The Far-Western Wing of the Rebellion, 
1861–1865

By W. H. Watford

While the attention of the nation was fixed on the early great battlefields of the Civil War, a contest for empire in the far-off arid regions of the southwest received but passing notice. The newly-formed Southern Confederacy, confident of its ultimate independence, was seeking to establish itself as an ocean-to-ocean nation, and although their forces were defeated and turned back in New Mexico in 1862, Confederate leaders maintained their claims to western territory, and throughout the war advanced fresh schemes of conquest.

Upon formation of the Confederate States in February 1861, some 2,500 men of the regular army of the United States were stationed along the U.S.-Mexican boundary, while others were in army posts protecting the northern Texas frontier. Their surrender by Maj.-Gen. D. E. Twiggs, commanding the department of Texas, followed upon the secession of Texas from the Union on February first of that year. Had Twiggs chosen to act in time, much of his command could have been concentrated and safely marched into New Mexico; but by his order Fort Bliss at El Paso, only a few miles from the New Mexican boundary, was abandoned and its garrison marched south to Fort Quitman. There, joining with the troops from Fort Davis, the combined force moved along the overland-mail route to San Antonio, the last column of U.S. troops in Texas to be surrendered.

Shortly afterwards, a battalion of Texas cavalry, under Lt.-Col. John R. Baylor, was sent by Col. Earl Van Dorn at San Antonio to take possession of federal property and guard the Texas frontier against invasion. In New Mexico, a short distance across the line from Fort Bliss (where Baylor was ordered to concentrate his forces), was a large number of U.S. troops. “It is possible,” Van Dorn warned Baylor, “for them to retake Fort Bliss and all the public property before our troops can
reach there.” If taken by surprise they might be captured; otherwise, “they could get out of your reach by falling back into New Mexico too far to be pursued.”

El Paso (then known as Franklin) represented in 1861 the westernmost extremity of the Confederacy. Through it passed the overland stage from St. Louis and San Francisco, and here also was the terminus of other stage lines from Santa Fe, San Antonio, and Chihuahua. Across the Rio Grande was the larger Paso del Norte, present-day Juarez. The native Mexican population on the Rio Grande was largely controlled by Anglo-American merchants and contractors. Most prominent among them, and also the leading Confederates in the valley, were Col. James W. Magoffin, previously a resident of New Mexico and now sutler at Fort Bliss; and wealthy Simeon Hart, at whose flour mill, a mile above El Paso, was ground the wheat from both sides of the Rio Grande. Their large Spanish-built homes, just above and below El Paso, afforded the finest hospitality in the valley and were centers of intrigue to draw New Mexico into the secession movement. Associated with them in this were Philemon T. Herbert, El Paso lawyer and former member of congress from California, and J. S. Crosby, district judge. Their immediate concern was the safety of the military stores at Fort Bliss which were threatened by the presence of federal forces at Fort Fillmore, some forty miles up the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico. The inhabitants of this section, mainly emigrants from Texas and other southern states, also awaited the arrival of Confederate forces on the Rio Grande. Mesilla, the principal settlement, was on the west side of the Rio Grande, only a few miles across the river from Fort Fillmore. North from Fort Fillmore lay Las Cruces, eight miles, and Doña Ana, fifteen miles—small stage-stop hamlets on the road to Santa Fe. They were isolated from the government at Santa Fe by the Jornado del Muerto, a ninety-mile stretch of desert which extended northward along the Rio Grande. New Mexico below the Jornado was generally known as Arizona, including not only the Rio Grande settlements but also far-off Tucson and other remote mining towns.

Almost yearly since 1856, Arizona had memorialized congress for a separate territorial government. Its inhabitants had been discriminated against in representation at Santa Fe, but failure to have been provided with adequate military protection against the Apaches, who roamed at will throughout the country, was their greatest complaint. The Arizonans’ latest effort to separate from New Mexico had led in 1860 to the
organization of a temporary government, which claimed jurisdiction over all of New Mexico south of 33° 40'. Dr. L. S. Owings of Mesilla, a former Texan, had been chosen governor; but again there was no action by congress.

Actual secession of Arizona was largely accomplished by agents of the Texas secession convention which, in February 1861, had appointed Simeon Hart and Philemon T. Herbert (see above) as commissioners from Texas to urge Arizona and New Mexico to join the Confederacy. Hart, advised by friends not to appear in New Mexico in person, had carried out his share of the mission by correspondence and by secret agents, and later reported to the Texas governor his conviction that the inhabitants of Arizona were prepared "... without a dissenting voice, to join Texas and the South for a Confederacy." Herbert, meanwhile, journeyed personally northward from El Paso into Arizona. Upon his arrival at Mesilla, he dispatched a letter to "Governor" Owings stating that he had been authorized to invite Arizona to join the Southern Confederacy. On March sixteenth, a secessionist meeting at Tucson, addressed by Herbert, voted previously-prepared resolutions calling upon the people of the territory not to recognize "the present Black Republican administration" and to resist its officials sent to Arizona; they were assured not only territorial recognition but also that the Confederacy would control the Apaches and make possible the faster development of the country.

New Mexico proper was expected to join in the secession movement. The commercial relations of the territory had been mainly with adjoining Texas and with Missouri by the Santa Fe trail. The native New Mexicans, long dominated by Southern officials appointed to the territory, had, in 1859, adopted a slavery code, which had contributed to frequently-heard charges that a Southern conspiracy existed to bring New Mexico into the Union as a slave state. Most prominent Southern official in New Mexico was the territorial secretary, Alexander M. Jackson, who wrote to a Mississippi political friend on February 17, 1861, that the commercial connection of "New Mexico proper, above the Mesilla Valley" was almost exclusively with Missouri, and that the majority of the people of that section of New Mexico were "fully prepared to go South, provided Missouri so goes," but that none would take such initiative except the inhabitants of the American settlements in Arizona. He spoke of the "ultimate position of New Mexico in the Confederacy" toward which his pro-slavery efforts in the territory had been
directed; but the future repeal of the slave code could not be prevented unless the native politicians were convinced that New Mexico would be assigned to the South. “The mass of the New Mexicans . . . and more particularly the wealthy and intelligent, are in favor of the institution of slavery, but . . . they will not be able to overcome the influence of Federal power and patronage.”

One of Simeon Hart’s agents, Capt. H. C. Cook, arrived in Santa Fe on May 18, 1861, with letters Hart had furnished him. After a few days, he was able to report to Hart that the people of New Mexico to the most remarkable degree favored the cause of the South. This was even more true “than in the State of Texas, at the time of Secession.” He agreed with Jackson that New Mexico would be greatly influenced by the action of Missouri in the matter of secession. With the New Mexicans unarmed and with a large portion of the U. S. army stationed in the territory, he predicted that New Mexico would take no action not initiated by the Confederacy.16

The exodus of Southern office holders and army officers from New Mexico, in late May and early June, followed upon the news of Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s call for troops. Most of them left by way of El Paso and San Antonio, with a few taking off across the plains from Fort Union to Texas. A state of complete demoralization existed among the soldiers of their commands, Southern army officers told Cook, and, with proper encouragement from the Confederacy, they could have brought large numbers of their men with them. Such a conspiracy had been disclosed, following a spring campaign against the Mescalero Apaches in southern New Mexico, when Southern officers attempted to deliver the troops of their regiment over to the Confederacy by marching them into Texas. Involved also was Col. W. W. Loring, commanding the department at Santa Fe. One of the officers, however, succeeded in warning others who were loyal, and the conspirators afterwards resigned their commissions, leaving the country “as rapidly as they could get out of it.”17

Col. Edward R. S. Canby, Loring’s successor in command of the department at Santa Fe, had received information that some movement against the territory from Texas could be expected. In the face of this possibility, orders were received from Washington to remove the federal troops from New Mexico for eastern service. Canby therefore ordered additional forces into Fort Fillmore to cover the withdrawal of troops from other, more distant, posts in western Arizona. For many
weeks, the fort had been under strong Confederate influence, not only from its own officers but also from those who had passed through on their way out of the territory. Mesilla, across the Rio Grande from Fort Fillmore, was reported “as much in the hands of the enemy as Charleston is.” A Confederate flag was flying in the streets and secession leaders were ordering Union men to leave. That the Confederacy had not already occupied the region was, however, a source of much anxiety, although the people of Arizona were reported in more immediate danger from widespread Indian depredations than from federal troops under their present commanders. This information was forwarded on June sixth by four prominent secessionists—among them Samuel J. Jones, sutler at Fort Fillmore and federal collector of customs for the district—who appealed for arms to equip local volunteers for Indian warfare. Another citizen of Mesilla, M. H. MacWillie—who signed himself “chief justice” of the territory—informed Jefferson Davis on June 30, 1861, of the impending withdrawal of federal troops from New Mexico and suggested that an expedition be sent up the Canadian River from Indian Territory. “The stores, supplies, and munitions of war within New Mexico and Arizona are immense,” he declared; and he pointed out that the Confederacy thereby would “relieve Texas, open communication to the Pacific, and break the line of operations, which, with . . . the blockade of our ports and complete possession of our frontier, is designed to circumvallate the South.”

Colonel Baylor’s four companies of Texas troops arrived on the Rio Grande during the first week in July. At Fort Fillmore, Maj. Isaac Lynde, commander of the southern military district, had made no preparations against invasion, reporting on July 7, 1861, to Canby that “this post or this valley was not worth the exertion to hold.” Fort Buchanan and Fort Breckenridge in western Arizona were being evacuated, and, as soon as these troops arrived on the Rio Grande, Fort Fillmore in turn would be evacuated; Arizona would, in effect, be abandoned.

On the night of July twenty-third, before the troops from western Arizona could join Lynde, Baylor marched north from El Paso. Lynde refused to contest the San Tomas crossing a mile below the post, or take possession of Mesilla, but, instead, ordered his troops from those points into Fort Fillmore. Early next morning the Texans entered Mesilla, where their arrival was made a day of celebration. Late in the afternoon of the same day, Lynde appeared on the outskirts of the town with 380 men, and sent his adjutant forward under a flag of truce to demand
its surrender. He was met by Philemon T. Herbert, now a colonel on Baylor's staff, and Maj. Edwin Waller, who delivered Baylor's reply to "come and get it." After an unsuccessful attack against their position, Lynde retreated to Fort Fillmore. His first decision was to defend the post, but he soon determined that it could not be held against the artillery which Baylor was waiting to have brought up from Fort Bliss. Shortly after midnight, Lynde abandoned Fort Fillmore, destroying as much property as his hurried departure would permit; and at daybreak next morning, with field glasses from a Mesilla rooftop, Baylor could see the dust of Lynde's column as it moved eastward along a road that led 150 miles through a pass in the mountains to Fort Stanton. Across the river, smoke rose from Fort Fillmore. Baylor ordered full pursuit and by afternoon was overtaking infantry stragglers, who, without water, were suffering from the heat and dust of the road. The final six miles was a succession of charges, with prisoners being disarmed in squads until, by the time Lynde's main force was reached, the Texans had captured his artillery and most of the infantry troops. At San Augustine Springs, twenty miles on the road to Fort Stanton, Lynde surrendered his command without firing a shot.25

With all of Arizona below the Jornado in the possession of the Texans, a provisional government was established, and on August 1, 1861, the territory was proclaimed a part of the Confederacy. Baylor, as civil and military governor, designated Mesilla as the capital, appointed other officials to serve under him, and set the northern limits of the territory at the parallel of 36° 30', thence west to the Colorado and down that stream to its mouth. He wrote to San Antonio urging the Confederacy to hurry sufficient reinforcements to occupy and hold the country, pointing out its importance as an outlet to the Pacific and its vast mineral resources.26 That Baylor's conquest opened a "pathway to the Pacific" was also noted in a report to Jefferson Davis by Secy.-of-War J. P. Benjamin, who described Arizona as a "natural appendage" to the Confederacy and "territory formerly common to all the states."27

For the rest of the year, Baylor was to hold his conquest with a force little larger than that with which he had entered Arizona. Meanwhile western Arizona reverted almost entirely to the Indians.28 After the evacuation of federal military posts in the region, the Apaches, unaware of the white man's domestic troubles, believed that they had at last stampeded the entire population. The road from Tucson to the Rio Grande was cut off at Apache Pass, while the southern overland stage,
its stations and equipment in Arizona destroyed and many of its employees killed by the Indians, discontinued operations, transferring to the central route. By the end of September 1861, the Mesilla Times reported that the Indians were in undisputed control of ninety-five per cent of Arizona.29

A loyal Union soldier, one William Need, was among those in New Mexico who were alarmed by the course of events in Arizona, and on September twenty-seventh expressed his concern in a letter to Secy.-of-War Simon Cameron.30 In the past six months, Need had visited five army posts in Arizona. The governors of New Mexico, he wrote, had paid not the slightest attention to the “will or wishes or wants” of the people of Arizona; hence, over a year ago, they had established a provisional government. Now the secession forces “were straining every nerve, using every device, pulling every cord with might and main” to incorporate the northern states of Mexico into the Confederacy. He declared that “the restless eye of Jeff Davis” was particularly bent on Arizona, that it was his “beau ideal” of a railroad route to the Pacific, and, further, that Davis, as a member of President Pierce’s cabinet, had influenced all the civil and military appointments to New Mexico in the last three administrations. If the Confederates captured Fort Craig, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe, and thus obtained a permanent foothold in New Mexico, Need warned that the Union cause would “be terribly menaced, if not absolutely lost, on the Pacific side.”31

Although Baylor’s July 1861 campaign had been an independent and locally-conceived operation, his forces had won control of the upper Rio Grande country in Arizona, which lay not only astride the southern overland route to California but also furnished a base of operations for invasion of New Mexico. In fact, even before Baylor had begun to move up the river from El Paso early that July, Henry H. Sibley, one-time U.S.A. major, now Confederate brigadier-general and recently in Richmond, was on his way to San Antonio to organize a mounted brigade of Texas troops for the New Mexican conquest.32 While in Richmond, Sibley, and other officers with Southern sympathies who had left New Mexico, stressed the weakness of Union forces in that area and the amount of Southern sentiment among the prominent Americans (the governor excepted) — a view confirmed by Baylor in September.33 Confederate successes in Missouri were encouraging, Baylor stated.34 Also encouraging was the news that Simeon Hart and Judge Crosby at El Paso were buying up supplies in northern Mexico for Sibley’s army,
Hart assuring Sibley that they would be enough to last him until federal stores in New Mexico could be captured.35

But difficulties in the enlistment of troops and in securing ordnance stores delayed Sibley’s plans. Of his three regiments, the first to leave for the long march into New Mexico was under the command of Col. James Reily of Nacogdoches.36 One of Reily’s soldiers believed that their destination was Tucson, Arizona, where they were to meet several thousand Southern sympathizers from California and then “switch off down in and take Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango, and Tamaulipas in Mexico and add them to the Confederacy.”37 Reily’s troops were described as producing a “war-like aspect”; that this augured no good for the enemy, and that someone likely would “get hurt.”38 A Texan who saw them leave believed that the Northern forces in New Mexico could easily be overrun, “with the result that probably the Far Western States, including Arizona, or even California, might join the Confederacy.”39 By November 29, 1861, Reily’s regiment was at Fort Davis, having completed a march of 475 miles with Fort Quitman as its next stop.

The second regiment, commanded by Col. W. R. Scurry, left San Antonio on November second, Sibley himself with his staff on the eighteenth, and the third regiment, under Col. William Steele, was to follow in a few days. But weeks of failure and disappointment passed before Sibley could report that he was advancing to the field of duty to accomplish “everything designed there by his excellency the President.”40

For several months, Canby at Santa Fe had been laboring to organize the defensive resources of New Mexico; martial law had been placed over the territory; several regiments of New Mexican volunteers created; and Fort Union, northeast of Santa Fe, and Fort Craig, on the Rio Grande above the Jornado desert, were strengthened and designated as the main centers of defense.41

On February 7, 1862, from old Fort Thorn at the upper end of the Mesilla Valley, the New Mexican invasion began, Sibley’s army, reduced by sickness and detachment to about 2600 men, moving northward across the Jornado to Fort Craig.42 The Texans had brought no provisions with them from San Antonio except those needed en route. Consequently a forward movement toward federal stores at Fort Craig no longer could be delayed. “Forage there was none; commissary supplies were getting scarce; the cold season was coming on; clothing was needed; all of which the country afforded none.” So said Theophilus
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Noel, self-styled correspondent of the expedition. In addition, the mountains were full of Indians, about whom a Texan wrote from Fort Thorn, "we dread them worse than the Lincolnites, by odds." Another Texan, Ebenezer Hanna, soon to die in the battle of Glorietta, began a diary at Fort Thorn; according to one entry, on the march to Fort Craig snow had begun to fall "so hard as to almost peel the skin off your face," instead of the "big battle or foot race" expected.

Upon reaching Fort Craig, Sibley offered battle on the open plain south of the fort, which Canby refused. But on the morning of February twenty-first, as the Texans were attempting to water their horses at Valverde (a few miles above the post), Canby's troops succeeded in driving them from all points near the crossing. Late that afternoon the Texans charged down the slopes of the valley and captured the Union battery, the commanders of the battery and of the Confederate assault both losing their lives in the fighting, together with most of the gunners manning the battery, while the infantry supporting them were forced back into the river.

Canby returned to Fort Craig, charging his defeat to the ineffectiveness of his volunteer troops. The fort was considered too strongly defended to be taken, therefore the Texans proceeded up the Rio Grande. Headquarters were established at Albuquerque, the small federal force there fleeing to Santa Fe, which was in turn abandoned on March 4, 1862, government stores being transported to Fort Union, thirty miles north of Las Vegas. A few days afterwards a Confederate force occupied the capital. "We were to wait a short time," wrote a captured Texan, "and then march on and take Fort Union, which, we thought, was ours already; and then New Mexico would belong to the new government of the South, and it would then be so easy to cut off all communication with California."

Sibley failed to capture Fort Craig and the bulk of federal stores in depot above that post. Over half of his horses had been lost on the march, and after Valverde his first regiment was ordered to dismount to provide horses for the artillery and other regiments of his command. "I now feel the pleasure of soldiering in New Mexico more plainly," said Ebenezer Hanna, whose diary shows the displeasure of Texans "who have never been accustomed to walking." He was not too happy at other prospects in New Mexico, "a thousand miles away from home a foot" surrounded on all sides by Mexicans and "Savage Indians" and with the enemy "between us and all connection with the South."
With Sibley's army in possession of Santa Fe, the executive department of the territory was transferred to Las Vegas by Governor Connelly. Canby had decided to remain with the Union forces at Fort Craig and wait until help reached him from outside the territory. To Maj.-Gen. H. W. Halleck, commanding the Missouri department at St. Louis, an appeal was made for immediate reinforcement:

A force of Colorado Volunteers is already on the way to assist us, and they may possibly arrive in time to save us from immediate danger; but, my dear sir, we must look to the future. 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. . . .

These Texans will not rest with the forces they have already with them, but they will have large additions to their command here, in order to extend their conquests towards old Mexico and in the direction of Southern California. . . .

Confederate operations in Arizona and New Mexico had aroused apprehension regarding their designs on Mexican territory. As early as May 1861, the state department at Washington had been questioned on the subject by the Mexican minister, to whom Secretary Seward had replied that the United States planned to concentrate in Arizona a body of troops from the Pacific coast, and it desired permission from Mexico to land them at Guaymas, on the Gulf of California, through which they could more easily reach their destination. This had been granted unanimously by the Mexican congress on June 20, 1861, although at the same time fear was expressed that its action would be used by the Confederacy as a pretext to open hostilities for the purpose of acquiring Mexican territory.

Such appeared to be the case. When John T. Pickett, Confederate official accredited to the Juarez government, learned in Mexico City that the United States had been given permission to cross Mexican territory, he began to threaten military reprisals, declaring on one occasion that a large Confederate force was moving toward El Paso with the intention of occupying Arizona and New Mexico, and that if the United States took advantage of the offer, war would probably ensue between Mexico and the Confederate States. In his dispatches to Richmond, Pickett urged the Confederacy to take possession of Mexican territory.

Along similar lines, Sibley revealed to one of his officers at El Paso that, after the occupation of Arizona, New Mexico and California, the Confederacy would next acquire, either through purchase or conquest, the north Mexican states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Lower California.
During the months spent in San Antonio, information had continued to reach him, in spite of assurances to the contrary, that an expedition was forming in California for a movement against Texas and that Mexico would permit U. S. troops to cross its territory. Upon arriving at El Paso, he had sent Col. James Reily, his next in command, to Chihuahua and Sonora, the Mexican states adjacent to Arizona. His reception by the governor and other officials of Chihuahua was so cordial that on his return to the Rio Grande in January 1862, Reily congratulated Sibley on having obtained the first official recognition of the Confederate government by any foreign power. Although Reily reported that the governor had privately assured him that federal troops would not be permitted to cross Chihuahua, even if the central government should demand it, Sibley was officially told that the state would abide by the constitutional laws of Mexico, which gave the Mexican congress power to permit or deny the entrance of foreign troops. This also applied to pursuit of Apaches into Chihuahua by Texans; however, permission to purchase and store provisions across the line was readily granted.

During his stay of twenty-one days in Chihuahua, Reily had written to a fellow-Texan, P. M. G. John H. Reagan, describing the state as a rich and glorious neighbor which would improve under the Confederate flag. "With Sonora and Chihuahua we gain Southern California," he continued, "and by a railroad to Guaymas render our state of Texas the great highway of nations." After participating in the raising of the Confederate flag at Tucson by making a speech in the public plaza, Reily left on March 3, 1862, for the Sonoran capital with a letter to the governor and an escort of two officers and twenty men.

In November of 1861 Colonel Baylor had written that "California is on the eve of a revolution," and had recommended that Southerners in that state be induced to join the Confederate army. With about a hundred Arizona troops of Baylor's command, Capt. R. S. Hunter had been sent by General Sibley to establish a post at Tucson, his desire being, as he reported on January 27, 1862, to protect "the important and growing interest, chiefly mineral, in western Arizona" and to open communication with southern California where Sibley believed the population was "favorably inclined" to the Confederate government. Hunter's force arrived at Tucson on February twenty-eighth when the Texans were hailed by the entire population and where he had found that a few citizens, "more ultra in their Southern feelings than the rest" and alarmed at reports of a California invasion, had been preparing to seek safety on
the Rio Grande. Within a few weeks, Captain Hunter had pushed his troops along the southern overland route to the Pima villages, from which small detachments scouted the road leading to Fort Yuma, the federal post on the California side of the Colorado River.

On the west coast, Gen. E. V. Sumner had assumed command of the Pacific department of the U. S. army in April 1861. During the following months, his headquarters at San Francisco received reports of groups of men organizing at different points, especially in southern California, for the ostensible purpose of either beginning hostilities in the state, enlisting for service in the south, or meeting a Confederate invasion from Texas. After Baylor's occupation of Arizona in July of that year, these groups were reported gathering in increasing numbers, collecting supplies, and evidently preparing to receive a Confederate army. The southern military district was reenforced to check the movement, for Sumner feared that civil war would immediately begin should a Confederate force get into the state as a rallying point for the secession element. He issued to his command on September 3, 1861, the single-line general order: "No Federal troops in the Department of the Pacific will ever surrender to Rebels." A strong military camp was established at Warner's Ranch between Los Angeles and Fort Yuma to support that post, to prevent the gathering of Confederate recruits in the region, and to resist any force advancing through Arizona. Fort Yuma itself was reenforced, boats and ferries on the river seized and guarded, and civilians forbidden to cross into either Arizona or Sonora without permission. The noted secessionist, Dan Showalter, was arrested with his party and held during the winter at the fort; however, by the end of the year southern California was generally quiet, except for small groups seeking to cross the frontier. In the meantime an expedition was being organized to move against the Confederates in Arizona.

While preparations were under way, the attention of military authorities was directed toward the activities of Colonel Reily in Sonora. The U. S. consul at Mazatlan managed to secure a copy of Sibley's letter to the Sonoran governor, in which, in addition to the requests he had made upon the governor of Chihuahua (see above), Sibley sought permission to establish a depot at Guaymas and a right of transit across Sonora. The governor was reported to have denied him these privileges, although Reily, while at Ures (the capital), had boasted that he had obtained all he had asked for and even more. On May 1, 1862, Gen. George Wright, now commanding the Pacific department, addressed
a letter to Ignacio Pesqueira, the Sonoran governor, assuring him that the United States would protect his state against invasion. Fearful that Sibley might enter it under pretext of chasing hostile Indians, Wright had, the day before, ordered Col. James H. Carleton, then at Fort Yuma, to pursue the Texans without regard for boundary lines, in the event that they crossed into Sonora. In letters to the governors of both Chihuahua and Sonora, Carleton pointed out that the South could never establish itself as an independent nation. Within a month he received a reply from Pesqueira assuring Carleton that only the rights of a neutral nation had been offered the Confederacy, and that Reily's assertions while in the capital had been "exaggerated, or perhaps badly interpreted."

By the end of April 1862 the greater part of Carleton's 1,500 troops, crossing the desert by companies one day apart, had reached Fort Yuma and, from there, had resumed their march to the Pima villages. This forced back the Texans, who, having destroyed hay and other Union supplies along the route and captured ten members of a scouting party, had come to within fifty miles of the fort. They were now retreating to Tucson, and by May twentieth, when Carleton's advance guard reached that Confederate stronghold, the Texans had fled to the Rio Grande, accompanied by most of the American residents.

Colonel Reily had already passed through Tucson on his return from his mission to Sonora. From Doña Ana on April 17, 1862, he wrote that he had obtained his second recognition of the Confederacy, pointing out that in consequence of his missions to Chihuahua and Sonora—which took him over 1,400 miles in sixty-one days, mostly through country controlled by the Apaches—"unlimited and unrestricted right" to buy supplies in Sonora had been obtained, together with the right of transit through the state and permission to establish a depot at Guaymas. California authorities, he said, had thus been thwarted in their negotiations with Governor Pesqueira for permission to send federal troops through Sonora. The capture of Carleton's scouting party on the road to Fort Yuma Reily hailed as the first victory of the Confederacy on the Pacific. "Others will follow"; the advance of a more respectable Confederate force on Fort Yuma would arouse the people of southern California, the majority of whom "are with the South."

With Sibley's army in possession of Albuquerque and Santa Fe, Confederate ambitions during the month of March 1862 seemed well on the road to fulfillment. The Texans apparently were unaware of the ap-
approach of a volunteer regiment from the mining regions of Colorado to drive them from the country, or of the organization of the California column. The Colorado troops (some 1300 men, including those from Fort Union), having learned of Canby’s defeat at Valverde, were even then making forced marches over the mountains to New Mexico. In Apache Canyon, only a day’s march from Santa Fe, their advance guard engaged 500 Texans for two hours. The following morning, Col. W. R. Scurry, with 600 Texas troops from Albuquerque, reached the scene of battle, and the combined force then waited in a strong position for the “Pike’s Peakers.” Next day (March 28, 1862) they moved on down Apache Canyon to Glorieta Pass, its eastern entrance. The Coloradans had now brought up their main force, first sending a detachment under Maj. J. M. Chivington on a circuitous route over the mountains. In the furious six-hour battle which followed, neither side gained a decisive victory, and, shortly after sundown, Col. J. P. Slough, the Colorado commander, withdrew toward Fort Union to protect that post, while the Texans, learning that Major Chivington had circled the fighting in the canyon and had fallen upon their wagon guards—afterwards destroying animals, wagons, ammunition and their entire supplies—returned to Santa Fe, where Colonel Scurry reported that the loss of his supply train had forced him back “for something to eat.”

Within a few days General Sibley was withdrawing the troops from Santa Fe and making preparations to leave the country. Canby, who left Fort Craig on April first, appeared before Albuquerque eight days later, and engaged in two days of skirmishing with Sibley before withdrawing to Tijeras, where a junction with the Colorado troops was effected. He then started in pursuit of the Texans, who were moving down the river. On April fifteenth he attacked them at Peralta but afterwards refused to oppose their retreat. That night Sibley crossed the river at Los Lunas, and during the following two days both armies moved down the river in sight of each other, the Texans on the west side, Canby’s forces on the east. On the night of April seventeenth, the Texans, in order to avoid Fort Craig, recrossed the Rio Grande and fled into the mountains, striking the river again about thirty miles below the post.

Their arms and equipment abandoned or destroyed, and with only half of their force remaining, the Texans during the month of May were scattered along the Rio Grande in Arizona, collecting the means necessary to enable them to leave the country. There was little optimism
that Arizona could be held, although one Texan reported that Judge David S. Terry, California's foremost secessionist, with 1500 well-armed and mounted Californians was coming by the Gila route to join them. "If this is true," he wrote, "we will have a lively time yet in the valley of the Mesilla." Two additional regiments were being organized at San Antonio, and information had come through that Arizona and New Mexico were to be held at all hazards. But federal armies from three states were preparing to converge on them: the Colorado volunteers were with Canby at Fort Craig, the California column was at Tucson, and a large force was assembling at Fort Riley, Kansas, under orders to march to New Mexico. Moreover, Sibley reported from El Paso on May 27, 1862, a complete lack of ammunition and supplies—nothing could be purchased on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande with Confederate paper. He pointed out that future operations should not rely upon New Mexico's resources, and expressed his conviction that "except for its political geographical position, the Territory of New Mexico is not worth a quarter of the blood and treasure expended in its conquest." As a field of military operations, it had a "multiplicity of defensible positions," but the essential element, food, could not be relied upon.

By June 17, 1862, Sibley's first two regiments had left El Paso and were on the road to San Antonio, 400 men remaining behind in Arizona—hardly enough troops to hold the territory, the San Antonio Herald noted, "when the whole Brigade seems to have been insufficient for that purpose." A California army, it reported, was advancing on Tucson. Evacuation was unavoidable, and the paper ran a series describing the pitiable condition of the retreating soldiers: they were "suffering terribly from the effects of heat; very many of them are a-foot, and scarcely able to travel from blistered feet. They were subsisting on bread and water, both officers and men.... They were all cheerful, for their faces were turned homeward." Many families from El Paso were said to be on the road to San Antonio. "Franklin [El Paso] is almost entirely deserted. The people on this side of the river are dependent on the Mexicans for supplies and Confederate paper with them is no currency at all... two thirds of the suffering of our men has been that they could not use our money to buy necessaries." On July fifth the Herald published an appeal from Colonel Reily for the people of the western counties of Texas to meet "these returning heroes as far on the road as possible." They were on foot and, upon reaching San Antonio, would
have marched as infantry nearly fifteen hundred miles since forced to
dismount after the battle of Valverde.

The Austin Gazette editorialized that the invasion of New Mexico
had been a "grand failure." The brave troops of Texas had been sent to
conquer a barren wilderness,

and after having performed prodiges \[sic\] of valor, and defeated the enemy in
two pitched battles, have been compelled to abandon the country from the sheer
want of something to eat. . . .

The force operating in New Mexico has been chasing a shadow . . . may the
brave remnant now toiling their way back, fighting against those worst of enemies,
hunger and thirst, yet have the opportunity of meeting and conquering them
somewhere within the bounds of civilization, where the soil is not sand, the water
the essence of bitterness, the towns hovels of mud, the comforts fleas and rattle-

snakes, and the people coyotes.88

On the other hand, a recent arrival from Albuquerque wrote the San
Antonio Herald that New Mexico, Arizona, and western and northern
Texas were worth fighting for; they were "really the bone of contention
in this war," and, in addition to their value for livestock, grain and min-
eral resources,

They are indispensable to the Confederate States as a thoroughfare to the
Pacific and for the purpose of securing to her a portion of the coast and harbors
of that ocean, which as Confederate ports might (it will be easily seen) be made
to command by far the greater portion of the commerce of the Pacific. Who
would go to San Francisco if we had as good a port farther South, at the terminal
of a railroad, the other terminal being on the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi?
What other railroad and port could compete with them?89

The same correspondent in the issue of August sixteenth noted the
arrival of a party of Californians "spoiling for a fight," and asked, "Is
there no way to gratify them?"

The advance guard of Carleton's California column arrived at Fort
Thorn on July 4, 1862; four days later, Confederate troops abandoned
Arizona and were on their way to San Antonio.90 By August first he had
set up his headquarters at Mesilla, sending detachments later to take pos-
session of forts Bliss, Quitman and Davis in Texas,91 with the result that,
on September 21, 1862, he was able to proclaim: "... troops from the
Atlantic and Pacific slope — from the mountains of California and Colo-
rado, acting in the same cause, inspired by the same duties, and animated
by the same hopes — have met and shaken hands in the center of this
great continent."92
Efforts were made thereafter until the end of the war by Californians, Arizonans, New Mexicans, and Texans to revive interest in another invasion. For example, President Jefferson Davis was informed on March 24, 1863, that in the latter part of 1862 native troops had defeated the small federal force remaining in New Mexico and were in possession of the greater part of the territory. Their revolt had reportedly been inspired by federal misrule and by wealthy citizens who believed that Lincoln’s emancipation proclamation would be “subversive of the entire territorial labor system.” This had sounded plausible to Davis and he sought a ruling from the justice department regarding his powers to appoint a territorial governor for New Mexico. The reply was that while Davis had no authority from Congress to assume jurisdiction over New Mexico, “... Southern blood and Southern treasure were both freely expended in [its] acquisition by the United States, whilst the Confederate States formed a part thereof. The withdrawal of the Confederate States did not extinguish their claim to the public property held by the United States as a common Trustee of all the States.”

In June of the same year, Davis was urged to authorize the immediate invasion of Arizona and New Mexico; that the territories be permitted to “redeem themselves.” This could be done with the large non-conscript element on the frontier and the many California refugees in Texas and northern Mexico. The Confederacy could not afford, said his correspondent, to abandon Arizona and New Mexico for three reasons: Confederate relations with Mexico, its interests in the Pacific, and its domestic and foreign policy. As to the second, “Arizona affords the only practicable route to us for a trans-continental railroad. Our commercial relations may, sooner or later, necessitate such an enterprise. Then would the territory become a sine qua non.” He also noted that the development of Arizona’s mineral resources would bolster the Confederate currency. The territories’ fate, he warned, would be determined only by treaty or by force of arms, and if, at the close of the war, they were in the hands of the Confederacy, they could be better bargained for. “If we would possess the Territories, should we not take them while there is yet opportunity?”

From San Antonio on February 14, 1864, came a suggestion that Arizona and New Mexico be recovered with about a hundred men under Col. Dan Showalter, whose force would be introduced into Arizona from Mexico. The Confederates would then capture Fort Yuma and open communications with Southern California “from whence a suffi-
cient number of men can be drawn to sweep the entire Territories east and establish beyond cavil the claim of the Southern Confederacy to the country. In December 1863, Judge L. W. Hastings, recently arrived from California, had believed this could be done with forces drawn entirely from California. His proposal, which had received considerable support at Richmond, was to return, by way of Mexico, to California, where a large force would be recruited and introduced into Arizona as miners and emigrants to Mexico. This would, he wrote, "keep the thoroughfare open from the Pacific to Texas, and maintain an unbroken intercourse between California and the Confederate States, so as to enable the thousands of Californians who desire to aid in the Confederate cause to do so at will and with safety." The occupation of Arizona would also secure to the Confederacy "not only immediate and efficient military aid with its best moral influence both at home and abroad, but also a connecting link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the best and most feasible line of communication across the continent, the only practicable Atlantic and Pacific railroad route, the most valuable agricultural and grazing lands, and the richest mineral region in the known world." Another letter sent to President Davis in the spring of 1864 expressed the fear that Arizona and New Mexico, in the hands of the North, would be harbors for fugitive slaves. Moreover, without the territories the Confederacy was cut off from the Pacific, while with them the South would have a great advantage in the commerce of that ocean over the other aspirants. Their surrender, he wrote, "cuts us off from any prospects of future expansion and the fact of our final subjugation or inferior position, being thus surrounded, would be a mere question of time." Late in 1864, Baylor proposed the reconquest of Arizona, although he was then a representative at Richmond from his district in Texas. He would use 2500 Texans and make a sudden move upon the country, after which communication with southern California would be opened. Judge Terry and Colonel Showalter had informed him that 15,000 to 20,000 Californians could be obtained for the Confederate army. Baylor pointed out that the Confederacy might reasonably expect reinforcements from southern California, which he declared was "settled almost entirely by Southern people." Although the war department rejected the plan, Davis endorsed it with the notation that if the least optimistic number of Californians were obtained, the expedition would be worth the effort. Baylor was recommissioned a colonel, and given authority to raise a regiment in Texas for the undertaking. This was on March 25, 1865, in the closing days of the Civil War.
Confederate hopes for western territory ended with the surrender of Lee's army, although there were those who sought to continue the struggle from the remote border-areas of the United States and Mexico. The last real chance for western domain had faded, however, with the Confederate retreat from New Mexico in 1862.

NOTES


3. O. R., op. cit., pp. 577-78. Baylor's exploits as a frontier Indian-fighter in north Texas and as an ardent secessionist had already won him a state-wide reputation. Texas adj.-gen.'s files, 1860-61; and Governor's Letterbook, LXXX, 50 (Texas state library, Austin).


5. For Hart's efforts to encourage a Confederate invasion of New Mexico, see Texas State Gazette (Austin), March 30, 1861.


9. Concerning Herbert's report as commissioner to Arizona and New Mexico, see Governor's Letterbook (as in note 3 above), pp. 60, 64, 98.

10. Samuel Cozzens, The Marvelous Country or Three Years in Arizona and New Mexico (Boston, 1876), pp. 204-205; Mills, op. cit., p. 44.

11. Mesilla Times, March 2, 1861. Quoted in Loomis M. Ganaway, "New Mex-


15. A. M. Jackson to Orlando Davis, Santa Fe, Feb. 17, 1861 (Pickett Papers, as in note 8 above).

16. Capt. H. C. Cook to Simeon Hart, El Paso, May 29, 1861 (ibid.). Cook's letter was inclosed as a part of Hart's report to Gov. Clark of Texas.


21. O. R., ibid., p. 58. For contemporary accounts, see Lydia Spencer Lane, I Married a Soldier (Philadelphia, 1893), pp. 105-112; Maj. James Cooper McKee, Narrative of the Surrender of a Command of U. S. Forces at Fort Fillmore, N. M., in July A. D., 1861 (Boston, 1886).

22. O. R., ibid., pp. 45-46, 63-64.

23. Baylor first reported his force at 258 men, although later he wrote that he came into Arizona with 375 troops, which probably included volunteers enlisted at El Paso. O. R., ser. 1, L, pt. 2, p. 152.


26. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

27. Ibid., pp. 791-92.

31. Jefferson Davis's ownership of Chihuahua mining property appears to have been one of the many rumors concerning his western ambitions as president of the Confederacy.
32. New Orleans Daily Picayune, July 16, 1861. Sibley, a native of Louisiana, was known for his invention of the Sibley tent, its design having been suggested by the Comanche tents he had seen during his command of Fort Belknap in Texas. John Salmon Ford, “Memoirs” (manuscript, Texas state library, Austin), IV, 670-72.
33. O. R., ser. 1, IV, 109-110. The native New Mexicans, however, Baylor reported to be decidedly Northern in sentiment. Ibid., pp. 132-33.
34. Ibid., pp. 128-29.
35. Ibid., pp. 133-34.
36. A soldier in Reily's regiment has left the only Confederate account of the New Mexican campaign. Theophilus Noel, A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi (Shreveport, La., 1865), in Texas state library, Austin.
38. Texas State Gazette (Austin), Nov. 2, 1861.
40. O. R., ibid., pp. 141-43. That Sibley was acting “under instructions from the President” had been specifically stated in orders from Richmond to Col. Van Dorn at San Antonio. O. R., ser. 1, I, 93.
41. For Union correspondence during this period, see O. R., ser. 1, IV, 34-90. See also Report of Joint Committee... (as in note 17 above), pp. 364-72.
42. This estimate of Sibley’s force is Canby’s. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 488. Canby had collected over 3800 troops at Fort Craig, including, besides the New Mexican volunteers, one thousand regulars and as many hastily-gathered and unorganized militia.
43. Noel, A Campaign... (as in note 36 above), p. 12.
44. Texas State Gazette (Austin), Feb. 15, 1862.
47. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
52. Thomas Corwin to Seward, “Memorandum,” ibid., pp. 541-42.
53. Same to same, Sept. 7, 1861, House Ex. Docs., no. 100, 37th Cong., 2d sess., VIII, 23.
54. Frank Lawrence Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago, 1931), pp 102-105. Unknown to Pickett, these dispatches were not being delivered.
56. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 167-68.
58. Luis Terrazas to Sibley, Jan. 11, 1862, ibid., pp. 171-72.
60. Ibid., pp. 944-45; O. R., ser. 1, IX, 707.
62. Ibid., pp. 169-70.
63. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 707. An observer at Tucson noted that any troops, Union or Confederate, who could give protection against the Apaches, would have been well received there. Ibid., p. 868.
65. Ibid., pp. 610-11. An Arizona mining engineer, passing through southern California in the summer of 1861, formed the impression that almost the entire population consisted of emigrants from the Southern states. “A Northerner,” he recorded later, “was in as much danger as he would have been in the worst parts of the South.” Raphael Pumpelly, Across America and Asia (New York, 1870), p. 66. See also John J. Earle, “The Sentiment of the People of California with Respect to the Civil War,” American Hist. Assoc., An. Rept., I (1907), 134. A large number of Mormons in southern California were expected to welcome a Confederate army. O. R., ser. 1, L, pt. 1, pp. 548-51.
66. Ibid., p. 603.
67. Ibid., p. 773. An expedition to march against Texas from Mazatlan, Sonora, authorized from Washington, had been canceled. Ibid., p. 572.
68. Sibley to Ignacio Pesqueira, Dec. 16, 1861, ibid., pp. 766-68.
69. Ibid., pp. 989, 1013, 1042.
70. Ibid., pp. 1047-48.
71. April 30, 1862, ibid., p. 1042. Carleton’s recommendation was for his troops to occupy Sonora before Sibley’s did. Ibid., p. 1071.

73. June 2, 1862, O. R., ser. 1, L, pt. 1, pp. 1117-18. Pesqueira answered Wright, Aug. 29th, stating that he had handled Reily with great precaution, but had promised him nothing; he assured Wright that any step through Sonora "by any force from the South under any pretext whatsoever" would be considered an invasion by force of arms. O. R., ser. 1, L, pt. 2, p. 93.

74. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 597.

75. James Reily to J. H. Reagan, Mesilla, April 17, 1862, Pickett Papers, op. cit., microfilm 200. Reily reported that Captain Hunter had returned with him from Tucson and was then at Doña Ana.

76. The Mesilla Times' report that the battle "is generally considered in this valley to have decisively ended military operations in New Mexico . . .," was reprinted in the San Antonio Herald, March 22, 1862.

77. For Colorado's part in the New Mexican campaign, see Whitford (note 46 above); and A. A. Hayes, Jr., "An Unwritten Episode of the Late War," New Colorado and the Santa Fe Trail (New York, 1880), pp. 160-74; and "The New Mexican Campaign of 1862," Magazine of American History, XV (Feb. 1886), 171-84.

78. The Confederate march on Fort Union is described in a letter by Capt. J. B. McCown, Las Cruces, May 6, 1862, to the Bellville (Texas) Countryman, June 11, 1862.

79. Confederate reports generally describe the engagement as the Battle of Glorieta; Union reports as the Battle of Apache Canyon. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 533-45.

80. Canby's reason for letting the Texans escape was that he could not feed them as prisoners. Others accused him of leniency toward Sibley, his brother-in-law.

81. Union estimates of Sibley's losses, and the hardships endured, are borne out by Captain McCown's letter (note 78 above) that, out of 900 men of his regiment who had left San Antonio, only 428 answered roll call. See also Theophilus Noel's Autobiography . . . (note 37 above), pp. 63-64.

82. McCown, ibid.

83. Jefferson Davis to Sibley, June 7, 1862, O. R., ser. 1, IX, 717-18; R. E. Lee to P. O. Hebert, May 31, 1862, ibid., p. 716.

84. About 5000 men were being organized at Fort Riley for service in New Mexico. O. R., ser. 1, VIII, 628, 631, 653-54. See also Samuel J. Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties (Chicago, 1911), p. 45.

85. O. R., ser. 1, IX, 511-12, 714. For opinions on Sibley's conduct of the campaign in New Mexico, see Noel, A Campaign . . ., op. cit., pp. 14-15; and Teel (note 55 above), p. 700.

86. June 7, 1862. Sibley's second regiment reached San Antonio by Aug. 9th, the Herald reporting its arrival in its issue of that date.

87. Ibid., June 21, 1862.
The Confederate territory of Arizona also collapsed with the retreat of Sibley’s army; Colonel Baylor’s military government appears to have been the only authority the region experienced. For Arizona’s political affairs, see Charles S. Walker, Jr., “Confederate Government in Doña Ana County as Shown in the Records of the Probate Court, 1861-62,” New Mexico Hist. Rev., VI (July 1931), 252-302; Col. C. C. Smith, “Some Unpublished History of the Southwest, Arizona Hist. Rev., IV (July 1931), 13-38; San Antonio Weekly Herald, Jan. 11, 1862.

Carleton ordered Simeon Hart’s flour mill confiscated, describing Hart as “a man who did more than anyone else to bring Sibley’s force into this country, and who did more than almost all others to keep it supplied while here. . . .” O. R., ser. 1, IV, 578. See also, Mills, op. cit., p. 7.

M. H. MacWillie to Davis, Richmond, March 24, 1863, Pickett Papers, op. cit., microfilm 201. MacWillie was then Arizona delegate to Richmond.

J. H. Watts to Davis, April 8, 1863, ibid.

MacWillie to Davis, Richmond, June 8, 1863, ibid.


L. W. Hastings to Davis, Dec. 16, 1863, O. R., ser. 1, L, pt. 2, pp. 700-705, 721-23. Authority was given to put Hastings’ plan into operation, with Judge Terry in overall charge of the undertaking. Feb. 4, 1864, O. R., ser. 4, III, 76. Confederate currency was valueless in northern Mexico to purchase supplies, therefore the expedition was canceled; however, Hastings’ and other similar proposals had specified that cotton be purchased in Texas and sold in Mexico to obtain specie, thus avoiding a repetition of Sibley’s difficulties in 1862.

Spruce M. Baird, Shreveport, La., to Davis, mailed May 10, 1864, Pickett Papers, op. cit., microfilm 202.