

History of the Confederate Territory of Arizona

Confederate Arizona

By
Thomas D. Gilbert

During the first year of the Civil War, while armies were being formed and while early strategies tried and failed to bring the rebellion to an early end, the Confederacy's only territory was born, lived, and died. Battles were fought, careers were made and destroyed, and many lives were lost, long before most of the major events of the war occurred. Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant were still relatively minor players of the nation's greatest drama, Antietam was just a creek, Gettysburg was still a quiet college town, and few in America had ever heard of Appomattox Court House when the territory in question went out of existence. That territory was Confederate Arizona.

When one looks at a modern map of the United States, he or she sees two states in the Southwest between Texas and California. New Mexico and Arizona are seen side by side, New Mexico to the East and Arizona to the West. In the middle of the nineteenth century, both modern states plus a small portion of Nevada made up the United States Territory of New Mexico. This vast region plus California was, in the early part of the century part of northern Mexico until it was ceded to the United States in 1848 after the Mexican War. The southern part of the region remained part of Mexico until purchased by the United States in 1854. This southern area became known locally as Arizona, and its early Anglo settlers came largely from nearby Texas and other southern states. Located far from the territorial capitol, Santa Fe, Arizonans felt isolated and had little in common with the Hispanic population along the northern stretches of the Rio Grande and the white settlers

that had migrated along the Santa Fe Trail from Missouri and points east and north. Appeals to the national government to create a separate southern territory were ignored.(1)

When sectional disputes back East finally developed into civil war, many Arizonans were ready to join their southern brethren to create a new nation, especially when the United States government revoked the mail contract of the Butterfield Stage Line, further isolating the region. In Mesilla, just up the Rio Grande from the Texas border, and in Tucson, some 300 miles to the west, conventions were held in March, 1861, declaring the secession of Arizona from New Mexico Territory and the Union. A delegate to the Confederate Congress was chosen and the newly created Stars and Bars replaced the Union flag all over the region. Although the struggling Confederacy took a full year to get around to officially granting territorial status, Arizona was born, at least by declaration.(2)

Arizona's secession did not go unnoticed by the new Confederacy and especially by neighboring Texas. Many southerners, including Jefferson Davis, had been long interested in expanding southern interests to the Pacific. A Confederate Arizona would connect Texas and California, and sufficient secessionist interest existed along the West Coast to encourage dreams of southern manifest destiny. A Confederate outlet at a port like San Diego would offset Union efforts to blockade the East and Gulf coasts. A Confederate nation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific would greatly enhance possibilities of European recognition. Within the newly gained western region were vast gold and silver deposits, which would be diverted from the treasury of the Union to that of the Confederacy. Once consolidated, the greatly expanded nation could then look further south and add part or all of weakly held Mexican territory by purchase or conquest. The prospects of a great empire looked bright.(3)

While Arizonans made speeches and waved flags, the Union's military presence within the territory began to shift. Many troops that had been stationed throughout New Mexico Territory for protection against the Apaches were moved toward the Rio Grande in preparation for transfer to the East. In addition, a number of officers were resigning their commissions to "go South." Those troops remaining were concentrated in key locations by department commander Colonel Edward R. S. Canby to prepare for the expected

Confederate invasion. These changes occurred during a general Apache uprising. The ever-observant natives believed the withdrawal of the soldiers meant that the Apaches were finally winning their longstanding war against the white intruders, and they now redoubled their efforts to drive them away for good. Many Arizonans who had remained loyal to the Union now shifted allegiances, finding themselves further isolated and betrayed by the government they had trusted.(4)

Among the officers leaving New Mexico Territory to serve the Confederacy was Major Henry H. Sibley. Unlike other officers who planned to defend the new nation east of the Mississippi, Sibley's departure was temporary. Dreaming of western empire, Sibley immediately traveled to Richmond to try to convince Confederate leaders of the opportunities that existed in the far West. He believed that, given the rapidly weakening strength of Union forces in New Mexico Territory and the Confederate sympathy that existed especially in the southern area, a determined effort by a single brigade could seize the whole region. This would encourage secessionists in California who would flock to his aid in conquering the entire West. Confederate attention could then be turned to Mexico. He found a ready audience in Jefferson Davis, who commissioned Sibley as a brigadier general and sent him to Texas to raise an army of conquest. Davis was only able to provide Sibley with authorization and encouragement, because the fledgling Confederate government was unable to provide financial backing, material, or men for the effort.(5)

While Sibley traveled back to Texas to gather men and munitions, another effort was already underway with Arizona in view. A battalion raised by erstwhile Indian agent and adventurer John R. Baylor to confront expected military resistance to Texas' secession in February was, when that threat failed to materialize, diverted to west Texas garrison duty by department commander Earl Van Dorn. Baylor's command left San Antonio in mid-June for Fort Bliss, the abandoned westernmost outpost of Texas, just across the Rio Grande from Mexico and just south of the border from newly proclaimed Arizona Territory. After leaving garrisons at abandoned Federal forts along the way, Baylor's battalion of 400, designated the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles, arrived at Fort Bliss in early July.(6)

Baylor quickly assessed the situation in nearby Arizona and determined that Federally-held

Fort Fillmore, forty miles upriver, constituted a grave threat to his position. Rather than wait for an attack, Baylor chose to be the aggressor, after digesting reports of Confederate sympathy in the area, especially in nearby Mesilla. On July 23, with 258 men, Baylor moved upriver and camped within 600 yards of the Federal fort. He had planned a surprise attack next morning, but fort commander Major Isaac Lynde was warned of Baylor's presence by a deserter. Learning of this, Baylor moved instead into Mesilla, where the Texans were greeted enthusiastically. On July 25, Lynde advanced his force of 380 from Fort Fillmore to demand Baylor's surrender. Baylor's response was, "If you wish the town and my forces, come and take them!" Lynde resolved to do just that, ordering his infantrymen into line while his two mountain howitzers began to shell the town and his mounted troops prepared to charge. As the Federal horsemen approached, carefully aimed shots and volleys from the barricaded Texans and their Mesilla allies began to create confusion. One Yankee horseman was killed and four others were wounded as rifle and shotgun fire ripped into their ranks. As the survivors began to withdraw, the Federal cannoners came under rebel fire and were soon forced back as well, followed by the Union infantry. The brief battle had resulted in Lynde's loss of three killed and nine wounded, while six Texans were wounded and twenty rebel horses died in the bombardment. Baylor's men carefully followed the Yankees to the fort and began preparations to attack. During the next day, as the Federals feverishly dug defensive trenches and prepared obstructions, Baylor sent riders to Fort Bliss for reinforcements and replacement horses. That evening, the Arizona Guards, a local militia unit that had assisted in Baylor's defense, infiltrated Fort Fillmore and made off with 85 cavalry horses and 26 mules. This loss so discouraged Lynde that he decided, instead of trying to defend the fort, to evacuate his command to the nearest concentration point, Fort Stanton, some 80 miles to the northeast.(7)

After destroying supplies that they could not carry, the Federals, along with a number of wives and children, left for the nearby Organ Mountains after midnight, July 27. The plan was to cross over the range at San Augustine Springs, about ten miles from the fort, and then continue across the desert to Fort Stanton. This proved a little over-optimistic as the July heat soon slowed the march to a crawl. To complicate matters, it seems that while destroying supplies the night before, some of the Federal soldiers had uncovered a large store of medicinal whiskey and had determined that this could be carried along in their canteens. As the day dawned, Baylor's men spotted a large cloud of dust in the distance

and discovered that the Yankees had disappeared. Not satisfied with the possession of the fort, Baylor quickly organized pursuit. The Texans found the trail to the mountains littered with guns, clothing, empty canteens, and inebriated Union soldiers and civilians. Of the 500-plus refugees, less than a hundred were with Lynde at the springs when Baylor and his men arrived. These surrendered without a fight. Fort Fillmore and its former occupants were now in the possession of the Confederacy.(8)

Baylor returned to Mesilla with his prisoners, a much needed supply of captured equipment, and, as a bonus, nine thousand dollars in treasury notes. While paroling the Yankees and sorting through his bonanza, he was advised of the arrival on July 28 of a party of officers enroute from California to Richmond to offer their services to the Confederacy. Baylor asked their leader to take temporary command of his small army while he began to organize the territory in the name of the Confederacy. Thus it was that Albert Sidney Johnston accepted his first Civil War command. Although in command for only ten days, Johnston took the field during his tenure in an unsuccessful attempt to capture a garrison of 250 U.S. regulars enroute from an abandoned western fort to another concentration point upriver. On August 7, Johnston resigned his Arizona command and moved on to find his destiny further east.(9)

Meanwhile, Baylor, on August 1, issued a proclamation declaring all of New Mexico Territory south of the 34th parallel as the Confederate Territory of Arizona. He installed himself as its governor, with Mesilla as its capital. He placed the new territory under marshal law and appointed court officers to enforce the law. Baylor then authorized the raising of new military companies for local defense and took steps to restore mail service and secure the safety of the road to Tucson.(10)

Baylor had additional motives for securing the road to Tucson. Not unlike Sibley, Baylor had a plan. After increasing his command to at least a thousand men, he planned to move his base to Tucson. From there he would counter rumored threats of a Union invasion from Mexico by seizing Guaymas, Sonora, a Mexican seaport 300 miles due south of Tucson. The road between Guaymas and Tucson would then become a supply channel connecting the Pacific with the Confederacy. From Tucson, Baylor would also be able to move against

California, soon securing the West Coast and its riches and ports. His operations would begin with the arrival of Sibley and the expected reinforcements from Texas. In Baylor's version of the plan, Sibley would keep the Federal troops along the Rio Grande occupied while he, Baylor, headed west.(11)

There was definitely an immediate need for additional troops and a guarantee of safe travel. The Apaches continued their rampage throughout the Southwest, hoping to exterminate once and for all the whites who had invaded their land. At Baylor's order, patrols roamed near and far in search of the elusive red men. In addition to this threat, Canby continued to concentrate his forces up the Rio Grande from Mesilla. The nearest concentration point was now at Fort Craig, 130 miles upriver. Federal patrols probed Arizona Territory in search of information about the southern invaders. Often Union and Confederate units clashed. Baylor was holding his own but just barely. To continue the dream of Confederate expansion, he needed strong reinforcements.(12)

Help would soon be on its way. Sibley arrived in San Antonio in August with authority to raise two regiments of cavalry and a battery of mountain howitzers. This proved a difficult task, as many Texans had already headed east for the war effort, but Sibley was up to the challenge. An experienced recruiter, he called for volunteers via local newspapers. As a nucleus, Sibley chose company commanders, and these were sent out to fill their companies. He then carefully selected his staff and brigade-level officers. A variety of munitions and equipment were garnered from the arsenal in San Antonio. Supplies of food and forage along the route to Fort Bliss and in Mesilla were arranged with the help of Southern-minded businessmen. By late October the regiments were filled, armed, trained, and the expedition was ready to roll. Sibley has been called a "slow McClellan." The "slow" part will be seen later, but Sibley seems to have had at least some of McClellan's organizational skill. Sibley had raised three regiments, the 4th, 5th, and 7th Texas Mounted Volunteers. The 7th was raised almost as an afterthought for use primarily for garrison duty in Mesilla and in conquered territory. These regiments were commanded respectively by Lieutenant Colonel William Reed Scurry (he was actually second-in-command of the 4th, but his superior, Colonel James Reiley had been detached for diplomatic duty in Mexico), Colonel Tom Green, and Colonel William Steele. Sibley was able to raise two howitzer batteries, and he

assigned one each to Scurry and Green. Sibley's total force numbered approximately 2,500 men.(13)

On November 9, the Sibley Brigade started its 650 mile trek to Arizona. Due to the scarcity of water along the desert route, the regiments were divided into small groups which marched a day apart from each other. Each regiment was accompanied by a beef herd and a wagon train, lengthening the column considerably. Sibley himself departed with his staff on November 18, and, passing his men along the road, arrived at Fort Bliss a few days ahead of them on December 13. Here he established his headquarters and took command of all forces in the region, including Baylor's men, renaming the entire aggregation the Confederate Army of New Mexico. While waiting for his strung-out columns to arrive, Sibley issued a proclamation "to the people of New Mexico" announcing his upcoming campaign, promising protection and prosperity to "the peaceful people of the country." He warned, however, that "those who co-operate with the enemy...must be prepared to share their fate."(14)

Baylor was not happy with the way his fate was turning out. Local recruitment was moving slowly, and his Texans were falling prey not only to Federal skirmishers and raiding Apaches, but to smallpox and other diseases as well. During the autumn months, word had arrived of large Federal forces gathering in California and Mexico, and of heavy reinforcements from Kansas soon expected to augment Canby's 2,500 troops now concentrated at nearby Fort Craig and Fort Union, northeast of Santa Fe. Fearing an imminent and overwhelming convergence at or near Mesilla of these forces, Baylor, without hesitating to confirm the rumors, ordered preparations for immediate evacuation. The local citizens, reacting to Baylor's panic, began packing and fleeing to Mexico. Soon more accurate information arrived, indicating that the rumors were, so far at least, unfounded. Baylor's heroic reputation had been marred, however. July's hero came under scathing verbal attack, especially by Robert Kelly, editor of the Mesilla Times and, earlier, a leading advocate of Arizona's secession. After printing the erroneous reports and thus adding to the public hysteria, Kelly had dismantled his press and had it shipped across the border during the panic. Embarrassed, he became Baylor's greatest critic: "Such a stampede was never witnessed, save at Manassas." The difference between Manassas and Mesilla was that the local stampede lacked "a fight or even a sight of the enemy." On December 12,

Baylor angrily confronted Kelly. Words led to a scuffle, and in minutes, Kelly lay mortally wounded by Baylor's pistol shot. A military court found Baylor innocent, but further damage to his reputation had been done. Now, Sibley had at last arrived, but only to take command instead of becoming Baylor's partner in conquest. Baylor, at his best a military man, found himself reduced to the position of a harried bureaucrat in charge of a struggling territory. His empirical visions would apparently have to wait...at least until Sibley headed north.(15)

While waiting for his regiments to complete their long march through the desert and prepare themselves for the upcoming campaign, Sibley dispatched his diplomatic envoy, Colonel Reily, into neighboring Chihuahua to attempt to persuade the Mexican authorities to help prevent Union advances from that direction and to become a source of supply for his army. He then selected an abandoned Federal post, Fort Thorn, forty miles up the Rio Grande from Mesilla, as the base from which he would begin his conquest of New Mexico Territory. During the first two weeks of January, 1862, his army moved slowly north through the Mesilla Valley and began to concentrate in the vicinity of Fort Thorn. Ninety miles north lay Fort Craig, Sibley's first objective. His plan was to take Fort Craig, then move upriver to occupy Albuquerque and Santa Fe, the territorial capital. New Mexico's lifeline, the Rio Grande, would be under Sibley's control. In effect, the territory would be his. He could then move further north into Colorado or strike out west for California.(16)

In order to open and maintain the roads to the west, Sibley ordered the Arizona Rangers, a 60-man company that had been raised by Baylor, to move immediately to Tucson. Enroute, the Rangers would serve as escort to Colonel Reily, headed for a second diplomatic mission, this time to Sonora. His first effort had produced mixed results. Governor Terrazas of Chihuahua had so far proved reluctant to honor the request to deny Union transit over his soil but had at least agreed to permit the purchase of supplies for Sibley's army. For whatever it was worth, Reily interpreted the Mexican leader's response as "the first official recognition of the Government of the Confederacy by a foreign power." His visit to Sonora would involve a request to permit the establishment of a Confederate supply base at the port of Guaymas. This, of course, would be a partial fulfillment of Baylor's plan of conquest, providing the Confederacy with a connection to the Pacific. The presence in Tucson of the

Arizona Rangers, under Captain Sherod Hunter, a strong Baylor supporter, could also provide the means for a revival of the rest of Baylor's dream.(17)

On February 7, the Confederate Army of New Mexico began its march up the west bank of the Rio Grande, led by Colonel Green and the 5th Texas. Within a week, Green's men were skirmishing with Union cavalry about fifteen miles south of Fort Craig. Scouting reports indicated that the fort was too strong to assault, so on February 15, the Texans moved to within a mile in an unsuccessful attempt to draw the Federals out into the open. Although Canby was well equipped, his garrison included a large number of new recruits, volunteers from upriver New Mexico, and Canby believed his safest position was right where he was. After a few days scouting and holding councils of war to determine the next move, Sibley ordered his men to cross the river and bypass the fort, thus threatening to leave it isolated between Confederate garrison forces at the forts below and Sibley's army above. Sibley and Green believed this movement would force Canby to give battle. On February 19, the crossing was made, and throughout the next day, the Texans struggled through deep sand and around a huge lava flow that flanked the river. The plan worked. At dusk, as the army approached the river north of Fort Craig, several infantry companies of Union regulars and volunteers emerged from the fort and crossed the river at Valverde ford to prevent the thirsty rebels from reaching the water. Following a brief exchange of fire, a mounted charge aimed at the New Mexican volunteer units resulted in a quick withdrawal as night fell. The Texans encamped for the night, planning to force a crossing in the morning.(18)

There occurred that evening a rather strange episode when Paddy Graydon, a Union scout, undertook a little mission designed to create havoc among the invading Texans. Graydon and one of his cohorts obtained two worn out mules and strapped a large load of artillery shells upon them. The spies then quietly led the mules across the river. When within a short distance from the rebel pickets, they lit the fuses and slapped the mules on their rumps to send them running into the enemy lines. Graydon and his partner then made haste to get back across before all hell broke loose. Hearing something behind them, they glanced over their shoulders expecting to see alert rebel pickets chasing them. Their followers, however, were not Texans. The mules apparently decided that they did not like the plan and instead turned around and followed their former leaders. The retreat of the scouts immediately

became a rout as they ran for cover with the mules close behind. Fortunately, they were finally able to sufficiently outdistance their pursuers. The mules, however, were not so fortunate.(19)

At daylight, February 21, the leading Texan elements, which happened to be members of Baylor's old command, approached the river to find a 500-man Union infantry force under Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin S. Roberts in possession of the ford and enemy cavalry on the rebel side of the river poised to attack. The outnumbered Texans immediately engaged their enemies while calling for help from the rear. Reinforcements soon arrived in the form of Scurry's 4th Texas. Green's regiment followed as did the artillery units. The Confederates, now with a slight edge in numbers, pressed toward the river, only to be countered by more Union infantry and artillery units rushed from Fort Craig. The incoming artillery soon tipped the balance in favor of the Federals, as the Texas howitzers were opposed by much larger Yankee field guns.

With his artillery in command of the field, Canby ordered the balance of his force to advance to the ford. Meanwhile, Green, having replaced a suddenly ill Sibley as Texan commander, tried an unusual method to dislodge the enemy now in possession of the east side of the river. A company of mounted lancers was ordered to charge the left flank of the Yankee infantry. The attack, however, was not properly supported, and the result was not unlike attempts by cavalry on other battlefields to attack infantry. The lancers were easily repulsed by the well-disciplined foot-soldiers, and very few returned safely to their lines. Canby positioned a battery of artillery on each of his flanks and prepared to launch a heavy attack along an old river channel on the left flank of the rebels. Green countered by ordering a frontal attack by 200 mounted troopers supported by the 4th Texas. Once again, the horsemen were repulsed, but this time the New Mexican volunteers, sensing victory, counterattacked, only to be assailed by the 4th Texas. At the same time, Green ordered a dismounted assault by units of his 5th Texas on the battery on the left Union flank. The artillerymen, under Captain Alexander McRae, stood by their guns as their infantry support waivered and fled under the savage Confederate attack. As McRae and most of his gunners fell, the Union left and center began to disintegrate. Canby quickly ordered a general retreat, much to the surprise and disappointment of his men now making headway against the enemy left. The

Texans found themselves in command of the field, as the Union volunteers and regulars streamed toward the fort and safety.(20)

The battle for Valverde ford was over. The casualties were heavy, considering the numbers involved in the fight. Green lost approximately ten percent of his force: 36 killed and 150 wounded, of which 43 more died. Several Confederate supply wagons were destroyed along with their contents by the Union artillery. Canby's losses, amounting to sixteen percent, included 68 killed, 160 wounded, 17 mortally. Thirty-four Federals were reported missing, and McRae's battery of six guns had been captured. While the battle was tactically a Confederate victory, it proved to be a rather empty one. The Federals were still secure in their fort, with at least a month's supply of provisions on hand. The next day, a surrender demand was refused by Canby, although both sides agreed on a two-day truce to gather the wounded and bury the dead. Sibley, back in command after his illness, realized that he could not successfully assault the fort. Not willing to give up at this early stage, especially after his victory at Valverde ford, Sibley decided that his only option was to leave Canby where he was and move north. Sibley's supplies were low, but he could replenish these at the Federal supply depots upriver at Socorro, Albuquerque and Santa Fe.(21)

On February 23, the Army of New Mexico pushed on. Having lost a number of horses and wagons in the battle, many troopers had to walk, some carrying wounded comrades in litters. The animals that remained were becoming worn and were often unable to move the wagons without help from men pushing against the wheels. Progress was exceedingly slow. At the end of the first day north of Fort Craig, only six miles had been covered. Three days later, the Texans reached Socorro, thirty miles north of the fort. Here, the day before, an advance party made up from elements of the 5th Texas had routed a small militia force which was guarding the town. "Socorro" is a Spanish word for "help" or "succor." The little town certainly lived up to its name as far as the Texans were concerned. A hospital was established for the wounded as well as many who had fallen ill. The Federal depot yielded much needed food supplies, as well as arms and ammunition, fresh horses and mules. After two days rest, the army moved on.(22)

Meanwhile, Canby, while still at Fort Craig, was actively reacting to Sibley's advance. A

few days after the battle, he dispatched Captain Gurden Chapin, his assistant adjutant general, along with several companies of cavalry to slip past Sibley and prepare northern New Mexico for the Confederate invasion. Soon after arriving at Santa Fe, Chapin wired Canby's superior, Major General Henry W. Halleck, advising the department commander of the battle and of the situation. Chapin warned the general of Sibley's intentions and of the potential danger to the Union cause that he represented. He then asked for reinforcements from the East, and in closing, stated; "I have given you a true picture of the state of the country, and if you wish to save it, you, I hope and pray, will act immediately." Canby's immediate concern, aside from calling for reinforcements, was the prevention of more supplies falling into the hands of the rebels. Supply depots in Albuquerque and Santa Fe were many times larger than the one captured in Socorro. Canby reasoned that, if he could prevent further loss of supplies to the Texans, attrition, accelerated by the desert conditions of the country, would before long bring Sibley to ruin. Canby also had another ace to play. The weakly held Fort Union, situated along the Santa Fe trail in northeastern New Mexico would soon be reinforced by nine hundred Colorado volunteers. If these men could be assembled soon enough, they could aid in the Texans' demise.(23)

Sibley's army continued to slowly move upriver, averaging about twelve miles each day. Once again, an advance party moved ahead to capture Albuquerque, about seventy miles north of Socorro. This time, however, the small Union garrison had been warned by Canby's outriders, and as the Texans approached on March 2, the government warehouses were set on fire. Most of the supplies were thus destroyed by the escaping garrison. This loss was partially offset by the capture of another Federal depot west of Albuquerque by local southern sympathizers, who turned the booty over to the arriving Confederates. In addition, a Union supply train enroute to Fort Craig was captured by a Texan patrol. These unexpected provisions, along with what could be salvaged from the flames, provided a forty-day supply for the rebel army. By March 7, most of the weary Texans were encamped in and around Albuquerque, as Sibley, having received news of Federal concentration at Fort Union, revised his immediate plans.(24)

Fearing a junction of Canby's troops in his rear and the Coloradans on his flank, Sibley ordered units of the 4th and 7th Texas to move into the mountains to the east of

Albuquerque. Here the men could recuperate while guarding the main road between the two Union forts. Meanwhile Baylor's old command, now under Major Charles Pyron, was instructed to move immediately to take and occupy Santa Fe, forty miles to the northeast. Most of Green's 5th Texas would remain at Albuquerque under Major John Shropshire, while Green himself would move with several companies toward Fort Union. By these maneuvers, Sibley hoped to remain flexible enough to operate against any Federal movement. If nothing significant occurred, he planned to converge against Fort Union by the end of March.(25)

As Sibley's army slowly dispersed to its assigned positions, far to the southwest, Sherod Hunter's small company of Arizona Rangers, having occupied Tucson late in February, was now patrolling the roads leading to California. After seeing that Colonel Reilly was safely escorted to Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora, Hunter's main concern was an increasing Federal concentration at Fort Yuma on the far western border of Arizona Territory. Here, Union Colonel James H. Carleton was accumulating men and provisions for an invasion force. At least one of the rumors that had been heard by Baylor months earlier now appeared to be true after all.(26)

While Hunter watched and occasionally skirmished with the Californians, Baylor, having grown impatient with desk work, took the field against the Apaches. Following a raid led by Cochise and Mangas Coloradas in which hundreds of Confederate horses were stolen, Baylor rounded up the remnant of his old command and as many militia as he could find and headed for the mountains. The Apaches (including a young man who would later become known as Geronimo) proved as elusive as ever and eventually disappeared into Mexico. Baylor pursued until at last he managed to capture several warriors with some women and children. He summarily executed the adults and took the children prisoner. Returning to Mesilla, he received word that one of his lieutenants had received a request from Mangas Coloradas for a peace parley. Baylor immediately sent instructions. "The Congress of the Confederate States has passed a law declaring extermination to all hostile Indians. You will therefore use all means to persuade the Apaches or any tribe to come in for the purpose of making peace, and when you get them together kill all the grown Indians and take the children prisoners and sell them." Here Baylor overstepped his authority, because the government

had issued no such order, and was, in fact, dedicated to a policy of pacification. Shortly after issuing his soon-to-be-famous extermination order, Baylor submitted his resignation as governor and journeyed back to Texas to begin recruiting again. The one-year enlistment of the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles would be expiring soon. He encouraged those that had remained behind in Mesilla to go with him and help him reorganize. Having little faith in Sibley's efforts in the north, Baylor planned to return to Arizona very soon at the head of a better and larger army of conquest. He left behind Colonel Steele, commander of the 7th Texas, and 600 men.(27)

As Baylor's men in northern New Mexico pressed toward Santa Fe, the Federal supplies that they hoped to capture once again eluded them. Given plenty of advance notice, the Santa Fe garrison had time to load over a hundred wagons and drive them through nearby Glorieta Pass and on to Fort Union, 30 miles to the east. The Union soldiers also escorted Governor Henry Connelly and the administrators and baggage of the territorial government. Major Pyron and his Texans arrived in Santa Fe on March 10 to find the town in a state of anarchy. They were thus surprised to find themselves greeted by, among others, Mrs. Louisa Canby. The Union colonel's wife and family had remained behind, and now welcomed the invaders as restorers of law and order.(28)

At Fort Union, reinforcements continued to arrive. The fort commander, Colonel Gabriel Paul, had been ordered by Canby to remain at the fort until the time was right for consolidation of the two forces. Although Paul was a graduate of West Point and a Mexican War veteran, the leader of the Coloradoans, John P. Slough, had received his volunteer commission as colonel before Paul. As seen many times elsewhere, the odd nature of this political war placed a young Colorado lawyer and politician above an older and experienced professional officer. Slough, encouraged by Governor-in-exile Connelly, decided, against the orders of Canby, whom he did not outrank, to take the offensive. As his men recuperated from their rapid march through the snow and ice of a Colorado winter, Slough sent scouts to probe Sibley's dispositions. His immediate plan, at the urging of the governor, was to recover Santa Fe.(29)

The increased activities of the Union patrols along the Santa Fe Trail and of similar

probes now moving north from Fort Craig provoked Sibley to begin a reconcentration of his forces. He ordered Major Shropshire to move quickly from Albuquerque to Santa Fe, and Pyron's smaller command was instructed to move up the trail to guard Glorieta Pass. Scurry's 4th Texas moved with his larger force and the army's wagon train toward Galisteo, a few miles southwest of the pass. Green remained with Sibley, in reserve at Albuquerque to keep an eye toward the rear. Once again, as events moved toward conflict, Sibley's illnesses began to reappear, and his subordinates would take the lead. It was beginning to become clear to Sibley's officers and men that these infirmities were related to an overfondness of the whiskey barrel. In a war whose officers on both sides were often noted for hard drinking, Sibley seems to have been one of the most prolific in this regard. It has been said that it is unclear whether his drinking caused his debility or his infirmities led to heavier imbibement as a treatment.(30)

By late March, Slough was ready. Leaving a small force with Colonel Paul, the Coloradoan ordered his men, along with most of the regular army garrison, to move toward Santa Fe. Slough's command of about 1,300 infantry, cavalry, and artillery left Fort Union on March 22. Canby received word of the movement, and adjusting to the situation, immediately prepared to move north with most of his garrison. Hearing from his scouts of the Federal approach, Pyron's 400 Texans prepared to meet the enemy as Scurry and Shropshire hurried to his support. As the Federals drew closer, Slough, also hearing reports of activity in his front, slowed his advance and sent forward a reconnaissance force under Major John M. Chivington. On March 26, patrols from both advance parties spotted each other in Apache Canyon just west of Glorieta Pass. The resulting skirmish led to a larger fight as Pyron and Chivington brought their men forward. Both forces were about the same size, but Chivington found himself with an advantage of terrain. Slightly uphill from the Texans, the Coloradoans were able to quickly climb the canyon walls and direct a converging fire into the Texans below. Pyron withdrew about a mile only to be flanked by his opponent and was forced back once again. He at last found a strong position by crossing a small arroyo and destroying the bridge over which he had crossed. The Federals slowly pursued. As evening drew near, they mounted a cavalry charge in which all but one of 103 Colorado horsemen successfully leaped across the barrier. The intense hand-to-hand combat which ensued was mercifully brief due to rapidly falling darkness, and Pyron was able to withdraw to a fortified position he had earlier prepared at the mouth of the canyon. Chivington, short of water, also

withdrew a few miles to a mountain spring. Both parties were exhausted and agreed to a truce the next day to rest and gather their killed and wounded. Pyron had lost four men killed, twenty wounded, and seventy captured. Chivington, in the role of attacker, had lost five killed and fourteen wounded.(31)

As the combatants rested, they were reinforced by the main forces under Scurry and Slough. On March 28, both advanced against each other. Although both forces were once again approximately equal, Scurry had a 1,200 to 850 numerical advantage as they met in Glorieta Pass. Slough, believing Scurry would remain at his fortified position, had diverted Chivington and 490 men into the mountains to the south of the trail. The smaller force was to move into the rear of Scurry's position for a concerted attack. The problem with this, however, was that Scurry was no longer there. The engagement began with an artillery duel, followed by a general assault by both sides. The rough and broken ground did not permit formal military maneuvers and the fighting soon degenerated into individual Indian-style skirmishes, men shooting at each other from behind boulders and trees then rushing forward for brief but furious hand-to-hand combat. Slough attempted two flanking movements, but both were repelled by Scurry's larger numbers. Chivington was nowhere to be found, and, finally, after six hours of continuous fighting, the Coloradoans were slowly forced back up the trail. Each side had lost 46 men killed, and the number of men wounded were also remarkably similar, 64 Federals, 60 Confederates.(32)

As Slough's exhausted forces began to withdraw, Scurry received an urgent message about trouble in his rear. Chivington, led by a local scout, had, after a long and difficult struggle through the mountainous terrain, reached his destination. Although he had, as planned, emerged from the woods on a mesa overlooking Scurry's campsite, he found that the main enemy force was no longer there. Instead, Chivington saw that the entire Confederate wagon train was beneath him, guarded by 300 men and two howitzers. Immediately, Chivington ordered a downhill attack, and eighty heavily loaded wagons were soon in his possession as the Texan defenders scattered at the unexpected sight of nearly five hundred Coloradoans suddenly descending upon the camp. Chivington ordered the wagons overturned and the supplies within them destroyed. Five hundred horses and mules were driven away into the mountains as flames consumed the wagons and exploded the ammunition.

Having received by then orders by courier to rejoin the main column, Chivington and his men retraced their steps back over the mountains, leaving behind a pile of useless debris. Although his absence had resulted in the loss of a battle, Chivington's fortuitous find and his quick action won a much greater victory. Although neither side realized it at the time, Confederate hopes for the Southwest had gone up in flames along with their wagons.(33)

Scurry, although in possession of the field, was forced to withdraw to Santa Fe because of his total loss of ammunition and supplies. (Before leaving, the Confederates buried their dead. This was not an unusual occurrence, except for the discovery 125 years later of a neatly-arranged mass grave of 31 Confederates, found when an excavator dug a foundation for a house. Further search revealed the separate grave nearby of Major John Shropshire, who had died in one of the many charges that day.) Scurry was not pursued, however, because Slough had had enough and headed back to Fort Union with his battered command expecting a Confederate counterstroke despite Chivington's feat behind enemy lines.(34)

Scurry's men slowly returned to Santa Fe where a makeshift hospital was hurriedly established to receive the wounded and sick. Among those coming to the aid of the suffering soldiers was Mrs. Canby, who wept at the sight of the suffering and destitute soldiers and then led Confederate officers to a large supply of government blankets and clothing that had been left behind by the Federals. She soon became known as "the Angel of Santa Fe" because of her merciful attention.(35)

Sibley soon arrived and in early April held a council of war with his officers. He had learned that Canby was enroute from Fort Craig with his well-equipped army of 1200 men. Colonel Paul was back in command at Fort Union, Slough having resigned in fear of thunder from above, and another advance from that direction seemed likely. The Texans had been only able to scrape up twenty days of provisions from the surrounding towns and villages, and ammunition was down to forty rounds per man. The handwriting was on the wall. The army must, if possible, retreat to Mesilla.(36)

The "if possible" part depended largely on Canby's intentions. Moving directly north on the same path along which Sibley must retreat, Canby arrived on the outskirts of Albuquerque on April 8 and began shelling the Confederate defenses. Sibley ordered the men that still could to march to the rescue of the 120-man garrison and the meager supply of provisions. It appeared that a battle was likely, but at the approach of the Texans, Canby withdrew toward the mountains. There he awaited the arrival of the garrison of Fort Union which he had ordered to join him. Given a brief opportunity to escape, Sibley ordered an immediate march south. By April 12, the Texans were on the road. Progress, however, was slow, given the weak and now demoralized condition of Sibley's men. Meanwhile the Fort Union garrison arrived in the mountains on April 13, and the Federal forces in New Mexico were finally united. Canby ordered a forced march to intercept the Texans. The relatively fresh Union troops were able to respond, and at daybreak, April 15, they caught up with the slowly fleeing foe at Peralta, a few miles south of Albuquerque. An all-day artillery battle ensued, Canby unwilling to risk an assault on the Texans who had barricaded themselves behind the walls of the village. By now, Canby felt that additional fighting was unnecessary. His plan was to forcibly escort the Confederates out of New Mexico. Knowing of his enemy's weakened condition and of the desert looming ahead, he believed that by the time the Texans reached Mesilla, they would be only a semblance of the army that had entered the territory a few months ago and would be unlikely to try again. Besides, Canby reasoned, if he fought the Texans and took them prisoner, he would be hard pressed to feed and clothe them.

Early the next morning, Sibley resumed his retreat. The Texans moved south along the west bank of the river, shadowed by the Federals on the right side. Aside from occasional skirmishing, the fighting along the Rio Grande and in northern New Mexico was over.(37)

It was just about over in Confederate Arizona, as well. Hunter's men had done their best to harass and delay the Californians, capturing a Federal detachment on March 18 and skirmishing with Union patrols twice, on March 23 at Stanwix Station along the Gila river, and on April 15 at Picacho Pass north of Tucson. These and other efforts by the Arizona Rangers delayed Carleton's advance until early May. At last, however, the Union force that became known as the California Column began to roll across the desert, forcing Hunter and his men to evacuate Tucson and return to Mesilla.(38)

Nearing Fort Craig, Sibley's scouts informed him that a well-armed garrison awaited his arrival. Sibley was not yet convinced that Canby, still just across the river, intended to let him escape, and he called another council of war to determine his next step. After considerable debate, the Texas officers concluded that their choices were reduced to imprisonment or an arduous escape route through the mountains west of the Rio Grande that one of the the scouts knew of. The latter was decided upon, and on April 17, the hundred-mile detour began. As the column moved into the rough terrain, all semblances of discipline and order disappeared. Men soon began to falter and fall by the wayside to await the tender mercies of the Apaches who saw in Sibley's new path of retreat still another opportunity to annihilate the white soldiers. Equipment was abandoned as well as worn-out animals. The struggle over and through the endless ridges and valleys took over a week, and by the time the leading elements at last returned to the river south of Fort Craig, the column had stretched to almost fifty miles along the winding mountain trail. To their relief, the weary and footsore stragglers were met at the river by units of the 7th Texas sent north by Steele to escort what was left of Sibley's army back to Mesilla. During the last week of April, as Canby's scouts watched from afar, the long journey ended. Of the 2,500 Texans that had marched north in February, less than 1,800 returned.(39)

In the wake of Sibley's retreat, Canby returned to Fort Craig to rest and refit his command which had also struggled through the difficult campaign of long marches and hard-fought battles and skirmishes. Reinforcements were on the way from Kansas and California, but the only enemy they would find would be the still-formidable Apache, which would be contained but not defeated for another twenty-five years.(40)

After about a month's recuperation in the Mesilla valley, Sibley and his Texans began their long journey home. Sibley had no intention of returning. Before he left the Southwest for the last time, he wrote to his superiors, "The Territory of New Mexico is not worth a quarter of the blood and treasure expended in its conquest." The brigade was followed out of the territory by remnants of Baylor's old command, including Sherod Hunter and his Arizona Rangers. Reilly also returned to Texas, his mission, thanks partly to Baylor's incursions into Mexico, a total failure. All that remained behind was a small command under Steele to act as

rear guard and to hold on in fading hopes for Baylor's return. At last, as Carleton's Californians drew near, Steele crossed the Texas border on July 8 and Confederate Arizona, not quite a year old, died. The following February, a new Arizona Territory was born, but its shape and allegiance were far different. The United States Territory of Arizona was carved out of New Mexico, the division this time along a line from north to south. Less than fifty years later, the two territories became the 47th and 48th states of the Union.(41)

Baylor continued his efforts to rebuild his command and breathe life back into Confederate Arizona, traveling to Richmond in May to receive authorization to raise a new "Arizona Brigade." Word soon arrived, however, of his extermination order, and Jefferson Davis reacted by revoking Baylor's commission. Still, Baylor would not give up his dream. Back in Texas, he successfully ran for a seat in the Confederate Congress where he continued to lobby for a new effort to conquer the West. He was at last reinstated as a colonel and was ordered back home for one more try. However, the date of his reinstatement was March 25, 1865, and by then, it was far too late. The Confederacy, like its only territory, would soon be dead.(42)

Could Confederate Arizona have survived if Chivington had not found that wagon train? Federal forces were in retreat to Fort Union, and a vigorous pursuit might have dislodged its occupants. But what then? Colonel Canby's appeals for help had been heard, and Kansas troops were soon on the way. Had Sibley moved toward California, how would his bedraggled troops have fared against the fresh California Column? Suppose someone else had commanded the Army of New Mexico? The impetuous Baylor, perhaps. Would a more vigorous, perhaps more abstinent commander have had better luck against the ravages of Apaches, desert, and great distances, not to mention converging Federals in all directions? Could another commander have succeeded, like Stonewall Jackson that same spring of 1862, first striking one superior, then another, and another? I do not believe so. I believe the odds were too great. There were just too many things going against the Confederacy's efforts in the far West. Had they somehow succeeded, would not Lincoln have shifted at least some of his attention to the West? I believe so. I do not believe the Confederacy itself was necessarily a lost cause. I believe that Confederate Arizona was. In the end, both causes were lost together. Perhaps it was all for the best. Instead of a Union and a Confederacy

stretching uneasily side by side from the Atlantic to the Pacific, one dedicated to slavery and the other to freedom, we gained, at least in theory, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.