

Chapter Three

The First Regiment

June 1861

At this time Brevet Lt. Col. Edward Canby did not know the disposition of the Confederates in Texas. He had heard the rumors of preparations for a Texan invasion. But as to when they would attack, and from which direction, he couldn't be sure, and because of this, he could not concentrate his troops in any specific area. If it came from the northeast, Fort Union would be the best base of operations, if from the east, he would concentrate his forces in Albuquerque, from the southeast, Fort Stanton, and from the south, Fort Fillmore. He needed scouts in many different locations. In attempting to detail his troops for that duty, Canby quickly realized he didn't have enough men to garrison the forts, keep the Santa Fe Trail open, guard against the Navajo and Apaches, and scout for Texans – and the situation was about to become more complicated. He needed volunteers.

Canby had recently been ordered to send most of the Regulars east. He must have felt a surge of panic since only four cavalry companies were to remain in the Territory. He tried to stall for time, writing to the Assistant Adjutant General at the headquarters of the Army in New York that, “The preparatory arrangements for the movement of the troops from the department are being made with as much rapidity as possible, but the scarcity of transportation (both public and private) in this country will occasion some delay.”¹ He stated that the companies of the 5th US Regiment would be concentrated in Albuquerque while those of the 7th US Regiment would be gathered at Fort Fillmore. Then he proceeded to describe the rumors of a Texan invasion of the Territory and his preparations in that regard. He signed this correspondence “Major Tenth Infantry, and Brevet Lieut. Col., U.S. Army.” He still wasn't sure of his rank, since confirmation had not come through from headquarters.

At this time there were 1,500 Regulars scattered throughout the southwest in small posts. Their job was to keep trails open and protect citizens traveling on the roads. Their other task was to keep citizens on the roads and to stop any unwarranted infringements upon the natives – anything that might start a war. Unfortunately, all too often, it was the army that started the wars. At the most, each post contained one or two companies of US infantry or cavalry. Therefore, the regiments would not be in a position to repel a determined invasion (or even to be sent east) without gathering all their companies together, so Col. Canby began the process of assembling his forces at strategic forts. Major Isaac Lynde, commander of the 7th Infantry Regiment, was ordered to relocate to Fort Fillmore in southern New Mexico, near the town of Mesilla. Four companies of the 7th Infantry under the command of Brevet Major G. R. Paul had already been collected there. Canby also ordered Lynde and Paul to be alert as to the movements of Texans as well as to the moods and sympathies of the locals. He thought the Mesilla valley might be disloyal to the Union. He also alerted all commanding officers to the possibility that agents might attempt to subvert the enlisted men along with their equipment to join the South.² On the same day, Canby's Adjutant, Allen Anderson, penned a letter to Benjamin S. Roberts, commander at Fort Stanton, warning that the Pecos River area in the east should be watched for a potential advance by Texans. Patrols should be made by ‘Mexicans’ or friendly Native Americans if possible. He suggested they cover their military purpose by posing as a trading group – and that secrecy of their mission was paramount.

Meanwhile, as Canby had feared, the Secessionists were on the move in Mesilla. Transplanted Texans were active in attempting to inspire the locals to welcome the idea of joining with the Confederate States of America. Major Paul reported that the Texans had captured Union troops in Texas after promising to let them go. And they had taken over Forts Washita and

¹ Canby to Headquarters 6/17/61, Official Records of the War of the Rebellion.

² Anderson to Lynde 6/16/61, Official Records.

Arbuckle in northwestern Texas and four companies of Texan militia were expected to arrive at Fort Bliss soon. At the moment, Fort Bliss was still unoccupied by either side. Major Paul also noted that a Confederate convention had been held in Mesilla on March 16, 1861, and that inducements had been made to entice the enlisted men to desert but there was no response at all from the rank and file. He sent along a copy of the resolution of the convention in Mesilla, which stated that they would no longer “recognize the present Black Republican administration.”³ Canby sent word on the same day to the Federal commander in Kansas that Texan troops were being mustered, possibly to attack the supply wagon trains on the Santa Fe Trail. He also asked for the status of any supply trains currently on the road.⁴

Despite Federal apprehensions, the Confederates were just as disorganized as they, and were also busy marshalling their forces to secure northwest Texas. The Southern officers and agents still in contact with the US Army were attempting to draw the men to the Southern Cause. The loyal Union officers could not imagine anyone of integrity, such as they considered all of their fellow officers, to be acting subversively. They could not conceive how much the men of southern sympathies truly hated the United States. Each new revelation of the disaffection of yet another officer, who only yesterday was considered the epitome of loyalty and patriotism, sent another shock rippling through the ranks. A typical sentiment described in a letter by Major Lynde reads: “COLONEL: I received your dispatches yesterday by Lieutenant Hall, and was very much astonished to receive such proofs of treachery against Colonel Loring.”⁵ But he believed all the troops in his command to be loyal.

The Confederate agents also tried to commandeer as much equipment and supplies from the United States as they could. They captured everything that was stored in Texas. What they couldn’t get their hands on peaceably they tried to steal. Bands of marauders posing as bandits went out under Texan orders to rustle horses – one group managed to steal forty-one mounts from A Company of the 1st US Dragoons (the future 1st US Cavalry). Meanwhile, Canby and his officers were asking the Texans if they knew anything about the banditos and of course they denied any knowledge of them. They also denied any attempt at subverting the US soldiers. But Union suspicions were soon fully realized when a letter from Confederate General Sibley to Colonel Loring was captured and presented to Canby, and this letter described exactly what subversions were meant to be in progress. He wrote that there were supplies and ammunition at El Paso “for two or more companies for twelve months.” The loss of these supplies would be a “serious embarrassment for the cause.” Sibley promised to capture these supplies. “I regret now more than ever the sickly sentimentality (I can call it by no other name),” he wrote, “by which I was overruled in my desire to bring my whole command with me.” And he verified that the rank and file considered the resigned officers as traitors. He wished he could have done something more, though he did not like the “meeting of duplicity and dishonesty by the like weapons,” but as he continued on, he seems did like the ‘like weapons’ after all and advocated duplicity and dishonesty to the fullest extent. “Should you be relieved from command too soon to prevent an attempt on the part of your successor to recapture, by a coup de main, the property here, send a notice by extraordinary express to Judge Hart.”⁶

On June 18 Captain Shoemaker, in charge of the Ordnance Depot at Fort Union, replied to a query from Canby regarding how many volunteers he could arm. Shoemaker reported that he had enough arms and equipment for two regiments although some of it was “old and outdated.”⁷ A few days later, Canby’s Acting Adjutant, 2nd Lt. A. L. Anderson in Santa Fe, ordered Major Chapman at Fort Union to “organize a small party of spies for the purpose of watching the road

³ Paul to Anderson 6/16/61, Official Records.

⁴ Canby to Headquarters 6/16/61, Official Records.

⁵ Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

⁶ Sibley to Loring 6/12/61, Official Records.

⁷ Shoemaker to Anderson 6/18/61, Official Records.

from Fort Smith to Anton Chico, and another to watch the country east of Fort Union and south of the road to the crossing of the Arkansas.”⁸ In the same letter Chapman noted that two companies of the 5th US Infantry were moving from Fort Fauntleroy [located west of Albuquerque near Cubero], one company to Albuquerque and one to Fort Union. In addition, he was sending a small group of Native Americans, presumably Pueblo Indians, to Fort Union. “Three or four Indians will be sent from this place to Lieutenant Walker’s party, at Hatch’s ranch, to be used for the same purpose as those you are authorized to employ.”⁹ At last, Canby felt he had enough preparation to request volunteers from Governor Abraham Rencher. He called for three companies of volunteers on June 20th “to aid in the protection of the eastern frontier of this territory and guarding the trains on the routes from the Arkansas to this department.” This order was in conformance with Order No. 15, May 4, 1861.¹⁰

Governor Rencher immediately sought out Ceran St. Vrain and, appointing him the rank of Colonel of Volunteers, asked him to muster a regiment. Colonel St. Vrain had been a familiar face on the frontier for many years since he arrived in Taos in 1825, working as a freighter in partnership with Francois Guerin. He was described as a “courtly French pioneer, frontiersman, and trader” and, “charming and gentlemanly.” He was the son of Jacques Marcellin de Hault de Lassus who added the name of St. Vrain to distinguish himself from his brother Charles, who had been the Lt. Governor of Louisiana when it was sold to the United States. The family was composed of French aristocrats who had escaped from the horrors of the French Revolution. It seems that Jacques eventually shortened his name to St. Vrain. He owned a brewery just outside of St. Louis and had ten children including Ceran.¹¹ In 1827 Ceran began trapping furs and in 1830 became a trading partner with brothers Charles and William Bent. They owned a trading post called Fort William near present day Pueblo, Colorado, and Bent’s Fort near the main fords on the Arkansas River. In Taos they ran a trading post, sponsored trapping expeditions, and were involved in the Santa Fe trade. Ceran and Charles became brothers-in-law when they married sisters. Charles Bent had also become the first American civilian Governor of New Mexico, but he was killed during the 1846-47 Rebellion. As noted before, Ceran was a well known militia leader, first as a captain of a company of mounted volunteers during the Taos Rebellion. Then he served as Colonel of a ten-company battalion of mounted volunteers in 1855.

St. Vrain welcomed his good friend and other brother in law, Christopher ‘Kit’ Carson, to be his second in command with the rank of Lt. Colonel. Kit Carson is definitely the most well-known person of the period then and now. Kit was born in Kentucky in 1809. His father was killed when he was nine so he never attended enough school to learn how to read and write very well. He ran away from his saddlemaker apprenticeship in 1826 and joined a wagon train headed for Santa Fe. At nineteen he became a fur trapper, an occupation which he continued until 1840. His first wife was an Arapaho named “Waa-nibe.” He had a daughter by her named Adeline. His second wife was a Cheyenne named Making Out Road, but the relationship soon fizzled out. He had a second daughter by her whose name and fate are unknown. In 1842 he became a guide for John C. Fremont on his famous trek to California and when he returned to Taos the next year he married a third wife, Josepha Jaramillo of Taos. St. Vrain, Bent, and Carson had all married one of each of three Jaramillo sisters, so the three families were very close. Carson returned to California with Fremont and was there when the Mexican War broke out in 1846. During the Mexican War he served the army as a courier and was rewarded by President Polk in June, 1847, with a commission as a 2nd Lt. in the Regiment of Mounted Rifles. He served in that capacity

⁸ Anderson to Chapman 6/19/61, Official Records.

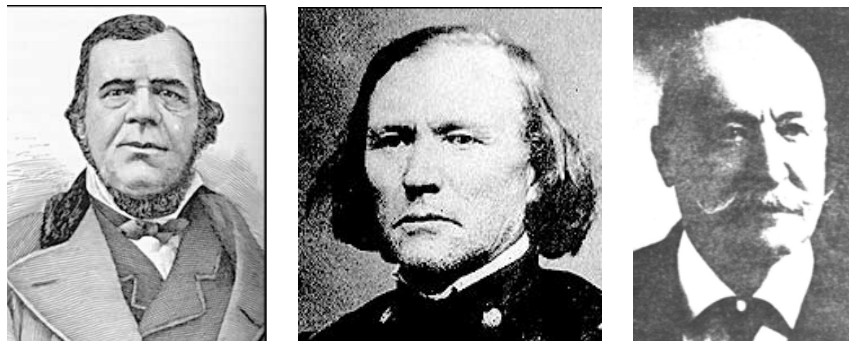
⁹ Anderson to Chapman 6/19/61, Official Records.

¹⁰ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., Leading facts of New Mexican History, Volume II, (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), page 371.

¹¹ LeRoy R. Hafen, Ed., French Fur Traders & Voyageurs in the American West (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, First Bison Books printing, 1997), 283.

until June, 1848, when he learned that his commission had not been ratified by congress. This was a politically motivated decision, due to his association with the currently unpopular Fremont. As a courier from 1846-1848 he had traveled an estimated 16,000 miles and had been home only 6 months. In 1854 he became an agent for the Utes in southern Colorado. Recently, he had resigned that post to join the Army. Kit was appointed by President Lincoln to be a Lt. Colonel of Mounted Volunteers on May 27, 1861, as was reported in the New York Daily Herald on the following 6th of June. There were rumors that Kit had been bribed to become a Confederate but nevertheless, on June 21, he was sworn into service by territorial “Chief Justice Kirby Benedict to accept the commission and swear allegiance to the United States, promising to defend it against all enemies.”¹² He was always fiercely loyal, patriotically as an American, but culturally as a New Mexican, and always to his friends and family. He spoke Spanish fluently but often had to search for the right word in English. He also spoke several Indian languages. What struck people the most about him, was his straightforwardness, courage, and honesty.

Major José Francisco Chaves was selected as third in command. He was born in 1833 in Padillas (Peralta), NM, on the family’s old land grant. His father was Mariano Chaves, son of Francisco Javier Chaves. His mother was Dolores Perea, the daughter of Don Pedro Perea. Francisco’s family was well-known through-out the province as his father had served a term as governor during the Mexican period. The Chaves family raised cattle and conducted trade on the Santa Fe Trail, where his uncle, Antonio Chaves, had been murdered by Texans in 1843. Francisco studied at St. Louis University and therefore could speak English very well. He went on to study medicine for two years at the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons but his first love was politics. He made two mercantile trips to California in 1852 and 1853 respectively. He was a soldier in various volunteer campaigns against the hostile natives, had been wounded in battle, and he served as a Captain of New Mexico Volunteers during the Navajo campaign of 1859-1860 under Lt. Colonel Manuel Chaves. While away on this campaign he was elected to his first term as a representative to the New Mexico Council, as the Territorial Legislature then was called. After his father died his mother married Doctor Henry Connelly. In 1857 Francisco married Mary Bowie by whom he had two children.¹³ Chaves was appointed directly by President Lincoln as a Major of Volunteers.



L-R: Ceran St. Vrain, Col.; Christopher “Kit” Carson, Lt. Col.; J. Francisco Chaves, Maj.;
1st Regiment New Mexico Volunteer Infantry

The regimental Chaplain was Father Damasio Taladrid, a native of Madrid, Spain. As a young man, according to his mother’s wishes, he had studied for the priesthood but his first choice would have been a military career. Later his father helped him join the military and in a war with France he was captured and became sick. During convalescence he decided he had

¹² Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 2003), 113.

¹³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 400-401, footnote 326.

made a mistake and determined to return to the priesthood.¹⁴ He came to New Mexico in 1854 and was appointed assistant to Father Martínez at Taos. That's how he came to be very well known to Carson and St. Vrain, who belonged to that parish. Martínez was a brilliant but controversial figure who was constantly involved in politics. He had helped to foment the 1847 uprising in which Governor Bent was murdered. Carson and St. Vrain who had lost a good friend and had had their families terrorized, as well as Judge Carlos Beaubien who had lost a son to the rebels, never forgave Martínez for his part in it. In 1856 because of his opposition to Bishop Lamy, Martínez resigned and Taladrid became the Taos parish priest. However, Martínez didn't stay retired, he started a schismatic church a few miles away and many people followed him. When it came time for Bishop Lamy to excommunicate Martínez, Carson, St. Vrain, and Beaubien strategically posted armed and sturdy men to prevent any repeat of the former rebellion and to protect Fr. Taladrid and his congregation.¹⁵ Martínez stepped down. He was eventually pardoned by Lamy, but his flock still smoldered with blame for Taladrid; so Lamy was forced to relocate him to Isleta and send another priest to Taos.¹⁶ Now Fr. Taladrid joined the New Mexico volunteers as Chaplain. Perhaps he had finally found mediation between his two conflicting careers.

St. Vrain also selected the captains of the companies and they began recruiting in their various locals. Their regiment would be designated the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry (1st NMVI), although at this point, many people thought it was to be a mounted unit. It would serve for three years and would have a full complement of ten companies, although only three companies had been authorized by Canby to begin recruitment at this time. Originally the volunteers were not meant to receive any uniforms. But to rectify the clothing problem, earlier in the month on the 7th of June General Order #16 had been issued: "...an allowance for clothing, \$3.50 per month," was added to the inducement for volunteers service, but "each company officer, non-commissioned officer, private, musician and artificer of cavalry, shall furnish his own horse and horse-equipment and receive therefore 40 cents per day for their use and risk."¹⁷

St. Vrain eventually also selected the other staff members of the regiment. As Adjutant, he enlisted 1st Lt. Eben Everette. As Quarter Master he selected Lt. Lawrence Murphy who would be assisted by Sergeant Paul Romel. For leader of the Field Music, Principal Musician Henry M. Holmes was chosen. Holmes was a bugler so it is possible that all of the field music were buglers, rather than fifers and drummers. This would confirm the possibility that the First was originally meant to be a mounted regiment. The Ordnance Sergeant was Frederick Berger (he later became 1st Sgt of Co. G). The Medical staff consisted of Surgeon J. M. Whitlock and Assistant Surgeon, J. H. Shout, with Hospital Stewards James W. Cadogan, John Drennan, and Matrons Georgianna Monteeth, Leonora Monteeth, and María Sena. The Sergeant Major, the senior enlisted man of the regiment, is not listed.¹⁸

Also on the 20th of June Canby penned another letter to Headquarters in Washington D.C. outlining his problems in the defense of New Mexico. He wrote that he needed to garrison outlying Forts in order to protect the Territory from Indian hostilities; he had to defend from invasion as well as guard the Santa Fe Trail, the "communications with the east." He stressed the need for Regular troops as the garrisoning of important locations should not be left "entirely to new and undisciplined troops." He requested that his department be allowed to keep one regiment of Regular infantry and one of cavalry (10 companies each) in addition to the volunteers that were to be raised. He also asked Washington to consider the possibility of recruiting troops

¹⁴ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 129.

¹⁵ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 338-340.

¹⁶ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 374-375, footnote 8.

¹⁷ Chris Emmett, Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest (University of Oklahoma, 1965), 237.

¹⁸ Soldier/Sailor online database <http://www.civilwar.nps.gov/cwss/>

from Colorado. He rightly suggested that mounted New Mexican volunteers would serve very well as escorts, spies, and scouts. He also noted that he had only two 24 pound howitzers available for service but the carriages were in disrepair.¹⁹ Then he asked Governor Rencher for more troops, eight more companies, in fact. Four foot companies were to report to Albuquerque, two companies, one foot and one mounted to Fort Craig, and two more of the same to Fort Stanton.²⁰

On the 23rd of June, the day that Colonel Loring left for his new 'Cause,' Canby penned another warning to Washington D. C. about a pending invasion by Texan forces and announced that he had called for ten companies of foot volunteers and two companies of mounted volunteers. He also complained about the hostility of the Apaches in southern New Mexico as well as the Comanches in the north.²¹ At this time, he hoped to use Fort Fillmore as the first line of defense in protecting the Territory from attacks from the south. He decided to send arms, supplies, and reinforcements to Major Isaac Lynde who would be the commanding officer at Fort Fillmore. He wrote a letter to the effect that Lynde was being reinforced with two companies of Regular cavalry and that he was authorized to organize two or more companies of Volunteers as he so wished. Three hundred rifles, and 12,000 cartridges as well as 20,000 rations were also being sent to him. He also expressed hope that Fort Bliss could be recaptured from the Secessionists,²² but despite all the letter-writing to that effect nothing was ever done about the stores at Fort Bliss by either Lynde or Paul. On the same day, the 23rd of June, Ceran St. Vrain left Santa Fe to take up his new post at Fort Union. Anderson informed Brevet Lieut. Col. Chapman, the commander of Fort Union, that Colonel St. Vrain would go on recruiting detail to gather the companies of his regiment, which were to muster at Fort Union.²³

At this time, a Union man named William W. Mills who lived in El Paso went to Mesilla to visit his friend Judge Watts. Watts was not there so Mills wrote a letter for him describing the situation he found there. He had found "matters here in a most deplorable condition." A Confederate flag was flying publicly. Officers at nearby Fort Fillmore were attempting to "embarrass our Government" by averting material to the Confederates, as had been done General Twiggs in Texas. But the enlisted men and the 'Mexicans' here were definitely pro-Union. "Give them something to rally to, and let them know that they have a Government worthy of their support, and they will teach their would-be masters a lesson." At this point he believed that the area could be easily restored to the Union and he mentioned the horse thieves who had stolen horses from the Dragoons and that no action was made to overtake them. "If Colonel Roberts, from Stanton, or any other faithful officer, would come here and take command, all would be right in three days."²⁴

This letter was so impressive that Canby sent a copy to Washington in order that army headquarters might be appraised of the situation in Mesilla. As things were in a panic in Washington D.C. it was excusable if this news was not exactly a priority for them. In various forms, this sort of thing was happening all over the country, especially in the border states, between the North and the South, and the Capital of what was left of the United States was located in a border state.

¹⁹ Canby to Washington D.C. 6/20/61, Official Records.

²⁰ Canby to Rencher 6/22/61, Official Records.

²¹ Canby to Headquarters 6/23/61, Official Records.

²² Canby to Lynde 6/23/61, Official Records.

²³ John P. Wilson, *When the Texans Came* (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Anderson to Chapman 6/23/61, 55.

²⁴ William Wallace Mills, *Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898*, W. W. Mills, 1901, 40-41; this letter is also found in the Official Records.



William W. Mills

William Wallace Mills was a citizen of El Paso, Texas, and a strong Union man. He was born in 1836 on a farm near Thorntown, Indiana. As a boy he worked on the family farm through the summer months and went to school in the winter. When he was 17 he was sent to study at an academy in the state of New York. During that time his father had secured for him an appointment to West Point but he gave the opportunity to his brother, Anson Mills who eventually became a Brigadier General. In 1857 William and Anson went to Texas where William became a schoolteacher in McKinney. But within a year, Anson had been assigned to work under Colonel William R. Scurry to survey the boundary line, in a new dispute between the United States and the state of Texas. William joined the survey party as they approached El Paso. After that William went to Fort Fillmore and worked for a year as a clerk in the sutler's store of Hayward and McGrosty. Then he moved to El Paso in 1858 where he and Anson each built themselves houses in town and William went to work as a clerk for St. Vrain & Co., Merchants.²⁵ Three years later, the "News of the firing on Fort Sumter and the inglorious surrender of all the United States troops in Texas, startled us...as though the lightning had brought it."²⁶

Two days later, Anderson wrote to Captain R. M. Morris, Company F, 7th US Infantry, at Fort Craig notifying him that he would receive two companies of volunteers, one mounted and one foot. This letter is notable because it gives details related to the mustering of the volunteers. He was to receive one company of foot (three years) and one of independent mounted volunteers (three months) under Robert H. Stapleton in the near future. Col. M. E. Pino "will designate the foot company," which would become one of the companies of the 2nd New Mexico Volunteers (NMVI). "The oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States must be taken by all who enter the service, and the refusal to take it will be an absolute cause of rejection." The volunteers were to be "armed and equipped for immediate service," including "camp and garrison equipage," but uniforms would not. His company and the two of Volunteers would form the garrison of the Fort.²⁷

The arms most of the foot volunteers would receive were surplus .69 caliber smoothbore muskets left over from the Mexican War. Some were 1842 Springfields and others were older models, 1822 and perhaps some even earlier. These muskets had been converted from flintlocks to percussion caplocks and the barrels had been re-bored into rifles during the 1850s. It seems from accounts that they fired a round ball or 'buck and ball.' Apparently a few of the muskets in the stores had not yet been converted to rifles and they were still smoothbores. Perhaps these are the "old and outdated" muskets that Captain Shoemaker mentions earlier. The mounted troops were to receive rifles of the Mississippi, Hall's, or Harper's Ferry type. These were shorter than the infantry muskets and were a little easier to handle on horseback. Essentially, the mounted volunteers would be outfitted as mounted rifles rather than as cavalry. Rafael Chacón notes that

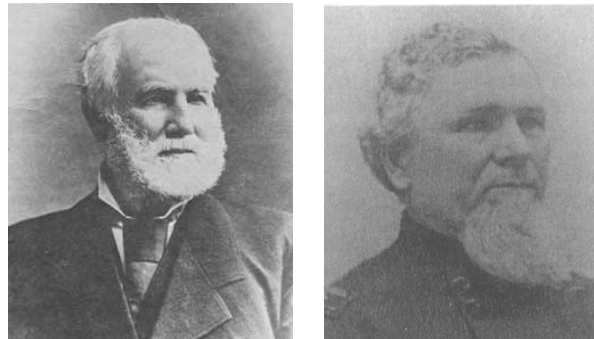
²⁵ Mills, *Forty Years*, 11-12.

²⁶ Mills, *Forty Years*, 38.

²⁷ Canby to Morris 6/25/61, Official Records

except for the NCOs (non-commissioned officers) the men of his mounted company were not issued pistols or swords at his own request. He felt they were not experienced enough with those types of weapons.²⁸ Their other equipment at this time would be mostly surplus Mexican War white leather gear, canvas haversacks, and surplus canteens, if enough could be obtained from the stores at Fort Union and perhaps Fort Leavenworth. As yet, the new 1855 Springfield rifled 'minie guns' were reserved for the use of US Regulars. It was a new type of conical projectile that replaced the musket ball. When fired, the rear edges of the cone spread out against the muzzle of the gun barrel. Then the spiraled 'rifling' on the inside of the barrel caused the projectile to spin. It was much more accurate than any musket ball, and for a greater range too. The Confederates in New Mexico would complain a lot about these 'long-range guns.' In addition, the Minie gun was easier and quicker to reload since the minie ball did not have to be as tight as a round musket ball had to be in a rifled gun. Previous to the development of the minie ball, most rifled muskets were cursed with fouling problems after firing a few shots.

In the next few days Canby ordered the authorization of additional volunteer companies, two at Fort Stanton and two at Fort Fauntleroy, one foot and one mounted at each location. Then on the 30th of June he ordered William Chapman at Fort Union to organize one hundred Regulars and two companies of Volunteers for the purpose of protecting the supply wagons which were expected to be on their way to Fort Union from the east. This was a problem for Chapman since no volunteer companies had arrived at the fort yet. Chapman was a longtime veteran who had served in the US Army for 25 years. He did not like the New Mexicans whom he thought were only good for patrolling and digging. There would be no love lost between him and the Volunteers to whom he would come to be known as 'El Viejo,' the old man; and friction soon developed with the volunteer officers that would stick with him throughout his command at the fort. Captain Duncan of the US Mounted Rifles (3rd US Cavalry Regiment) was to be in charge of the expedition. Thomas Duncan appears to have had a completely different opinion of the New Mexicans as he never wrote of them in negative terms. The patrol would take thirty days rations and move with as little equipage as possible.²⁹



L-R: Major William Chapman, Fort Union; Captain Thomas Duncan, 3rd US Cavalry

Then Canby ordered the abandonment of Fort Buchanan in Arizona, near the Sonoita River between Patagonia and Sonoita. He also wrote another letter to Washington DC indicating that the Texans would positively attack in the near future and that he was concentrating forces at Fort Fillmore. He also reported a significant Indian attack near Socorro and some smaller attacks that had been proved to have been committed by citizens, not native Americans. He worried that the Texans might attack from the east and northeast and that he was making preparations to guard against that liability.³⁰ By now Canby was convinced that the horse raids in the south were not

²⁸ Jaqueline Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 192.

²⁹ *Canby to Chapman 6/30/61*, Official Records.

³⁰ *Canby to Washington D.C. 6/30/61*, Official Records.

being committed by bandits but rather by Texans who were gaining mounts for their Army and that Texan officials were blindsiding him as to their true intentions.³¹

July 1861

On the 1st of July, Canby informed Roberts at Fort Stanton that the Texans were not expected to be able to make any significant forays from their base at Fort Bliss at least until after the 10th of the month. Canby implored him to get his post in a ready defensive posture in the near future. He also warned Roberts that any outright war with the Apaches in the area would be a great embarrassment to the Army, and at any rate, such a necessity would be second to defending against a Texan invasion.³² Canby wrote to the Governor the same day asking again for two more companies of volunteers to muster at Albuquerque.³³

The same day, on the 1st of July, Colonel Chapman received the first company of New Mexican Volunteers to report for duty.³⁴ They had been recruited by St. Vrain who lived and owned a grist mill there. They were 89 men from the town of Mora and José María Valdez was their captain.³⁵ Valdez was also a brother-in-law of St. Vrain as he had married one of the famous Jaramillo sisters, Manuela.³⁶ Since the men had all brought their own horses this company was mounted. So it happened that the first volunteer company to report for duty in the Territory was from Mora, the town that had been attacked by Texans in 1843. They became Company A of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry. Captain Valdez was 48 years old³⁷ and this was not the first time he had fought for the Americans. In 1848 he served against the Jicarilla Apaches as captain of a company from Taos County. In 1854 he led a forty man mounted company from Mora that assisted Major William Grierson of the 1st US Dragoons in a campaign also against the Jicarillas. In the 1855 campaign he was again commanding a company, also from Mora. In 1859 his reputation was such that the Army authorized him to raise a company of spies and guides to take the field against the Comanches. Valdez and his men were to be armed and supplied at Fort Union, but before they could muster the crisis had passed. Valdez also had served as Prefect of Taos County in 1848 and again in 1850. Mora did not organize its own county until 1860 when it became separate from Taos. Now Valdez was at Fort Union, again reporting for duty. Unfortunately they had expected to receive uniforms and gear fit for campaign duty. Disappointed, they had to go home and outfit themselves.³⁸ This was to be the first of many disappointments.

On July 2, Captain Arthur Morris [Morrison] brought in another company,³⁹ ninety-one men from Las Vegas.⁴⁰ Captain Morrison's unit became Company B of the 1st Regiment. This company was on foot. Arthur Morrison sounds like a respectable name. He is listed with the Spiegelbergs as being one of the first Jewish settlers in New Mexico, but his beginnings were somewhat checkered. Within a short time after Fort Union was established in 1851, it was quickly surrounded by whiskey shanties for the entertainment of the men. This was very frustrating to the officers since the founding of the post was an attempt to get away from the evils of Santa Fe and now the evils had followed them. The Federal commanders suspected that stolen supplies from the fort were ending up at the shanties and decided to make a raid in May 1852. Arthur Morrison and nine other men were clapped in irons and sent to Santa Fe for trial. The

³¹ Canby to Lynde 6/30/61, Official Records.

³² Anderson to Roberts 7/1/61, Official Records.

³³ Canby to Rencher 7/1/61, Official Records.

³⁴ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

³⁵ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

³⁶ Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives, 113.

³⁷ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 25.

³⁸ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

³⁹ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁴⁰ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

shanties were burned to the ground and witnesses say that Mexican women scattered in all directions. Oy gevalt!

The amount of Federal property recovered is staggering, and one wonders how such a quantity was stolen, presumably by the soldiers for barter at the whiskey houses, and also how it could be stored without large warehousing. For example, the soldiers recovered 9400 pounds of bacon, 1200 pounds of ham, 3400 pounds of flour, 4000 pounds of coffee, etc & etc. After that Fort Union's lands were extended to an eight mile square.⁴¹ Morrison must have gotten through the trial somehow, paid the fine, served some time, or cleared himself.⁴² In all probability he was merely the booze supplier of this group since he was the owner of a mercantile store in Las Vegas at the time. He had married an Hispanic woman and converted to Catholicism, which was why he was no longer mentioned in Jewish circles. He was born in Germany in 1821 not far from Frankfurt and his original surname was Marko. Like most educated Europeans he spoke several languages. He arrived in New Mexico in 1849 and settled in Las Vegas starting both the store and a stock-raising business.⁴³ By 1861, he had become influential enough to enlist ninety-one men and he felt patriotic enough to deliver them and himself to muster at Fort Union.

On July 3rd Judge Perry E. Brocchus of New Mexico was visiting in Washington D. C. and had just met with President Lincoln. They talked about the situation in the Territory and Lincoln asked Brocchus to advise Secretary Simon Cameron as to the volunteers who would be raised there, asking for three regiments with as many companies as possible to be mounted troops. Brocchus wrote to Cameron that he had met with Adjutant-General Thomas who agreed that New Mexico should have some cavalry regiments in addition to the two foot regiments already authorized, "but it is almost unanimously agreed by officers of the Army and civilians who are acquainted with the character of the country, its wants, its population, and the existing emergency, that there should be at least three regiments, and that a majority of them should be cavalry." He went on to say that each volunteer would bring his own horse and save the Government some money. He stated that Major-General Fremont and Colonel Blair agreed completely, qualifying "that infantry troops are not well adapted to active service in the field in New Mexico," adding that both of these men had considerable experience in New Mexico. He closed with an affirmation of the patriotism he felt towards the Union.⁴⁴

It is a singular fact that ancient Roman military commanders wisely employed their newly conquered or allied auxiliary troops to fight in the manner to which they were most accustomed. That is, they did not try to 'Romanize' their style of fighting, but allowed them to fight in the way they were used to. For example, in those days the Romans fought on foot as infantry in tight formations. They often employed auxiliaries as archers, slingers, and cavalry. They did not have Roman mounted troops in any numbers until after Caesar's time. Curiously enough, the most common mounted auxiliaries they employed were from Spain. After the Roman Empire fell, and throughout the following Dark/Medieval Ages, the Spanish kept their tradition of fighting from horseback. But unlike the rest of Europe being a caballero (knight) was not contingent on noble birth, therefore, even the less wealthy were accustomed to fighting on horseback, usually 'a la jinete,' skirmishing as individuals. And when they came to the New World the caballeros came with them; this tradition was the backbone of New Mexico's defense throughout its long existence. The insight of President Lincoln and the authorities in Washington D.C. is indicated by the fact that they also were aware of the mounted capabilities of the Hispanic volunteers; a fact which Canby did not seem to fully appreciate.

⁴¹ National Park Service, Fort Union; www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books

⁴² National Park Service, Fort Union.

⁴³ Jerry D. Thompson, Desert Tiger, and the Civil War in the far Southwest (University of Texas at El Paso, 1992), 79, footnote 213.

⁴⁴ Brocchus to Cameron 7/3/61, Official Records.

His strategy was completely the opposite. He wanted to employ the New Mexicans in stationary garrisons, on foot, behind defensive works. He would only use a few mounted troops for scouting and escort. Canby failed to grasp that the Spanish in New Mexico had always deployed in defense of their homes in the form of mounted troops, almost never behind fortified works unless it was totally necessary. It was not their preferred style. Moreover, more often than not, they had won their punitive conflicts with the natives. Many of the American veterans of the Mexican War had made favorable comments on the fabulous riding abilities of the Mexicans. Nevertheless, according to Canby's plan, the formation of the two infantry regiments continued. In addition to fighting as infantry, it was difficult for New Mexicans to understand why they must join the army for three years. Most family men couldn't make a commitment like that. They were used to banding together as militia during emergencies but not for serving for such a long time, normally a few weeks to three months at most.

On the same day, July 3, 1861, Company C reported for muster at Fort Union under the command of twenty-nine year old Captain Francisco S. Abréu of Santa Fe. His father was Don Santiago Abréu who had died defending Governor Pérez during the 1837 rebellion. Santiago himself had served as Governor from 1831 to 1833. Francisco was the brother of Jesús G. Abréu who had received a substantial gift of land including the village of Rayado from his brother-in-law, Lucien Maxwell. Lucien had inherited the 1.7 million acre land grant from his father-in-law, Charles Baubien, a French Canadian who had moved into Taos in 1823 and started a supply store. Kit Carson's ranch, which is now part of the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch, also came from a portion of this land grant. After giving the land to Abréu in 1858, Maxwell built a new ranch on the Cimarron River where the Cimarron Cut-off of the Santa Fe Trail passed by. This is the Maxwell's Ranch that Federal correspondences refer too. It is certain that Francisco was also steeped in Indian fighting. Like Company B they were on foot.

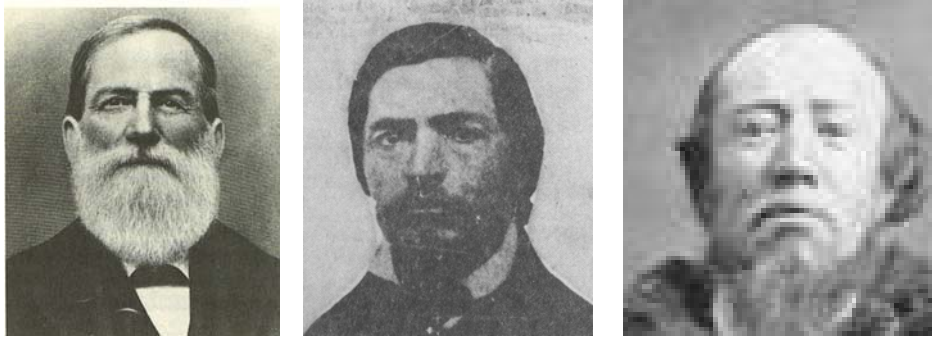
On July 4, Independence Day, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to Congress, calling for 400,000 volunteers and 400 million dollars to pay for them. The money and the authority to raise volunteers were granted. But precious little of that money would come to impoverished New Mexico, at least not for a while. At this early stage, each state was responsible for the cost of mustering, arming, and clothing its own volunteers. But these states had a financial base. New Mexico's treasury was empty. Moreover, Canby had no money either. Many of the Regulars had not been paid in a long time and the Army owed money to a lot of people for supplies and support. Since things weren't moving fast enough for him, Canby put into motion the enforced roundup of the New Mexico Militia troops by means of armed coercion. Lt. Col. Roberts wrote to Col. R. H. Stapleton (of the N. M. Militia): "If any of the Officers or Soldiers of the Militia, called into service under your orders from your immediate commanding general, refuses to obey your call, I am instructed to send you Military force to compel their obedience, but it is hoped there are no New Mexicans so ignoble in their natures as to refuse to respond to this call of duty to defend their Territory and their homes."⁴⁵ The Militia was considered a separate organization from the Volunteers; they were to be recruited in the manner in which they had been mustered to meet various Indian crisis. Unlike the volunteers, the militiamen would not be paid or clothed and would receive no compensation for the use of their own horses. By any Union states' standards, it was a raw deal.

On the same day, July 4th, 1861, the fourth company of volunteers was mustered in at Fort Union.⁴⁶ This was Company D commanded by Captain Julian Espinosa, whose men were mounted. They were closely followed by another foot company on the 6th. This became Company E, led by Captain Albert Pfeifer. He was a well-known figure on the frontier. He had emigrated from his native Germany at the age of twenty-two. He reached New Mexico in 1846 and became a Taos trapper, guide, and mountain man. He served as a lieutenant in St. Vrain's

⁴⁵ Emmett, Fort Union, 241.

⁴⁶ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

battalion in 1855-56. His body was covered by many battle scars and he once fought on after being pierced completely through by an arrow. Carson, St. Vrain, and Bent knew him well. He was described as “a very paladin of the frontier – mild-mannered, blue-eyed, kindly man, and, in the estimation of his fellows, probably the most desperately courageous and successful Indian fighter in the West.”⁴⁷ Like Carson, he once was employed as an Indian agent for the Utes so they were both well-known and trusted by the Utes.



L-R: Arthur Morrison, Captain Co. B; Julian Espinosa, Captain Co. D; Albert Pfeiffer, Captain Co. E; 1st Regiment.

Almost immediately, the volunteers presented Canby with an unexpected problem. A Don of Mora had one of his peones arrested, presumably a man of Company A, because the peone had enlisted in the US Army without the Don’s permission. For generations, the New Mexicans had been recruiting militia companies in their own fashion. The local landowner would call on his immediate relatives, neighbors and friends, including their hired men and peones. It was a medieval pastoral society. In a sense it was not entirely voluntary, but it was based on loyalty not law. Canby refused to let the peone go, suspended the right of any claims in Territorial Courts, and went so far as to promise freedom from peonage upon recruitment. Dons all over New Mexico immediately put a clamp on recruitment. If Canby had been more familiar with local customs he would have realized what he was doing. Unfortunately, this put the Dons who objected into the position of appearing disloyal to the Union. This may have been one of the things Canby was referring to when he said the natives were more concerned with their own “petty interests.” We can guess what President Abraham Lincoln might have said about it, “One war at a time.” Sure, the peonage system had to be dissolved, but perhaps not just now. That said, Canby continued to support their recruitment and put out a circular on the “Reclamation of Peones,” and had it sent to all the posts under his command.⁴⁸

The effect of this circular was that all peones would be accepted into service and could not be excused from duty except by a writ of Habeas Corpus from a United States court of law.⁴⁹ One way to view this is to think that the New Mexican Ricos were not loyal enough to the Union, but on the other hand, it can be seen that the New Mexicans who did join were all the more remarkable for it. Some who joined, including Rafael Chacón, brought their own peones with them even though that meant they would be free. Later, without realizing he had caused it himself, Canby and others would complain that most of the volunteers were not the best sort of New Mexicans, and that many of the ricos and their vacqueros had not joined.

On the 6th of July Canby wrote to the Governor of Colorado stating that he did not have enough volunteers to garrison Fort Garland in southern Colorado and he asked the Governor to provide two companies of Coloradans within the next three months for that purpose. They would

⁴⁷ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 374, footnote 298.

⁴⁸ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

⁴⁹ Anderson 7/6/61, Official Records.

be armed and equipped but no clothing would be issued.⁵⁰ Governor Gilpin was an experienced military man and he was fiercely loyal to the Union as well. A graduate of West Point he had served as a Lieutenant in the 2nd Dragoons during the Seminole War. After leaving the service, he served in Fremont's expedition in 1843, and again as a major in Doniphan's regiment of Missouri Volunteers during the Mexican War. After the War he was asked by the governor of Missouri to raise a battalion to protect the Santa Fe Trail, which he did. It was said that he was the only man in Jackson County, Missouri, to vote for Abraham Lincoln in the recent election. That took some guts. And during Lincoln's inauguration Gilpin served in the security detail at the White House. After this Lincoln appointed him as Governor of the Colorado Territory.⁵¹ But, unfortunately for Gilpin, Colorado was in no better financial condition than New Mexico was, and it was having even more trouble with secessionists than New Mexico did. For a while, he wasn't even sure he could hold onto Colorado for the Union.



William Gilpin
Governor of Colorado

The next day, on July 7th Lt. Col. Canby authorized the formation of a new camp at Fort Union for the housing and training of new volunteers.⁵² He placed Captain Francisco Abreu, Company C, in charge of the camp which became known as the "Camp of Instruction." Later the name was changed to "Camp Paul." Chapman stipulated that Abreu would keep a standing guard and also a picket guard "to prevent any improper use of the water, such as washing or bathing in the spring" which was the only source of Fort Union's drinking water, "...and to protect the public gardens from depredations." Finally, "a sink [latrine] would be dug for the Camp, which will be surrounded by brush to screen it from view."⁵³

Also occurring on July 7, 1861, companies A & B, 1st Regiment left Fort Union along with Captain Duncan's command (so much for drilling at the Camp of Instruction). Per Canby's order their mission was to protect incoming supply trains on the Santa Fe Trail. On the same day, Canby reported to Army Headquarters at Washington DC that he would proceed with calling for the volunteer companies that would fill out the 1st and the 2nd infantry regiments. He still felt that recruitment was proceeding very slowly and that New Mexico would not furnish enough troops to defend itself. One wonders why he worried about numbers when he and other Regular officers continually expressed the opinion that no amount of New Mexican troops could or would defend the Territory anyway. Canby seemed to be of two minds, one desperately needing the volunteers, and the other desperately loathing them. He represented to Washington that he needed the volunteers in order to comply with Washington's request that the Regulars be sent east as soon as possible. He also reported that he had requested two companies from Colorado to

⁵⁰ Canby to Gilpin 7/6/61, Official Records.

⁵¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 368-369, footnote 291.

⁵² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson 7/7/61, 59.

⁵³ Emmett, Fort Union, 240.

garrison Fort Garland, and spoke of the threat of increased Indian attacks as well as the mustering of Texan forces at El Paso. He related Col. Loring's departure on the 23rd of last month and reiterated that he had been exercising command ever since Loring's resignation. He also reported the gathering of Federal troops at Fort Fillmore as well as Duncan's expedition of 300 men to guard the wagon train on the Santa Fe Trail.⁵⁴

Still on the 7th Major Lynde wrote that he had reached Fort Fillmore on the 4th and found things in order. He stated that "From the best information that I can obtain, there are four companies of Texas troops at Fort Bliss, with two 18-pounders and four or more small guns." He also believed there could be two Texan companies at Fort Stanton. In reality, Lt. Col. Roberts still held that fort. Lynde felt very confident he could hold out against an attack.⁵⁵ However, on the same day, after looking around the fort a little better, he completely changed his mind about the security situation. He immediately wrote another letter to Canby relating that Fort Fillmore could not make a stand against an invasion in force, and he began to think about an escape route and mentions Fort Craig. He added a footnote, "P. S.--From what I have just learned, I think I can raise one or two companies of volunteers, and they are the kind of troops I want to act as spies [scouts]."⁵⁶

On the 8th Captain Jesús María Sena y Baca and his Company F of the 1st Regiment was mustered in at Santa Fe.⁵⁷ His father was Don Miguel Sena, who along with Francisco Abréu's father had defended the hapless Governor Pérez in 1837. This company was also on foot. On the same day, Henry Hopkins Sibley presented his New Mexico invasion plan to Jefferson Davis at the Confederate Capital in Richmond, Virginia. Davis agreed. Sibley was appointed a Brigadier General and was given authorization to recruit a brigade in Texas – the Sibley Brigade. Also on that day, Canby complained to Chapman, now also a brevet Lt. Colonel, that recruitment was going too slowly.⁵⁸ He must have felt that way even more when a rumor from Captain Morris at Fort Craig reached him that the Texans were on the move. Apparently an Apache told the scouts at Lemitar that a Texan Army was traveling up the Pecos River. He reported that their camp and herds covered three miles of ground, and that they also had artillery with them.⁵⁹

Of course this was just a rumor, or an outright lie, or a mirage. The Sechesh [period slang for secessionists] couldn't even occupy El Paso at this time, despite Major Lynde's assessment. On July 12th Captain Vidal's Independent Mounted Company was mustered in at Santa Fe to serve for three months. They were ordered to report to Fort Craig. About the same time Captain Antonio María Vigil's Independent Company comprising about 80 men was also recruited at Santa Fe for a three month enlistment. They were posted to Fort Union. Vigil and his men were from Abiquiu and he was an experienced company commander. His Lieutenants were 1st Lt. Jesús María de Herrera, 2nd Lt. Henry Clay Pike.

On July 14th Canby wrote another letter to the HQ in Washington, reporting that all was quiet on the southern front and the troops at Fort Fillmore had been "increased to seven companies of infantry and two of rifles [US Mounted Rifles]." He said he was making arrangements to send the Regulars east but he complained that, "...The organization of the volunteer regiments, particularly the Second (Colonel Pino's), progresses very slowly."⁶⁰ This is just Canby worrying again, since most of Pino's regiment would be recruited by the end of the month even though not all of the companies would be up to strength. On the 17th William Mills arrived at Fort Fillmore and delivered orders from Canby to Major Lynde. Among them was a

⁵⁴ Canby to Washington 7/7/61, Official Records.

⁵⁵ Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

⁵⁶ Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

⁵⁷ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁵⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Chapman 7/8/61, 61.

⁵⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Morris to Canby 7/19/61, 62.

⁶⁰ Canby to Washington D.C. 7/14/61, Official Records.

directive to capture the supplies at Fort Bliss, but Lynde remained inactive.⁶¹ Mills had already taken a letter written by a Dr. Alden from El Paso to Canby in Santa Fe and Canby had given him Lynde's orders to deliver on his return trip. Unfortunately, some of Lynde's officers, who sympathized with the south, and were plotting the surrender of Lynde's regiment, informed Confederate spies that Mills was acting as a Union agent. After arriving back at El Paso he was arrested and taken to Fort Bliss where he was imprisoned by Major Waller. He remained there for approximately 30 days until he was exchanged for a captured Confederate (sort of). At least his captors looked the other way while he escaped into Mexico. Apparently, Canby had threatened to do likewise to the Confederate prisoner whatever happened to Mills. It took him five days to reach Fort Craig where Col. Roberts made him a lieutenant and placed him on his staff.⁶²



William W. Mills

The first of the military supply trains from Fort Leavenworth arrived at Fort Union on the 18th of July. All of the first few trains that arrived carried only rations. On July 20th (one record says the 29th) John Mink (often referred to as Minks) Independent Company was sworn in for three months service at Fort Craig. Johann Heinrich Mink, like Charles Deus, was of German descent and had come to New Mexico as a Private in Fischer's Company of Hassendeubel's Missouri Volunteers in 1846, but upon arrival in Santa Fe he was discharged on a Surgeon's certificate. Apparently, he had been living in New Mexico since then. His company had about ninety men and his subalterns were 1st Lt. Felipe Sánchez, and 2nd Lt. Matias Medina.

The next day, on the 21st, Anderson sent Chapman news that, "One or possibly two parties of Pueblo Indians will be sent out to you in two or three days. They are represented to be reliable and well acquainted with the country east and south of your post."⁶³ That day Anderson wrote another letter to Chapman that the Regular Dragoons at Hache's Ranch would be relieved by Captain Antonio María Vigil's independent company of mounted volunteers. He added that Canby desired that "a volunteer command of three or four infantry companies may be held in readiness," to sent out on the Santa Fe trail to protect wagon supply trains, and Lt. Col. Carson would be in charge of this group.⁶⁴

On July 21, 1861, a large battle was fought in the east, the Battle of Bull Run or Manassas Junction, depending on which side of the Mason Dixon line you lean towards. A Union Army of 37,000 men under General Irwin McDowell marched to Manassas Junction, Virginia, and fought against 35,000 Confederates under General P. G. T. Beauregard. It was the first large scale battle of the war. The battle could almost have been considered a draw, except that some the Union troops left the field in disarray. Since most people thought this one battle would end the war, the result was not very encouraging, especially for the Union.

⁶¹ William Wallace Mills, Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898, W. W. Mills, 1901, 46.

⁶² Mills, Forty Years, 48-54.

⁶³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 7/21/61, 62-63.

⁶⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 7/21/61, 62-63.

On the same day, Major Lynde reported to Canby on events in southern New Mexico. Strangely enough, he notes that in accordance to orders, he suspended the enlistment of volunteers in his area. He does not explain why. The really odd thing is that he told the locals that they will get help against the Indians when the volunteer companies have been organized – yet he admitted in the very next paragraph that he had been ordered to stop recruiting even though the Apaches were in the neighborhood. Fifty men had already agreed to join the volunteers.⁶⁵

Three companies of Regulars were not present with the 7th US Infantry Regiment at Fort Fillmore at this time. Companies F, C, & H, were still marching in from outlying forts. On July 23 James Hubbell's Independent Mounted Company was mustered into service at Albuquerque for three months duty. James Lawrence Hubbell was born in Connecticut. He joined the US Army at the outbreak of the Mexican War and was sent to New Mexico where he met and married Juliana Gutierrez. The young couple received from her father 45,000 acres in the Parajito area.⁶⁶ He was a Don now, a landowner, and a wealthy trader. He assimilated well into the culture and became known as Santiago (James). His first lieutenant was his brother Charles and second was Francisco Aragon. Santiago was fiery in combat and obviously enjoyed a very good rapport with his men.



Santiago Hubbell Captain Independent Co.

At Fort Union, the Native American and New Mexican scouts hired by the Army were sent out. On the 21st Lt Ebenezer Gay of the 2nd Dragoons reported from his camp near Hatches Ranch to Chapman that no sign of hostile Indians or Texans had been detected as of yet. “No rumors of Indian depredations have reached me of late.”⁶⁷

On the Same day Confederate Col. John R. Baylor moved up from Fort Bliss to surprise Lynde at Fort Fillmore. The Texans camped about 400 yards from the fort and were soon discovered. The next day Baylor and his men, still unmolested by Lynde, move into Mesilla, about twelve miles to the north. If the morale of the US Regulars in New Mexico was suffering at this time, it was about to get worse. That day, the 25th of July, Major Lynde's forces moved north out of the fort and fought a dispirited battle a few miles south of Mesilla with the much smaller Texan force and for no apparent reason, withdrew back to the Fort after a few shots. The Union officers and rank and file were vexed at their commander's lack of fortitude. On the 26th a few companies of Lynde's men fought a much more energetic engagement in the town but it was a draw and they again withdrew back to the fort. On the 27th Lynde decided to give up the Post without a fight and retreat through the desert to Fort Stanton, but the movement was so disorganized the troops ended up surrendering piecemeal to the few Confederates that followed

⁶⁵ Lynde to Canby 7/21/61, Official Records.

⁶⁶ John Taylor, Bloody Valverde, A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 21, 1862 (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 64.

⁶⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Gay to Chapman 7/24/61, 63.

them. Apparently, rumors of whiskey in their canteens were true.⁶⁸ They were then paroled by the Rebels who did not want to feed them or guard them. As a condition of parole they swore not to fight against the Confederacy again. Thus they would no longer be of any use to New Mexico. If they had all resigned and gone home it would have had the same effect. Sure, most of the officers and men wanted to fight and they only retreated under orders; but is there any excuse for professional troops who cannot sustain themselves on the march without falling apart and getting captured? It was said that many veteran officers and men wept like children. But these experienced and conscientious men had not been able to make sure the rank and file had water in their canteens instead of the generous whiskey ration that had been doled out (and the rest stolen) the night before. The prisoners were then set free to proceed north to Fort Union to be shipped east. News of the debacle reached Canby on the following 4th and he didn't have the heart to send the news to HQ at Fort Leavenworth until the 16th.

What this news, coupled with the surrender of General Twiggs, did to the New Mexican people, the Volunteers, or those about to volunteer can only be guessed. Imagine how they felt when they found out that a large force of Federals had surrendered to a lesser force without a fight. If they thought the Regulars had been useless before, it was now proven. Confidence in the US Regulars must have hit an all time low at this point. As W. W. Mills had written earlier, "Give them something to rally to, and let them know that they have a Government worthy of their support, and they will teach their would-be masters a lesson." But at this point there did not seem to be much to rally to. Canby had lost 1/3 of his Regulars; seven companies of the 7th US, two companies of Mounted Rifles, and another company under Alfred Gibbs that had escorted supplies to the fort - not to mention all the supplies, muskets, ammunition, and cannon that were lost. Yet, in spite of these events, Canby continued to believe that his Regulars were his mainstay and the Volunteers would not be useful. He reported to Army headquarters in St. Louis that the Texans had occupied Mesilla and after Major Lynde's troops had failed to dislodge them, he had abandoned Fort Fillmore "and on the 27th surrendered his entire command (about 500 men) to an inferior force of Texans." He refrained from making any comment on this action since there would be a judicial inquiry. And in a following paragraph he wrote, "...It soon became apparent that the volunteer forces could not be relied on for the defense of this Territory, unless supported by a considerable force of regular troops."⁶⁹

Canby presents a strange sequence of thoughts in this correspondence. He seems to be implying that since the Regulars had failed the Volunteers were now proven to be unreliable. Perhaps he meant something different but that is how it reads. What must also be 'read between the lines' here is that Canby was almost in a panic. He sent orders to Chapman at Fort Union to begin building fortifications, and to Roberts to do the same at Fort Craig. Meanwhile, amidst the dramatic events occurring in the southern part of the state, Christopher 'Kit' Carson was sworn in as a Lt. Colonel of Volunteers on the 25th of July at Fort Union⁷⁰ - a quiet but momentous event for the First Regiment.

To try to stem the general feelings of dismay and near panic among the people of New Mexico, Governor Rencher wrote a proclamation on July 26 to "...call upon all good and loyal citizens to uphold the authority of the laws and to defend the Territory against invasion and violence from whatever quarter they may come from."⁷¹ On the 28th Lt. E. Gay, still at his camp near Hatches Ranch reported to Chapman at Fort Union regarding the Pueblo scouts he had sent out. They had found a Comanche camp on the Canadian River, the inhabitants of which informed them that, "they did not wish any more war with Troops or Mexicans and that they would observe

⁶⁸ In conversation with John Wilson who did research on this subject.

⁶⁹ Canby to H.Q. St. Louis 8/16/61, Official Records.

⁷⁰ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁷¹ Calvin Horn, New Mexico's Troubled Years; the Story of the Early Territorial Governors (Horn and Wallace, 1963), 88.

the treaty hereafter.”⁷² The next day, on the 29th of July, Canby reported to Washington that New Mexico was in deep trouble because only twelve companies of volunteers had been assembled thus far. More recruits were coming in too slowly. He stated that he could not hold his posts in Doña Aña and Arizona Counties, and doubted he could hold Fort Stanton. His writings were geared toward retaining his Regulars to ‘save the day,’ since the volunteers could not do it. He reported that the Regulars were “being withdrawn as rapidly as the circumstances of the country and the slow organization of the volunteers will permit.” And he stated his intention to keep a strong garrison at Fort Stanton. He complained of the difficulty of obtaining horses and mules was delaying his progress, but he expected that the 1st Regiment (six foot companies and four mounted) would be ready to march by the middle of August. He also mentioned the incessant Indian raids in the southern part of the state, as was the situation at the time of his previous report.⁷³

On July 30th Captain Duncan’s command returned to Fort Union from duty on the Fé Trail. His report on the 31st to Lt. Col. Chapman that, “in obedience to instructions from Dept. Hd. Qtrs. Of the 30th June & Orders No. 41 dated Fort Union July 4th 1861, I left this post on the 7th Inst. In command of Cos. “D”, “E”, and “H”, R.M.R. [Regiment Mounted Rifles], and Companies “A” & “B” 1st Regt. N.M. Volunteers.”⁷⁴

In the last two days of July, two more captains of the 1st Regiment and their companies mustered into service: Captain Louis Felsenthal’s Company G on the 30th, and Captain Santiago Valdez at the head of Company H on the 31st.⁷⁵ If the other captains were traders, rum-runners, mountain men, ciboleros, and rancheros, Louis Felthensal was from the other end of the spectrum. He was a clerk. He arrived in New Mexico in 1858 as a young Prussian Jew immigrant from Iserlohn, Westphalia. A year after his arrival he became a clerk for the Territorial Council (the state legislature), and he also became a founding member of the Historical Society of New Mexico at this time. At the behest of Mrs. Levi Speigelberg he joined a small congregation of Jews that met at the Speigelberg residence for community and worship. He was fluent in several languages including Spanish which must have greatly aided him in command of a company of Hispanic volunteers. As the war seemed imminent Felsenthal applied for a Captaincy and was accepted. His troops were recruited from the Santa Fe area. He seems to have adapted well to his new task as commander of a company of volunteers and probably didn’t like clerking much anyway.⁷⁶ Not much could be found on Captain Santiago Valdez except that he was thirty years old at the time.

August 1861

On the 1st of August Col. Baylor in Mesilla made a proclamation declaring that all of New Mexico, which also included the present state of Arizona, below the 34th parallel would now become the new Confederate Territory of Arizona. In contrast to the dismayed feelings of the locals in Mesilla, Confederates everywhere were celebrating that the Confederacy now had, not only one more slave territory, but also a connection to California, which they thought would be overtaken by their compatriots there. But they could not have known how hollow that vast new territory actually was, since the largest group of inhabitants by far was hostile Native Americans and even worse, events would not turn out in their favor in California. Rebel sympathizers there were repressed and it became a Union state. By the end of the month California would begin mustering volunteers who would come to the aid of New Mexico, even if

⁷² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Gay to Chapman 7/28/61, 64.

⁷³ Canby to Washington 7/29/61, Official Records.

⁷⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Duncan to Chapman 7/31/61, 65.

⁷⁵ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁷⁶ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Louis Felsenthal; Citizen-Soldier of Territorial New Mexico (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1982), 1-32.

they would be just a bit late. Interestingly, New Mexico was still considered by easterners to be a border state that could swing either way and maps of the day were drawn in that fashion. Baylor set himself up in Mesilla as the acting governor of the new Confederate Territory. Because of his recent successes and the apparent softness of the Yanks, Baylor thought he could easily capture all of New Mexico if he had a few more men and horses. But instead of being preoccupied with Yankees he was so beset by Apache Indian attacks he had to form a company of Arizona Rangers in defense. Baylor, like the U.S. Regulars before him, quickly found out that the Native Americans were a formidable foe that could not be ignored. The invasion of New Mexico would be left to General Sibley who was still assembling his brigade in San Antonio, Texas.

On August 2nd Lt. Col Roberts received news of Lynde's surrender and he began preparations for abandoning Fort Stanton. He set fire to the fort but heavy rain quelled the fires. It would seem that Roberts' evacuation was rather hasty because that was pretty shoddy work for a professional engineer. Local New Mexicans moved into the fort as soon as the Federals left, but they were beset by banditos who stole most of the supplies. However, the Confederates were easily able to remove the occupants and recover most of the goods. Confederate Captain Walker and his company moved into an intact fort with most of the supplies still available, including cannons.⁷⁷

By this time there were seven companies of N. M. volunteers at Fort Union; six foot and one mounted.⁷⁸ Kit Carson returned there on the 2nd of August and he related to Chapman some worrisome news he had heard on the way. Chapman promptly reported it to Canby at Santa Fe. Carson had heard from Indian Traders through the Comanches that "a large force of white men were coming up the Canadian or Pecos river in this direction." Chapman also communicated that Carson thought he could gather enough Utes and New Mexicans to steal all their mounts. Chapman thought it was a good idea⁷⁹

Of course, this was only another rumor, probably a misguided report of Walker's men at Fort Stanton. Also, on the 2nd of August Canby called on Governor Rencher for a battalion of four more companies of mounted volunteers under the command of a Lt. Colonel to serve for three years. And still on the same day Chapman at Fort Union wrote to Anderson in Santa Fe that he had decided to begin construction on new fortifications. His scouts had reported two men spying on the fort and the news lit a fire under him. He knew the fort as it stood currently was indefensible. Using the volunteers he would begin building a new fort – which was referred to as the 'field works.' He also reported that the New Mexicans were being trained as artillery crews. Chapman, like Canby, also felt strongly that the Volunteers would not hold up in a fight without fortifications. Echoing Canby's opinion, he stipulated that, "These Mexican volunteers are more afraid of the Texans than they are of death, and in case of an attack by the latter, I cannot rely upon them." In his mind they wouldn't fight anyway, but they could dig and possibly fight behind defensive works.⁸⁰

Regardless of Chapman's opinion the New Mexicans would be tested in time. As can be noted in many correspondences, the US officers can hardly be cited as authorities on what the native people were thinking. To be fair, the New Mexicans no doubt, met the insulting attitude of the Regulars with their own form of abrasiveness. Some of it was Regulars versus Volunteers, and some of it was Hispanos versus Gringos, the rest of it was a pastoral society versus an industrial one. The instructors of artillery were 2nd Lt. John F. Ritter and 2nd Lt. Robert W. Hall, but contrary to Chapman's report, the Volunteers would be doing a lot more digging than drilling.

⁷⁷ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 370, footnote 293.

⁷⁸ National Park Service, Fort Union.

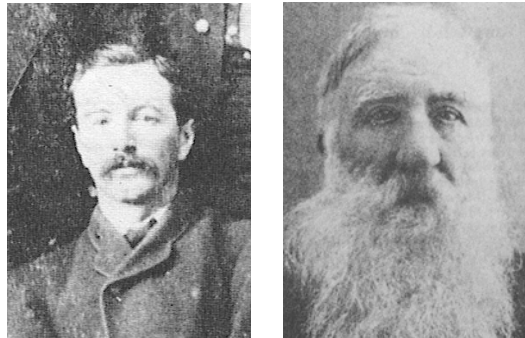
⁷⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman 8/2/61, 67.

⁸⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/2/61, 69.

On the 3rd of August Lt. Col. Carson assumed command of Camp Chapman, the camp of volunteers.⁸¹

Captain Charles Deus, in charge of Company I which was mounted, mustered in his men on the 4th of August.⁸² Deus was forty-five years old. His original name was Karl Deuss and he was of German extraction. He had come to New Mexico as a Private in Fischer's Company of Hassendeubel's Missouri Volunteers in August, 1846. He served with Fischer for the next two years, until August, 1848; therefore he was with the company during the Taos Rebellion. He had been living in Santa Fe since then. He did militia work when he commanded a company during the Apache crisis of 1855 under Ceran St. Vrain, so it was only natural that he would join with St. Vrain again. Only one more company was needed to fill out the First Regiment.

Canby thought that Carson's suggestion to organize a party of Utes and New Mexicans to harass the Texan advance was a good one and should be executed as soon as possible.⁸³ The next day Chapman gave the order to Kit. On August 6th Anderson informed Chapman that there were no more tents available in the Territory for new troops: "There are no tents in the Department that can be furnished but it is believed that very good temporary shelters can be made from the remains of the old fort."⁸⁴ The temporary shelters were never built and apparently many of the volunteers slept on the open ground. On the 7th Col. Carson and Captain Pfeiffer began their assignment to gather a force of Ute Indians. The ostensible reason for assembling Native American allies as scouts was to keep as many volunteers as possible working on constructing the new field works. Carson noted that the Army would have to feed the families of the Ute volunteers while they were away and Canby agreed. Chapman sent some of Captain Vigil's men under a Lt. Pike to scout in the direction of Fort Stanton and then he reported to Canby on the work: "We are working about 200 men every four hours day and night on the entrenchments. They are progressing very well, and in [a] day or two more it will be sufficiently advanced for defense."⁸⁵ In actuality, work would continue for another five months.



L-R: Louis Felsenthal, Captain Co. G; Charles Deus, Captain Co. I; 1st Regiment.

Early in August Col. Carson requested uniforms for the volunteers. Since there was no money for them, they would need Federal support and this had been recognized as of June 7th prior. But even though a stipend had already been approved for clothing, nothing had as yet been issued. Perhaps he had forgotten about it. Anderson's reply misrepresented the fact that the Volunteers were already authorized to receive clothing as of two months earlier and he stated that they would order them now. This was a second-hand admission that Canby had not even requisitioned the uniforms for them yet. Anderson reiterated the instructions of General Order

⁸¹ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁸² National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁸³ Anderson to Chapman 8/5/61, Official Records.

⁸⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 8/6/61, 72.

⁸⁵ Chapman to Anderson, 8/7/61, Official Records.

#16. Then he closed by attempting to flatter the volunteers, “Col. Canby is much gratified with the favorable account given of the progress of the volunteers and he hopes that they will soon be in such an effective condition as to be able to give a good account of any enemy whatever.”⁸⁶ This statement appears to be conciliatory in nature, indicating the awareness of a serious rift beginning between the Regulars and Volunteers.

A more immediate problem than clothing for some of the volunteers was how to feed their families who had come to live with them at Fort Union. It was a common practice for Mexican women to follow their men – most of them were safer there than they were at home. Fearing imminent desertions, Canby authorized that rations could be issued to the families, the cost would be deducted from the soldier’s pay.⁸⁷ On August 8th, Canby issued a circular to the effect that the Territory was under martial law (pretty much the same as the rest of the Union at this time). “The writ of habeas corpus has been suspended in order to enable every commander to guard against the treasonable designs of persons disloyal to the Government of the United States, particularly agents and spies, persons engaged in furnishing information to, or in other treasonable correspondence with, the enemy, or in inciting insurrection or rebellion.”⁸⁸ That same day he issued General Order #27 which stated that Lt. Col. Roberts would now command the southern district of New Mexico from his new headquarters at Albuquerque.⁸⁹ Three days after Carson and Pfeiffer left for the Ute country, Canby again urged Chapman to have them hurry up in their assignment, not that he could do much about it.⁹⁰

On August 10th the Battle of Wilson’s Creek took place at Springfield, Missouri. A Federal force under Nathaniel Lyon attacked a Confederate army twice its size. Were they surprised! There occurred a lot of close-range slaughter but the results were inconclusive and the Federals withdrew. Meanwhile, back in New Mexico, Lt. Col. Carson was ready to leave for Fort Union with a Ute party. He had recruited twenty warriors with others soon to follow. Fearing an imminent Confederate assault, Canby ordered that the women and children at Fort Union be removed to Mora or Las Vegas if the Fort was attacked. The Confederates were not even close to being ready to do anything yet, and Canby’s worrisome precautions seem to represent the level of panic that existed among the Federal officers at this time. Although he was personally a brave man his preparations appear to be confused and dubious. The next day Col. St. Vrain reported that the women and children could be housed at Mora. He maintained a house and grist mill there and was very familiar with the community. Written on August 13, 1861, another request from the Assistant Adjutant-General, E. D. Townsend, of the Army headquarters in Washington D. C. reminded Canby to send the Regulars east, as previously ordered. But he charged Canby not to render the department defenseless, which gave Canby the excuse he needed to keep them.⁹¹

At last, the muster of the ten companies of the First Regiment New Mexico Volunteer Infantry was complete on the 13th of August, 1861, at Fort Union, with the induction of Captain Rafael Chacón’s Company K.⁹² Rafael was the son of Presidio Captain Albino Chacón. At a very early age he was sent to Chihuahua to study at a military academy. And therefore, at the age of thirteen, he found himself in command of a gun crew at Apache Canon in 1846 before Armijo dispersed the militia. Later, he served in Colonel St. Vrain’s battalion in the 1855 Ute/Apache war as First Sergeant of Company B. Now, at the age of thirty, he found himself a captain in the US Army. His company was fully mounted, much of it at his own expense. Some of the men did not have horses or the full purchase price for one, so he purchased horses at Mora, which his

⁸⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Carson 8/7/61, 74-75.

⁸⁷ Anderson to Carson 8/7/61, Official Records.

⁸⁸ Canby 8/8/61, Official Records.

⁸⁹ Canby 8/8/61, Official Records.

⁹⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Carson 8/10/61, 76.

⁹¹ Townsend to Canby 8/13/61, Official Records.

⁹² National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

soldiers were to pay back to him from their wages. He and his men expected to be fully recompensed for loss of horses and equipment and believed they would receive replacements as the horses and furniture wore out.⁹³ Seemingly for this purpose, each man's horse was rated for value upon mustering into service.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, the Regulars were quite disdainful of the New Mexican horses which they thought were unsuited for cavalry work, and they rated the value of each horse accordingly. After distributing arms, his company also received camp equipage, tents, one the Captain, one to the Lieutenants, one for cooking the officer's meals and ten large tents for the company.⁹⁵

It's possible that the large tents were 'Sibleys,' teepee-like tents that had been invented by Confederate General Sibley. Chacón notes that the men were armed with rifles and except for the officers, NCOs, and buglers, did not receive pistols and sabers. He said they were, "...well trained in the use and handling of the rifle..."⁹⁶ Thus, his men were outfitted as mounted rifles. Four of the regiment's companies were mounted and six were on foot.



Rafael Chacon Captain Co. K 1st Regiment

⁹³ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 119.

⁹⁴ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 119; and National Park Service, Fort Union.

⁹⁵ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 130.

⁹⁶ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 192. This note is actually from the reorganization of the unit in May, 1862. However, since Chacón believed it then we can assume that conditions were similar in August, 1861, and he did the same with his previous company. His first company was outfitted with Mississippi or Harper's Ferry rifles and the second with carbines.