoming that many of "... the friends of our cause..." would suffer in New Mexico, and that "if it is the wish of the colonel commanding the department that Arizona should be abandoned, and I presume it is, he can congratulate himself upon the consummation of that event."⁴⁹

Rumors that Union troops were being massed in Mexico were further cause for Confederate concern.⁵⁰

In November Sibley was ready to start for New Mexico after many delays.⁵¹ The men who left San Antonio were a hardy group, described by one of the party as

... three thousand five hundred of ... the best that ever threw leg over a horse or that had ever sworn allegiance to any cause. All-around men, natural-born soldiers, they were under twenty-five, with a liberal sprinkling of older ones who had seen more or less service on the frontier.⁵²

The country between San Antonio and El Paso was rugged. The Indians too presented an additional problem. These were pacified temporarily, however, because "... Sibley's friendship with ... [them] was very great, while that of his brother-in-law, Canby, commander of the Federal forces at Fort Craig, was nil."⁵³

By the middle of December Sibley appeared at Fort Bliss and took command of all Confederate forces in New Mexico and Arizona.⁵⁴ John R. Baylor, although outranked, retained power as civil and military governor of Arizona.⁵⁵

Meanwhile Canby considered that his regular soldiers were in good condition, but fretted about the possibilities of ever getting the volunteers into fighting trim and about the

48. *Ibid.*, I, 4:116. C. O. of C. S. Prov. Army to C. O. Dept. of Texas, October 4, 1861.

49. *Ibid.*, I, 4:129. Baylor to C. O. Texas Department, October 25, 1861.

50. *Ibid.*, I, 4:147. George L. McManus to C. O. at Fort Davis to Sibley, November 6, 1861.

51. *Ibid.*, I, 4:141. Sibley to Cooper, November 16, 1861.

52. Noel, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

54. *O. R.*, I, 4:157. General Order No. 10, December 14, 1861.

55. *Ibid.*, I, 4:158-9. General Order No. 12, December 20, 1861.

lack of equipment and money.⁵⁶ However, by the end of the year, Canby had an aggregate of 5,646.⁵⁷ In answer to complaints regarding his inactivity, Canby tartly said

. . . that I will move when I get ready to move; and that will be when I know that the country behind me is secured from a revolutionary movement. The present clamor I know to be instigated by enemies of the Government, fomented by emissaries, who have been busy in the exercise of this baneful influence since the middle of last month, but who have hitherto escaped detection.⁵⁸

If Canby was not ready to move, Sibley was. By the first of the year, 1862, word was received that the Texans were on their way to the North.⁵⁹ Canby was faced with serious difficulties. A shortage of money was creating unrest among the troops, and desertions were expected among the volunteers.⁶⁰ Revolts did occur at both Fort Union and Camp Connelly because of Union inability to pay and clothe the men as promised.⁶¹

Governor Connelly, who had married into a prominent native family, voiced confidence in the 4,000 volunteers and militia men whom he considered to be “. . . under fair discipline . . .,” although he worried about the “. . . continual spoliation of property” caused by the Indians who had greater leeway because of the Texan invasion.⁶² The governor was confident because

The spirit of our people is good and I have here and en route 1,000 and more of the elite of the yeomanry of the country to aid in defending their homes and firesides.⁶³

In February Canby reported that 3,000 Confederates were moving up the Rio Grande valley, but that he had 4,000 troops ready, and further that “the . . . population appear[ed] to be animated by a very good spirit.”⁶⁴ Additional

56. *Ibid.*, I, 4:78-79. Canby to Wash. Hq., December 8, 1861.

57. *Ibid.*, I, 4:81. Abstract, December 31, 1861.

58. *Ibid.*, I, 4:88. Canby to Major James L. Donaldson January 25, (?) 1862.

59. *Ibid.*, I, 4:82. Canby to Connelly, January 1, 1862.

60. *Ibid.*, I, 4:85. Canby to Wash. Hq., January 13, 1862.

61. *Ibid.*, I, 4:87. Canby to Wash. Hq., January 20, 1862.

62. *Ibid.*, I, 9:620. Connelly to Seward, January 11, 1862.

63. *Ibid.*, I, 9:644. Connelly to Seward, February 14, 1862.

64. *Ibid.*, I, 9:632. Canby to Wash. Hq., February 14, 1862.

assistance was received from another quarter. James L. Collins, the Indian agent, and the governor were on the scene to encourage the volunteers because

. . . some doubt has been entertained with regard to the courage of the Mexican when coming in contact with Texans, and we desire to give them every possible incentive to acquit themselves creditably.⁶⁵

The natives were credited with having “. . . turned out with a spirit that is truly commendable, the best and most influential men in the Territory are here and will take part in the battle.”⁶⁶

With Canby at Fort Craig and Sibley marching up the valley, the stage was set for the Battle of Valverde—a conflict which has been termed, possibly in exaggeration, as “. . . perhaps, the bloodiest battle for the number engaged, in the whole war.”⁶⁷

On the sixteenth of February, the forces led by Sibley were within a mile and one half of Fort Craig, about thirty miles south of Socorro. At this point the Confederate general had a choice of tactics. He could engage the troops from the fort, who marched out to give battle, or he could retire from the scene. Twitchell believed that Sibley was maneuvering at this juncture, so that a river crossing might be more easily accomplished.⁶⁸ On the seventeenth and eighteenth, a typical New Mexico dust storm halted any action by either side. The next day the Texans retreated to the south and crossed the Rio Grande to the east of the fort where they hoped to bombard Craig from the heights, but Canby prevented this by occupying the site first. Sibley then continued north, on the eastern side of the river, to Valverde a few miles distant. He hoped thus to cut Craig off from Santa Fe and the North.⁶⁹

Both leaders presented estimates of the number of soldiers involved, but were at variance. Sibley stated that the

65. *L. R.*, Micro. No. 170. Collins to Dole, January 25, 1862.

66. *Ibid.*, Micro. No. 170. Collins to Dole, February 11, 1862.

67. Claudy, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

68. Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, II, 374. Bancroft in his *Arizona and New Mexico* concurs with this, p. 691.

69. *L. R.*, Micro No. 170. Collins to Dole, March 1, 1862.

Union had at least 5,000, with a reserve of 3,000 in the fort, while claiming that the Confederates numbered only 1,750.⁷⁰ Canby judged the numbers differently, placing his own at 3,810, and the opposition at 2,600.⁷¹

At the river ford, five or six miles north of Fort Craig, the actual battle of Valverde (near what was the settlement of San Marcial) began on the morning of February 21, 1862, when the Union troops marched out to prevent the Confederate crossing.⁷² A two hour artillery and small arms battle marked the first clash which resulted in the repelling of the Confederates.⁷³ Heartened by this, the Union Cavalry crossed the river and engaged the enemy successfully.⁷⁴ In the afternoon Canby took personal charge of the battle and ordered his artillery to cross the river. The enemy concentrated their fire on the Union leader and

the fighting became general from that moment, and it was so severe that General Canby was in great peril on several occasions, and he had three horses killed under him that day.⁷⁵

Then occurred the crisis which was to prove the turning point of the day. Canby, realizing that a direct assault might not be successful, decided to outflank the enemy,⁷⁶ but the Texans had other plans. A Union battery under the command of Captain McRae had previously crossed the river. The Confederates with a desperate, concentrated charge were able to capture the guns and the supporting Union troops gave way.⁷⁷ Canby now decided upon withdrawal, but claimed that he could not restore order among the volunteers, although the regulars were more easily collected.⁷⁸

Efforts to place responsibility for the loss of the battery, and the subsequent withdrawal of the Union forces, brought out conflicting testimony. Major B. S. Roberts, who had

70. *O. R.*, I, 9:508. Sibley Report, May 4, 1862.

71. *Ibid.*, I, 9:488. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

72. Crimmins, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

73. *O. R.*, I, 9:489. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

74. Sabin, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, 844.

75. *Ibid.*, II, 845.

76. *O. R.*, I, 9:490. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

77. Twitchell, *op. cit.*, II, 376-78.

78. *O. R.*, I, 9:491. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

been in charge of the field for the Union before Canby took over, believed that “. . . the subsequent misfortunes of the day would not have occurred,” if a fellow officer had seized a position near the ford as ordered.⁷⁹ Canby, however, thought that “. . . the immediate cause of the disaster was the refusal of one of the volunteer regiments to cross the river and support the left wing of the army.”⁸⁰

There were various shades of opinion regarding the action of the volunteers aside from that presented by Canby. Governor Connelly partially exonerated the volunteers, who had followed the example of two regular companies which had refused to charge.⁸¹ Collins, who was present also, did not attempt to differentiate between regulars and volunteers, but thought that the action of both “. . . was shamefully disgraceful and cowardly.”⁸² Major Chacon, another witness, in defense of the natives denied that any of the regiment of Kit Carson had been ordered into a critical position. However, when the order to retreat was given, that part of the militia which had not participated fled.⁸³ Twitchell, taking a more detached view, felt that the volunteers were not all to be blamed for their part in the retirement.⁸⁴ Bancroft, while conceding that the victory belonged to the Texans, did not wish to blame or praise although he opined that the outcome “. . . reflected little credit on the federal arms.”⁸⁵

Although a large number of native troops left for home after the battle, Canby felt that “. . . this adds to rather than diminishes our strength.”⁸⁶ Washington was informed that the volunteers and militia could not be relied upon as “they have a traditional fear of the Texans, and will not face them in the field.”⁸⁷ Canby was given permission to discharge

79. *Ibid.*, I, 9:501. Reports to Major Thomas Duncan, March 8, 1862.

80. *Ibid.*, I, 9:487. Canby to Wash. Hq., February 22, 1862.

81. *Ibid.*, I, 9:629. Connelly to Seward, March 1, 1862.

82. *L. R.*, Micro. No. 170. Collins to Dole, March 1, 1862.

83. Sabin, *op. cit.*, Chacon Mss., Appendix II, 845-6.

84. Ralph E. Twitchell, “The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico—1861-1862,” *Old Santa Fe: A Magazine of History, Archaeology, Genealogy, and Biography*, 3:35, January, 1916. Charles F. Coan in his *A Shorter History of New Mexico* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, 1928) blamed the failure on part of the volunteers and some of the regulars, p. 210.

85. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 692.

86. *O. R.*, I, 9:487. Canby to Wash. Hq., February 22, 1862.

87. *Ibid.*, I, 9:636. Donaldson to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

them soon after.⁸⁸ The governor agreed finally that the natives would do more for the cause by “. . . preparing their lands for the coming harvest . . .” than in remaining to fight.⁸⁹ Later, in evaluating the New Mexico native troops, the *Rio Abajo* conceded that they lacked education and were not well drilled, but maintained that their discipline was good, and that their ability to fight Indians well was recognized.⁹⁰ Another possible cause for native lack of fighting spirit could be laid to the lack of consideration and contemptuous treatment meted out to the volunteers by regular army officers during the training period at Fort Craig prior to the battle.⁹¹

Aside from the matter of the volunteer troops, Canby attempted to explain the results of this encounter by declaring that “. . . the superiority in numbers . . .” and “. . . the superior mobility of its force . . .” tipped the scales in favor of the Confederates.⁹² The General himself was not held entirely blameless, however, although his personal bravery was lauded. Mills said that

I admired General Canby . . . , but I believe that if Colonel Roberts had been left to carry out his plans that day Valverde would have been a Union victory and the campaign closed.⁹³

A later commentator mentions that many of the soldiers led by Carson believed that the victory would have been won, but was actually lost through mismanagement.⁹⁴

Another factor in the Confederate success was a positive one. The ferocity of the Texans was certainly a contributing cause. “Never were double-barreled shot-guns used to better effect,” said a Confederate leader.⁹⁵ It has been suggested that this fierceness was due to the great thirst for water as the Texans had been kept from the river since morning.⁹⁶

88. *Ibid.*, III, 2:4. Wash. Hq., to Canby, April 4, 1862.

89. *Ibid.*, I, 9:645. Connelly to Seward, March 11, 1862.

90. *Rio Abajo Weekly Press*, February 2, 1864.

91. Notes and Documents, Letter from Santiago Valdez to C. Carson, *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 23:243-44, July, 1948.

92. *O. R.*, I, 9:492. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862.

93. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

94. Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

95. *O. R.*, I, 9:506. Sibley Report, February 22, 1862.

96. Hayes, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Sibley praised “. . . the spirit, valor and invincible determination of Texas troops. Nobly have they emulated the fame of their San Jacinto ancestors.”⁹⁷ Although his personal inactivity was noticed,⁹⁸ Sibley said “. . . in consequence of severe and prolonged illness and weakness resulting from it, . . .” that it was necessary for him to retire early.⁹⁹ A Confederate soldier had another explanation for the absence of Sibley. The Confederate leader allegedly was “. . . so much under the influence of liquor that Colonel Tom Green was obliged to assume command.”¹⁰⁰

Immediately after the battle a misunderstanding, which caused some recrimination, arose between the opposing forces. Sibley petulantly complained that a flag of truce which his troops understood as “. . . a proposition to surrender” was used by the Federals to ease their return to Craig. The next day the North again availed themselves of the “generosity and confidence” of the Texans. Ostensibly intending to gather the dead and wounded, the Federals loaded their wagons with small arms from the battleground and also recovered a cannon from the river.¹⁰¹

Sibley had a much greater problem. After remaining on the field for two days to bury the dead and care for the wounded, rations were reduced to a scant five day supply. There were two choices open—attack the fort or continue north. Sibley decided to go up the river,¹⁰² exhibiting little fear of the Northern troops who were thus left to his rear.¹⁰³ The shortage of food and supplies was evident, and had been noted at the time of the Confederate advance from El Paso.¹⁰⁴ The position of the Texans was precarious and called for action which Sibley recognized, and which prompted him to move.

Canby was in a difficult position, too. In listing his losses the Union leader found that 260 were killed, wounded, or

97. *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*

98. Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

99. *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*

100. Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, II, 377.

101. *O. R.*, I, 9:508-9. Sibley Report, May 4, 1862.

102. *Ibid.*, I, 9:509.

103. Twitchell, *op. cit.*, II, 379.

104. *O. R.*, I, 4:89. Canby to Wash. Hq., January 25, 1862.

missing. While needing additional troops, Canby and his men were not dispirited.¹⁰⁵ The Texans did not attack the fort again,¹⁰⁶ so the Northern general chose to remain at rather than abandon it or bring on another battle. He decided that he would maintain his position because he was outnumbered and believed that

If there is any consistency of purpose or persistence of effort in the people of New Mexico, the enemy will be able to add but little to his resources from a temporary occupation of the country.¹⁰⁷

At this point Union military fortunes were at a low ebb. Unwillingness to adopt an aggressive policy had permitted the invaders to force the campaign about as they wished. The volunteers at the disposal of Canby were untrained, but if allowed to fight in their own way, possibly would have given a better account of themselves. The native population was unenthusiastic over the conflict, but this could readily be understood as very few spoke English, and the Territory had been in the Union for only a little over a decade. Too, Canby was responsible for defending many points while the Texans had greater mobility, and little liability for the welfare of private citizens. Defense against Indian attacks also was a greater problem to the Union than to the Confederacy. Even though granting the greater responsibilities that faced Canby and his officers, the Texans had gained the upper hand by their greater enterprise, and were now threatening the entire Territory.

(To be continued)

105. *Ibid.*, I, 9:492-3. Canby to Wash. Hq., March 1, 1862. Ralph E. Twitchell in his *Old Santa Fe* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Santa Fe New Mexican Publishing Corporation, 1925), p. 380 remarks that Governor Gilpin of Colorado, upon hearing of the results from Valverde, sent troops to Raton Pass.

106. Coan, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

107. *O. R.*, I, 9:633. Canby to Wash. Hq., February 23, 1862.