

THE NEW MEXICO VOLUNTEERS

In the American Civil War 1861-1862

**By
David Poulin**

Index

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Introduction | page 2 |
| Chapter One – Texan Invasions | page 5 |
| Chapter Two – The Stage | page 21 |
| Chapter Three – The First Regiment | page 42 |
| Chapter Four – Recruitment Continues | page 64 |
| Chapter Five – Five Percent! | page 88 |
| Chapter Six – The Battle of Valverde | page 113 |
| Appendix – Unit Listings | page 136 |
| Index – List of Biographical Sketches | page 143 |

Cover drawing by _____. _____ depicts the First New Mexico guarding the left flank of the army on the morning of the Battle of Valverde. They are observing the progress of the battle from their position. Colonel Kit Carson is standing in front with Captain Louis Felsenthal on the left.

INTRODUCTION

It's possible that history students and Civil War buffs will not understand the American Civil War in New Mexico if they are not familiar with New Mexico itself - its history and cultural heritage, in short – what kind of people lived here. If we read only the popular histories available on the Civil War period we get the impression that the New Mexicans had never volunteered for military duty before...that they were untrustworthy, untried, and their very enlistment was a great experiment of sorts, almost amounting to the controversial use of black troops in the eastern states. This is not quite how it was.

We cannot look at the situation in the southwest with the same political, religious and cultural points of view that existed in the 'mainstream' United States. People here did not have any real experience with the issues of Negro slavery, State's Rights, and economics as they existed east of the Mississippi. This was truly a foreign land – a world apart, so to speak. This failure to take into account a population's unique demographics is not a new phenomenon. Most Americans, who entered New Mexico in the period after its conquest, did not understand the native New Mexicans, and early historians who recorded and recounted those American experiences followed through with many of the same biases. Therefore, this historical stereotype has passed down to today when modern historians take the Territory itself almost completely out of historical context. Part of the reason for this is that we have very few accounts that were written from a native point of view, Hispanic or Native American. But if we discount their point of view we are ignoring the vast majority of the people who lived here at the time.

During the Texan invasion the Union troops were a conglomeration of United States Regular Army troops, NM Volunteer regiments, independent short-term volunteer companies, and NM Militia troops that were raised by the State of New Mexico. The generally accepted version of the Battle of Valverde is that everything went well for the Union until the Confederates made a massed charge on McRae's artillery battery. The failure of the Union troops that day was attributed to the NM Volunteers who ran away in great numbers, and the reserve regiment of 2nd NM Volunteers that refused to cross the river and come to the aid of the beleaguered Union Regulars. Official reports give us the understanding that the US Regulars fought the battle virtually alone without any aid from the New Mexico Volunteers and Militia, which, it turns out, is not true. After the short campaign was over, and as if to consolidate the lie, most of the NM troops were summarily dismissed in disgrace. After the battle, the Connelly/Chaves family and many other influential families were completely outraged, a public outcry commenced, and Governor Connelly's voice was among the loudest advocating restitution of the facts.

However, the New Mexican Volunteers were never exonerated from the lies that prevailed and the damage to the people of the fledgling NM Territory was incalculable. They were stigmatized for generations as inferior citizens (they had been called that before, but now it was proven). Consequently most New Mexicans today do not even know there was a Civil War here, or that their ancestors may have taken part in it. Or, if they do know about it, they've only heard the official version of the story; nothing to be proud of. Another subsequent 'collateral casualty' is the fact that the State of New Mexico has had very little interest in commemorating or preserving the battlefields and related historical sites of this time period. It has been a difficult endeavor even to place monuments on the battlefields. What interest there was has been is due to private citizens and organizations, and some Federal agencies. Another consequence is the lack of historical works written from the point of view of the Volunteers.

The NM Volunteers and militia were not perfect. They had many faults and problems. They had not all willingly become US citizens 14 years before, and the authorities in Washington still considered them a 'captured' and 'imperfectly loyal' people. In all the haste and confusion of recruitment, some had not even properly 'volunteered', and others were not exactly clear what they were fighting for, especially with their families at home endangered by constant Indian attacks. Some also had equipment and clothing problems as well as a lack of familiarity with

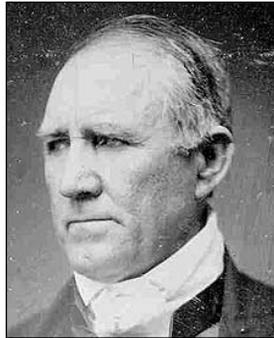
their arms. But incredibly, despite the hardships, prejudice, suspicion, and ill-treatment, the New Mexicans still served their new country when it counted.

Did the NM Volunteers perform any worse than the US Regulars present at the Battle of Valverde? No. Truthfully, they performed with the same mixture of bravery and caution as the Regulars. Did the NM Volunteers perform any worse than Eastern US Volunteers in their first battle? If we have any doubts, we can consider the Union performance at the First Battle of Manassas (Bull Run). Again, we would have to say, "No." In this book, we'll try to examine the opening of the Civil War in New Mexico, and the first major battle, from a slightly broader perspective. Strictly speaking, this is not a Union story, nor a Confederate one. It is a New Mexico story.

Chapter One

Texan Invasions

The problems between New Mexico and Texas did not begin during the American Civil War. They began during the Texas revolution for independence in 1836. When General Sam Houston's troops captured Santa Anna himself, Houston judiciously tried to cinch his success and avoid further bloodshed by making a deal with him. In return for sparing his life, the Mexican leader agreed to pull his troops out of Texas. It was a good move because Santa Anna had 4,000 fresh troops not twenty miles away. The Texan army followed the retreating Mexicans to the banks of the Rio Grande. Once there, Sam Houston and his officers inspected their newly won Territory and tried to decide where the western boundaries of their new country lay.



Sam Houston

General Houston stopped his forces on the banks of the Rio Grande where he believed the border between Texas and Mexico should be. All of his senior officers wanted the border to be a hundred miles west at a certain mountain range. They wanted complete control of the river valley. But Houston prevailed, insisting that the Rio Grande from the mouth of the river, north to 39 degrees latitude, and then eastward along northern New Mexico all the way to the Arkansas River, then at 100 degrees longitude south to the Red River, following the river to the border of Louisiana, and down to the Gulf of Mexico.¹ Thus began the troubles between New Mexico and Texas as they claimed all of New Mexico's land east of the Rio Grande. Even though the New Mexicans were completely unaware of this claim, the Texans thought it was a 'done deal.' As far as they were concerned the Mexican army was gone and they were free, and all that land was theirs.

However, the Mexicans felt that Santa Anna's agreement was a defeat they could not accept. To them, it had not won anyone's independence yet. Therefore, Texas and Mexico were found themselves to be still at war in a continuing series of border fights. Whenever Mexico backed off the Texans would anger them with some belligerent event. For example, in September of 1836 they voted to be annexed to the United States but that wouldn't happen for another nine years. Three months later they voted to include parts of four Mexican states into their Republic. Then they urged their sea captains to commit piracy on Mexican vessels. Meanwhile they heaped ethnic insults of all sorts upon the Mexicans in their newspapers, even calling them "an "imbecile nation" and an "abject race," that was easier to kill than tolerate."²

Although the United States delayed the request to annex Texas as a state, they did recognize it as an independent republic early in 1837. The Texans, however, were not content to rule only their own domain. They quickly set about taking steps to exploit the weaknesses of

¹ Frank S. Edwards, A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan (University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 3.

² Time Life Books, The Old West Series, The Spanish West (Time Inc., 1976), 114.

Mexico by interfering in several of the revolutions that were going on in several states. They allied themselves with Mexican Rebels in the Yucatan and sent their small navy to blockade its port cities. By 1841 Mexican General Ariel Arista was urging Mexicans everywhere to reconcile their differences in order to concentrate on the real enemy, Texas. "In Texas," he offered, "you can find a field in which to display your warlike ardor without the pain and mortification of knowing that the blood you shed and the tears you occasion are from your brethren."³

If the Texans had simply been satisfied with their freedom and the lands they were unquestionably in control of at the time, the Mexicans might have just let things be. As it was, even Americans were having trouble reconciling some of the actions of Texas, and to Mexicans it was a seditious assault. Unfortunately for Mexico, the Texan revolt was not the isolated event American history usually makes it out to be. In this period, there were revolts in ten Mexican provinces including Texas, New Mexico, and California. If Mexico had been more stable the Texans would have had much bigger problems. But as it was, Santa Anna and the government that took over after him had a lot of fires to put out. Most of the revolts were caused by similar causes – Santa Anna's dissolution of the constitution and the creation of a republican central government in Mexico.

One of the revolts, the Rio Arriba (upriver) Rebellion in New Mexico, came on the heels of the Texan revolt, breaking out late in 1836 and extending into 1837. More than three thousand rebels from northern New Mexico rose up and gained control of the entire upper portion of the province including the capitol, Santa Fe. They killed Governor Perez and set up a new government. In response, the region called Rio Abajo (downriver) gathered its militia forces, who elected a somewhat dubious Manuel Armijo as their leader, and marched to relieve the capitol. Led by a company of dragoons from Veracruz, the Rio Abajo Militia dispersed the rebels without any guidance from Armijo, an unlikely hero. But using the event as a means of good self-promotion to the authorities in Mexico, Armijo was appointed to the rank of General and made governor of the province. He was very pleased with himself. It is told that he once said, "God rules the heavens; Armijo rules the earth." This was how he began his somewhat checkered political career which lasted until the American forces invaded nine years later in 1846.

Thus, Texas and New Mexico became locked in incongruous perceptions of each other. The New Mexicans feared the belligerent Texan revolt – that they would try to extend it to New Mexico; and at the same time, the Texans thought that New Mexico would welcome them as comrades in arms because of the Rio Arriba revolt. So it happened that by 1841, people in New Mexico had heard plenty enough about Texan truculence, and when they discovered that Texan attentions would now be turned on them it caused them much concern. The success of the Texans and Americans who aided them was a cloud of despair that hung over Mexico, and it was felt in New Mexico that they might also be invaded. Their fears were very real.⁴

The First Texan Invasion 1841

After the Rio Arriba rebellion ended, New Mexicans settled back down to Mexican rule (more accurately, Armijo rule), but there were still murmurings of the sentiments of the revolt in several locations of the upper province. This encouraged Texans who were visiting New Mexico and word got back to interested people in Texas. Even as early as 1839, the Mexican authorities in Santa Fe believed that an American party under the leadership of a Julian Werkeman (probably William Workman), was endeavoring to "fan the flames of the previous revolution in favor of receiving a like revolution from Texas." Werkeman and others were stirring up the old feelings

³ The Spanish West, 114

⁴ David J. Weber, The Mexican Frontier 1821-1846; The American Southwest Under Mexico (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1982), 266.

that had inspired the revolt in the first place.⁵ Texas had deliberately sent agents to New Mexico with a message from President Lamar Mirabeau. They spoke of how Texans welcomed them as “fellow citizens,” and invited them to partake of “all our blessings.” Governor Armijo promptly had them arrested for attempting to start a revolt.⁶

Meanwhile back in Texas, preparations were made to take control of their new land in New Mexico. They formed an expedition to go to Santa Fe. They completely expected the majority of New Mexicans to welcome them with open arms (instead of loaded arms). If the New Mexicans were ready and willing to take up the Texan flag the armed expedition members were ready and willing to help them accomplish it. But if the citizens were not interested they would simply establish trade with them and then they would leave peaceably. This is how the expedition’s historian, an American named Kendall, pretty much described their mission.⁷

But even though it was billed as a trade expedition, just for back-up the Texans brought along a six-pounder cannon, which was described by one beholder as beautiful: “It bears upon it the lone star of Texas, and the name of her ex-governor, ‘M.B. Lamar,’ and upon the sight is engraved ‘Santa Fe.’”⁸ No doubt, the Texans had brought along this little beauty merely to bestow it as a gift to the people of Santa Fe – after all, they had engraved the name of the city on it. However, the New Mexicans did not at all appreciate the approach of the Texans. “General Lamar seems to have been very poorly informed as to the sentiments of the people of New Mexico. The reception accorded these so-called Texan pioneers was of an entirely different sort.”⁹



Mirabeau B. Lamar

The expedition departed from Austin in June, 1841. Their army had six companies under the command of Hugh McLeod, a brevet brigadier general of their army. Along with him came three commissioners, deputized as ambassadors who carried proclamations, written in both, English and Spanish. Kendall expressed that Texan expectations ran high as general feelings were that their mission would be a complete success. He wrote that, “not a doubt existed that the liberal terms offered would be at once acceded to by a population living within the limits of Texas, and who had long been groaning under a misrule most tyrannical”¹⁰

When Governor Armijo learned of their approach, it is said that he lamented, “Poor New Mexico! So far from heaven, so close to Texas!” He took steps to arouse the people and place his military forces in full battle readiness. He had anticipated such a threat for some time and had

⁵ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., Leading facts of New Mexican History, Volume II (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), 74, footnote 52.

⁶ Weber, The Mexican Frontier 266.

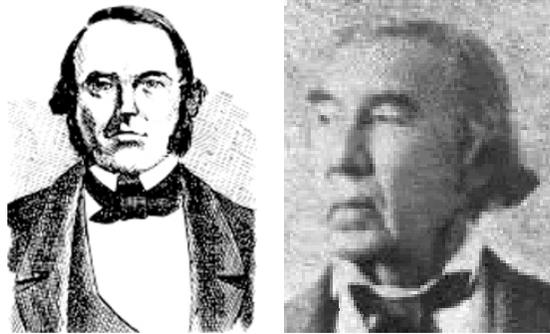
⁷ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 69.

⁸ Edwards, Campaign with Doniphan, 25.

⁹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 70

¹⁰ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 74.

long since alerted the government of neighboring Chihuahua to be prepared to lend aid. Scouts were posted along the eastern frontier to spy on the Texan advance, and tight restrictions were placed on the travel of Americans living in the province to forestall any possible communications with the enemy.¹¹ But the Texan invaders lost their way and after three months of arduous travel the men were reduced to desperate straits. They were orphans of the wilderness now, begging for assistance. Their efforts have been described by historians as “almost inconceivable incompetence.” They had traveled about 1300 miles on a 700 mile trip and had set out when the plains were almost waterless. The Native Americans along the way raided them and stole their horses and a fire in the camp wiped out tents and ammunition. Men became sick, starving and thirsty, even sometimes throwing their weapons away because they were too heavy to carry.¹²



Texan Commissioners L-R: Colonel William G. Cooke, Jose Antonio Navarro

Armijo had sent Captain Damasio Salazar, of the Mexican army, to scout the eastern plains for signs of the invaders. On the 4th day of September Salazar captured three men. They escaped and were recaptured. One was killed resisting and the other two were executed for trying to escape. This was not a good beginning. Later, on the 16th of September, Salazar captured five more men near Cuesta on the Pecos River. He immediately planned to execute all five, but was dissuaded by a New Mexican named Don Gregorio Vigil. He was a wealthy Don who was well regarded as a man “of good heart and correct principles and had great influence in that portion of New Mexico”.¹³

Thus hearing of the destitute condition of the invasion force and sensing that success was imminent, and to make sure he was in on it, Governor Armijo made his move. Wearing his best uniform and riding his best mule Armijo led his army out to meet the Texans. About thirty miles out he and his men came across a detachment that was bringing in the five prisoners. Although he wore a uniform Captain William Lewis claimed to the governor he was only a merchant. Upon which, Armijo remarked that the man’s buttons bore stars of Texas as well as the word Texas embossed upon them. Armijo grabbed him by the jacket, pointed to a button, and let him know he was not dressed like a merchant but as a soldier.¹⁴

The next day, on the 17th of September ninety-four more men under the command of Colonel Cooke were found at Anton Chico by Captain Salazar. Meanwhile, Manuel Chaves, nephew of ‘his Excellency,’ was ordered to go out and meet them with 100 men as Armijo needed time to gather his forces. Manuel discovered them at Cañon Largo in a thick forest, near the village of San José. He surrounded the Americans during the night and at dawn Chaves walked into their camp, unarmed and told them in English to surrender. When Cooke hesitated Chaves called his men into view. Chaves and the unfortunate Captain Lewis negotiated the

¹¹ Marc Simmons, The Little Lion of the Southwest (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 70.

¹² The Spanish West, 147.

¹³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 78.

¹⁴ Simmons, Little Lion, 72.

surrender. Lewis informed the dismayed Texans, correctly, that Armijo was not far away with 1,500 more men. They surrendered. Manuel Chaves supplied them with such food and blankets as he could and marched them to Santa Fe.¹⁵

Manuel Antonio Chaves was born in 1818 in Atrisco, the family land grant opposite Albuquerque, on the west side of the river. His family moved to Cebolleta when he was a boy. Manuel was not new to militia work. At the age of sixteen, in 1834, he went with his older brother, Don Pedro Chaves in a 50-man party on a punitive and captive gathering raid against the Navajo. The company found the natives unusually scattered and entered Canyon de Chelly where they happened upon a gathering of thousands of natives having a celebration with feasts and dances. The resulting battle lasted all day and only two New Mexicans survived to escape, Manuel Chaves, and a Navajo boy who had been raised by a New Mexican family. Chaves had been wounded seven times and the boy once. The Navajos had presumed that Chaves was dead and the boy had hidden himself in the rocks. After nightfall the two buried Manuel's brother and journeyed without food or water back to New Mexico. Along the way, the boy died. At the end of his limits Manuel happened upon some Mexican shepherds who made a litter and carried him back to civilization. His endurance was remarkable and his bravery was legendary. He was the son of Don Julián Chaves and his grandfather was General Fernando de Chaves, original owner of the Atrisco land grant. His mother was Doña María Luz Garcia de Noriega, Daughter of Francisco Garcia de Noriega. He was described as soft-spoken, with brown hair, grey eyes and fair skin. Later, in 1844, married M. Vicenta Labadie, a descendant of French fur trappers.¹⁶



Manuel Antonio Chaves

If Manuel had a fault it was horseracing. All New Mexicans and most natives were obsessed with gambling but Manuel's particular love was horseracing. Years earlier, he had owned the finest racing horse in Santa Fe. Governor Armijo was extremely jealous and had it poisoned. Chaves found out what had happened and tried to assassinate 'his Excellency' with a bow and arrow, but he missed, which is a mystery, since he was known to be an expert shot. That's how he ended up in St. Louis as an exile for a couple of years; and that's how he came to learn English. Eventually, Armijo needed him enough to ask him to return, reassuring him that all was forgiven.¹⁷ Now, he was in charge of the column that brought the prisoners to Santa Fe.

Once they arrived at Santa Fe, Armijo ordered them bound and placed in a dirty sheep corral next to the Governor's Palace. Through the walls they could hear a heated debate going on all night as to their fate. It was apparent to them that the Governor was not going to abide by the terms of the surrender. But, luckily for them, Armijo lacked the courage to order the execution of the prisoners by himself so he had asked for a vote by a council of officials. The vote finally taken at dawn was in favor to send the prisoners to Mexico City (by one vote). In contrast to

¹⁵ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Military Occupation of New Mexico (Arno Press, New York, 1976), 285-289.

¹⁶ Twitchell, Military Occupation, 296-297.

¹⁷ Simmons, Little Lion, 71.

Armijo's hostility, Manuel Chaves befriended Commissioner-Colonel Cooke and housed him in his own home. And for his part in the negotiations, the unfortunate Captain Lewis became the eternal scapegoat for the Texans because they believed that he had lied to them. The six-pound gun was placed as a monument in the central plaza.



Manuel Armijo

Armijo then sent out Colonel Juan Andres Archuleta who rounded up the remaining Texans on the 5th of October, at Laguna Colorada. "On the day following [their arrival in Santa Fe], the last of the prisoners were sent on their tedious march to the City of Mexico, where they arrived in several divisions at the beginning of 1842."¹⁸ On the way down, the salacious Captain Salazar had the opportunity to execute three more prisoners, and two others died from other causes. Salazar cut off the dead men's ears as a grisly record of their passing. The Texans were badly treated by Salazar but it might have been worse if Presidio Captain Albino Chacón had not been present on the trip. He was described as a man of noble and humane sentiments who took pity on the captives and did all he could to lessen their suffering. When the columns reached El Paso del Norte they were met by General Gonzales, the Curé (parish priest), and Don Ramon Ortiz, who immediately set about improving their conditions.¹⁹



Albino Chacon

As a side note, Captain Albino Chacón was the father of future U.S. Civil War Captain Rafael Chacón of the First New Mexico Volunteers. While in El Paso, the prisoners were treated surprisingly well and the Texan officers dined as guests of General Gonzales. In fact, they were sipping brandy and smoking cigars with the General when he arrested Salazar for his brutal conduct. Except for Armijo's apparent treachery, most of the viciousness of New Mexico's treatment of the prisoners was a direct result of the actions of Salazar; and to be fair to him, he

¹⁸ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 78.

¹⁹ Benjamin M. Read, Illustrated History of New Mexico (The New Mexican Printing Company, 1912), 405.

was only following direct orders from Armijo. “If any pretends to be sick or claims he cannot march, shoot him and bring me his ears.”²⁰ Compared to other New Mexicans, Salazar had a definite cruel streak. He appeared to be one of the few people in the Province to take Armijo seriously - a willing henchman to a cowardly despot. Five pairs of ears made their way back to Armijo who nailed them to a wall in the Governor’s Palace where the Americans found them in 1846. Armijo knew how his people thought of him; and, in all likelihood, the ears were meant to be badges of courage. Meanwhile most New Mexicans and American merchants went about their business, ignoring him as much as possible. Eventually, the group of Texan prisoners reached Mexico City, where some of them were released early on. The remainder was set free by Santa Anna on June 13th, 1842, except for one man who was condemned to death but was allowed to buy his way out of it.

Kendall, the expedition’s historian, defended the idea of an invasion by stating that, “the attempt to conquer a province, numbering some one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants within its borders, was a shade too Quixotical to find favour in the eyes of the three hundred and twenty pioneers”.²¹ In hindsight it surely was. New Mexico did not have that many people at that time, probably about 40,000-45,000, but considering that the populace mainly lived in small, far-flung, pastoral villages consisting mostly of peons; and the standing army in the whole area was a company of less than one hundred troops who were spread out in garrisons or employed guarding the Santa Fe Trail, was the idea really so quixotic? Perhaps not. It was well known that the Mexican Presidio troops were only armed with lances, swords, and second-rate firearms. Three hundred well-armed Texans with good rifles could easily defeat this contingent, and the Texans knew it. But what about the many militia groups? Of these, The Texans had heard rumors of great dissatisfaction in the ranks, and it was possible that a large militant faction, such as the previous 3,000-plus rebels of the Rio Arriba Rebellion might step in and put things altogether in the Texan balance. With that in mind, it was just possible and the Texans knew it.

Many historians believe that the Texan Santa Fe Expedition was sent to blaze a trail to Santa Fe for trade purposes, but the leaders bore documents that authorized them to appropriate “all public property,” and form a new government for the province. New Mexicans could provide for congressmen to go to the Texan legislature to represent New Mexico. The invaders were instructed to try “all gentle means before resorting to force,” but if things did not go their way, “then force could be used against government troops”.²²

Much has been written of the suffering of the Texan prisoners, but most of it is only impressive if one believes that the suffering of Texan criminals is much more important than that of Mexican criminals. The Mexican officials were represented in these reports as being most inhumane in conduct. These were bold complaints from a failed invasion/coercion force. The Texan response to the capture of its army was as incredibly out of context as their boundary claims were in the first place. After the incident, Sam Houston wrote a long letter outlining the Texan stand on this issue (the only stand the Texans ever made during this invasion). However, the facts seem to belie his point of view because no one could deny that they were an armed invasion force. Whether the attempt was just or not makes no difference and though they were mistreated it could have been a whole lot worse. The Texans, having once sworn allegiance to Mexico, could have been treated as Mexican traitors, or at the very least as prisoners of war.²³

Considering that memories of the Texan retaliatory massacres of hundreds of Mexican soldiers at San Jacinto, as well as Santa Anna’s humiliating defeat were not yet very far in the distant past, as well as the fact that they really were armed invaders, the Texans were actually treated surprisingly well, especially by Santa Anna himself. Yet, the Texans protested most

²⁰ The Spanish West, 147.

²¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 70, footnote 50.

²² Weber, The Mexican Frontier, 266.

²³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 72-73.

vociferously. Most nations in this era, including the United States executed their traitors, yet Santa Anna held up to his previous bargain and let them go. Ironically, to the utter chagrin of Texan patriots, a large number of Americans did not buy the Texan story at all, causing them to complain even louder. Because of this debacle, implicated Texan sympathizers hastily left New Mexico. Rowland and Workman and twenty others left for California since it was no longer safe to remain there. They were believed by the authorities to have sent information to the Texans – information leading to the arrival of the Expedition.²⁴



William Workman

One would think that would have been the end of it, however, the pusillanimous Texans just couldn't 'let it go.' A resolution was passed by their Congress describing that the new borders of Texas now included eight of Mexico's northern states including California (Alto and Abajo). But all that was accomplished by the attempted invasion was a new resolution by Mexican authorities to reconquer Texas. The approach of a new army to their borders sent Texans into a panic. There were inconclusive engagements at San Antonio, Goliad, and Refugio but the political situation in Mexico was too unstable to maintain the offensive and the army withdrew. A Texan force was sent to make sure they left. Once this was accomplished many of the men disobeyed Houston's order not to cross the Rio Grande whereupon they swept into Mexico and assaulted the town of Mier. They were captured en masse, some of them were shot, and the rest were sent to Mexico City in chains, just as had happened to the Santa Fe Expedition.²⁵

The Second Texan Invasion 1842

But a second humiliation brought even more patriotic fervor deep in the heart of Texas and another army was quickly mobilized to accomplish what the former had not and to punish the Mexican miscreants who had done their jobs in service of their country. Someone was going to pay this time. And this time their fury was directed at Armijo and New Mexico. The newspapers called for invasion and retaliation and the raising of their flag over New Mexico and Chihuahua as well as instigating revolutions in the rest of Northern Mexico. Just as before, enthusiasm was high.²⁶ To carry out this plan they began raising "...a force of eight hundred men, under the command of Colonel Jacob Snively, and such enthusiasm prevailed that it was with difficulty that the number was kept down, so many applications were made for joining the enterprise."²⁷ But for some reason, due to an apparent lack of purpose and direction, the invasion idea and the army as well, pretty much died of neglect and mismanagement. Enthusiasms drained in the inactivity and the ranks dwindled drastically. The 'invasion' plan was shelved and instead, someone got the

²⁴ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, footnotes 83.

²⁵ Alvin M. Josephy Jr., The Civil War in the American West (Vintage Books, 1991), 15.

²⁶ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 82.

²⁷ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 82.

bright idea of attacking the trade caravans on the Santa Fe Trail, an idea which shows in a true light the actual intentions of the Texans, which was the control of the Santa Fe Trail commerce. “The grand army of invasion and vengeance, the revolutionizing and capture of all of northern Mexico, finally resolved itself into nothing but the attempted plundering of caravans supplying the Santa Fe-Chihuahua trade...”²⁸

The Third Texan Invasion 1843

The Texan authorities organized two companies to go on ahead of the main group, presumably as advanced scouts. These companies were headed by John McDaniel and Charles A. Warfield. McDaniel and his small group were the first to leave. Warfield would soon follow, with Colonel Snively remaining behind to assemble the main force. What was left of the Spanish borderlands was almost completely undefended in terms of military strength. “The Mexican government took immediate steps to meet the pending invasion and sent a large force into New Mexico, under General José M. Monterde, to support General Armijo...”²⁹ Since part of the trade route was through Texas-claimed territory all the goods were to be considered contraband. The idea was to plunder Mexican goods and leave the Americans unmolested. But how would Americans feel about having their business counterparts from south of the border plundered at will? Not very good at all. They had had a very good commerce going on for twenty years now and they didn’t want anything to spoil it.

Because of their many contacts in Texas and Louisiana, the Mexicans knew all about it before it even happened. “It was currently reported in New Mexico, as early as November, 1842, that a party of Texans was out upon the plains, prepared to attack any Mexican traders who should attempt to cross the Missouri river the succeeding spring”.³⁰ They were very worried about it, and not least of the worries, was that the United States would come in on the side of Texas against them. The Mexican ambassador in Washington D.C. asked the United States to provide protection for the caravans, which they did.³¹ The commander of the US troops in the area, Captain Philip St. George Cooke, a native of Virginia and a West Point graduate, was alerted to watch for Texan bandits.

But in New Mexico, except for a paranoid Armijo who saw Texans behind every bush and tree as well as behind every American merchant in Santa Fe, most New Mexicans seemed to be unconcerned. “So little apprehension, says [Josiah] Gregg, seemed to exist, however, that in February, 1843, Don Antonio José Chaves, of New Mexico, left Santa Fe for Independence, with but five servants, two wagons, and fifty-five mules”.³² March was unseasonably cold and the ill-fated party suffered from frostbite, losing most of their animals. At the Little Arkansas River, Chaves was captured by John McDaniel and his small command of fifteen ruffians. After plundering his goods, seven of the men left. The other eight drew straws and shot Chaves.

Josiah Gregg, noted merchant on the Santa Fe Trail wrote in his memoirs that although shooting of Chaves may have been done as revenge for the cruelties faced by the Santa Fe Expedition, Chaves belonged to a powerful New Mexico family, “one that was anything but friendly to the ruling governor, Armijo.” Antonio’s Brother Don Mariano Chaves possessed a rare friendliness of character. Furthermore Mariano and his wife had supplied the original Texan prisoners with food and blankets, his wife even crossed the river and “administered comforts” to

²⁸ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 82.

²⁹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 82.

³⁰ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 83.

³¹ Frank D. Reeve, History of New Mexico Volume II (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., NY, 1961), 49.

³² Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 83.

them. Gregg even thought the Chaves family might have been well disposed towards Texas but now would be greatly resentful towards them.³³

Antonio José's brother, Don Mariano, was possibly the only man in New Mexico that Governor Armijo feared and therefore he could do pretty much what he wanted – even in giving aid to the Texan prisoners. While McDaniel was busy with Chaves, Captain Cooke's U.S. Dragoons had been following his trail. He and his men were arrested and sent to St. Louis where they were tried for murder and robbery. "In due course, the sentence of the court which found them guilty was carried out and John McDaniel and his brother David were both hanged".³⁴ And they had complained about how the Mexicans had treated them! Neither Houston nor Mirabeau wrote any letters of protest this time. But it wasn't over yet. Colonel Warfield's company was already on the move. Warfield had lived in New Mexico and was familiar with much of the territory. He enlisted twenty-four men and set out for the Point of Rocks where the company would rendezvous. In April 1843 they advanced toward Mora and arrived there undetected.³⁵

Actually, the Texans had stumbled upon an advance camp of about sixty men, probably a grazing camp outside of town. They rushed the guards at night and stormed into the camp, killing five, wounding four, and capturing eighteen men along with seventy-two horses and mules. Several of the New Mexicans escaped to warn the village. Knowing that the townspeople would be ready for them the Texans prudently decided not to attack the town but rather to retreat with their prize, the horses and mules. They told the prisoners, "You are now free. Bury your dead, and remember in the future how vain it is to resist the arms of Texas."³⁶ Then they fled in the direction of Wagon Mound.

On the way, they saw a body of mounted New Mexicans on the horizon behind them but were so overconfident they did not even keep vigilance that night. The exact moment they realized that the guards were not at their posts the horses were stampeded by a small group of mounted New Mexicans. Then gun fire erupted from all sides. They were surrounded. The Texans charged outward and the Mexicans scattered, but with the loss of the herd they had to admit it was the, "equivalent of a defeat." With only two "half jaded" animals left, they made knapsacks for themselves, packed the animals.³⁷ After burning their saddles, Warfield discharged his men from the Texan Army, separated them into three groups, and started walking to Bent's Fort. Warfield and some of the men intended to try to hook up with Snidely's force.³⁸ On the way one of the Texan groups was ambushed and five men were captured. They were taken to Santa and imprisoned.³⁹ Apparently the New Mexicans did not heed Texan threats.

Mora was not a good town to pick on. The villanos were hardy frontiersmen and they maintained a very aggressive militia. Even a company of US Dragoons couldn't take the town four years later in 1847 until they returned with cannon. It had been carved out of the mountain wilderness in the early 1800s in spite of the many Ute, Comanche, and Apache raiding parties that ranged through the area. Mora was built with defense in mind with the houses joined together in a rectangle in the ancient Spanish manner and even had a small two-story fort on the NW corner for a refuge. The village was described in 1847 by American Private John Hudgins as being built in a rectangle of about 250 to 300 yards on a side. The adobe houses on the edge were joined together in the ancient Spanish style except for two places which were fenced. There was

³³ Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, Ed. Max L. Moorhead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 170-172.

³⁴ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 84.

³⁵ Reeve, *History II*, 49; and Twitchell, *Leading Facts, Volume 2*, 85.

³⁶ Rufus Sage, *Western Scenes and Adventures* (G. D. Miller, Philadelphia, 1855), 265.

³⁷ Sage, *Western Scenes*, 267.

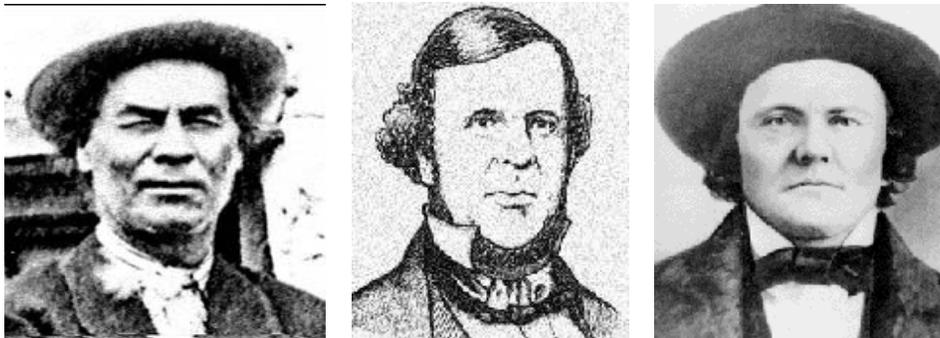
³⁸ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 85.

³⁹ Read, *Illustrated History*, 406.

an L-shaped two story building on the northwest corner and a wooden blockhouse on the southeast corner. These buildings had loopholes for firing from within.⁴⁰

Perhaps Warfield had forgotten that New Mexicans had been fighting this hit-and-run, horse thieving style of warfare for a long time with the hostile natives and they easily overtook Warfield's company. It is interesting to note that they captured the same number of Texans as men that had been killed by them. Perhaps it was a coincidence, perhaps not. And it was amazing they didn't kill them all – but then again, leaving the Texans dismounted on the open prairie would have been the highest form of insult. Apparently, they had what they wanted – the horses and the prisoners.

Colonel Snively's force was now ready to follow Warfield. On April 25th they left Georgetown near Austin for the international boundary, the Arkansas River. "Colonel Jacob Snively and his 'gallant' band of Texan 'avengers,' to the number, not of eight hundred, but about one hundred and eighty, now appear upon the scene,"⁴¹ luckily bypassing the patrolling US dragoons. When they reached the Arkansas they were joined by Warfield and the few men he had left. While at Bent's Fort Warfield had heard about the progress of the trade caravans. He was able to inform Snively that sixty wagons were on their way to Bent's Fort from Missouri and another caravan would soon be coming up from Santa Fe. As it happened, Kit Carson, Charles Bent, and Ceran St. Vrain arrived in the area with their own wagon train. Kit describes his meeting with Captain Cooke (Carson's notations are corroborated by Cooke's own journal of the expedition).



L-R: Charles Bent, Ceran St. Vrain, Christopher Kit Carson

The dragoons under Captain Phillip St. George Cooke had camped at Walnut Creek. Cooke informed Carson that the westbound train consisting of a mixture of American and Mexican traders was nearby to the east. Armijo's east bound train would be coming up from Santa Fe. The westbound train included about 100 men and a "large number of wagons." Captain Cooke's informants had told him that the Texans had advanced to the Arkansas River where they would attempt to capture the train. He also believed they would kill any Mexicans they captured. The Mexicans in the westbound train decided to stay with Cooke although he would only escort them to the Arkansas. They paid Carson \$300 to take a message to Armijo, warning him of the situation. Carson accepted and set out with Dick Owens. When he reached Bent's Fort he was told that some Utes were on the trail he must take. He set out from there alone but with an extra horse with which to outrun the hostile natives. He made it past the native village and continued on to Taos where he sent the message to Santa Fe.⁴²

Upon receiving the news, Governor Armijo gathered several militia units and Presidio soldiers totaling 700 men to guard the eastbound caravan and they left Santa Fe, headed for the

⁴⁰ Mora History and History of the Atencio Family, <http://members.aol.com/spegler919/nmhistor.htm>.

⁴¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 84.

⁴² Milo Milton Quaife, Kit Carson's Autobiography (University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 69-70.

international crossing. Meanwhile, Snively's force, still eluding Cooke's scouts, advanced down the Santa Fe Trail and on June 19th ambushed Armijo's advance guard - a group of one hundred Taos militia under the command of Captain Ventura Lobato. When they approached the Texans Lovato thought they were Cooke's men. Perceiving the mistake Snively allowed them to get very close before opening fire. Lovato and fifteen others were killed and the rest were taken prisoner.⁴³ Rufus Sage, who had been with Warfield and now with Snively, states that the Texans hid as the New Mexicans approached, and, jumping up at the last moment, identified themselves and offered Lovato a chance to surrender. But, as noted above, the New Mexicans reported that Snively passed himself off as Cooke and opened fire at close range, without warning. The fact that not one Texan was hit, seems to place the evidence in favor of Lovato. But regardless of what actually occurred, one New Mexican was able to escape by grabbing a Texan horse and riding back to the main caravan. Armijo quickly turned around and headed back to Santa Fe.⁴⁴

But even in his haste he had not neglected to send messengers to Cooke who quickly mobilized his force to intercept the raiders.⁴⁵ By this time, Snively's force had been drastically reduced by desertions and loss of mounts to native raids. He had only about 100 men left and was camped about fifteen miles below Caches. He crossed to the Americans to meet Cooke when the Dragoons approached. Snively thought the Americans would hail him and his men as comrades-in-arms. But he was very disappointed to find that Cooke treated the Texans as illegal armed foreigners on the border of the United States. To his utter surprise Cooke immediately began to take firearms from his men. Some of the Texans hid their rifles and turned over the "worthless guns which had been captured from the Mexicans."⁴⁶



Phillip St. George Cooke

The Texans told Captain Cooke they had killed eighteen Mexicans, wounded eighteen more, and captured the rest. Cooke sent forty of the Texans to Fort Leavenworth, presumably including Snively, and set the rest free. After release by the Americans, most of the remaining Texans, now about 60-70 men commanded by Warfield, went into Mexican territory after the southbound caravan on its way to Santa Fe. They soon gave up, however, and headed for Texas. Ironically, the Taos militia they had defeated were of the very same people that Workman and Rowland had hoped to incite to assist the Texans in their first invasion. Gregg wrote that if the Texans had proceeded differently, Lovato's men surely would have guided him to Armijo's train where they could have captured him.⁴⁷

These were not friends of Armijo. Not only were most of them Pueblo Indians and Hispanics from Taos, no doubt veterans of the 1837 rebellion, they had apparently been forced to

⁴³ Read, *Illustrated History*, 407.

⁴⁴ Quaife, *Kit Carson*, 71-72.

⁴⁵ Read, *Illustrated History*, 407.

⁴⁶ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 88.

⁴⁷ Gregg, *Commerce*, 173.

take this forward position by armed coercion (some even had to be tied to their saddles), so Gregg's assessment that they would not only surrender but also lead the Texans to the governor, may well have been an accurate one. And once again, Armijo, the 'ruthless tyrant' showed his true mettle by immediately turning the caravan around and heading in a panicked 'pell-mell' retreat back to Santa Fe. Armijo was always more of a merchant than a governor – and never a general. Understandably, the American freighters were also very disturbed by the Texan proceedings. Gregg mentions that even though the Texans had asserted they would not molest Americans or their goods, they could not, in all conscience, have allowed the plunder and murder of the Mexicans. He wrote, "What American worthy of his name, to save his own interests, or even his life could deliver up his trading companions to be sacrificed?" He believed that every man in the train would have considered such action to be nothing less than treachery, not to mention they each would have ruined their own business prospects in doing so.⁴⁸

By this time it was a fact that the Mexicans sponsored fully fifty percent of the trail's commerce and an attack on them would have severely curtailed relations. So in the end, loyalty and trade relations won out. Now the as-yet uninvolved Texans still residing in New Mexico became the victims of their compatriot's deeds. "When the news of the defeat of Lobato's command reached Taos, the friends and relatives of the slain, the whole population, indeed, were incensed beyond measure; and two or three naturalized foreigners, who were supposed to favor the Texan cause, and who hitherto had been in good standing, were now compelled to flee for their lives..."⁴⁹

As a result of the Texan depredations, General Santa Anna (back in office again) closed all the ports of entry of northern Mexico to all commerce from August 7, 1843 to March 31, 1844, and trade completely ceased on the Santa Fe Trail. It was not until the lifting of the ban that the caravans began to roll again when ninety wagons and 200 Americans once more hit the trail to the southwest. The pugnacious Texans had influenced the commerce on the Santa Fe Trail all right, but not in the way they had intended.

The Fourth Texan Invasion 1850

Texas was admitted into the Union in 1845 and five years later, the U.S. Congress passed the Organic Act of September 9, 1850, by which New Mexico was changed from a military protectorate to an official U.S. Territory with a non-military governor, a Territorial Council, and a representative in Congress. This attempt to 'territorialize' New Mexico brought the old boundary claims of Texas once more to the surface – never mind that New Mexico had only been ceded to the U.S. from Mexico in 1848 and therefore it could never have been Texan. But at least now, the Texans had to deal with the United States about it. By 1850 Texas had been a member of the United States for five years and had firm support in Congress. So much so, that they felt justified in creating three new Texan counties in New Mexico. There was El Paso County which contained parts of southern New Mexico, Worth County which reached upriver from El Paso County to Belen, and Santa Fe County which ambitiously included all the rest of eastern New Mexico and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.⁵⁰

New Mexicans had no idea they were now Texans. What most also didn't know is that they had been brought into the heart of the nation's most serious conflict – the slavery issue – and that made it critical. The opposition to the Organic Act was spearheaded by the representatives of Texas, back by many southerners who actually hoped that the Texas/New Mexico conflict would bring the country into open war in order to solve the slavery question once and for all. Therefore, with southern backing, the Texans felt that they had enough clout to at least legislate the take-over of eastern New Mexico if not precipitate a national war and take it. The debates for the

⁴⁸ Gregg, *Commerce*, 170-172.

⁴⁹ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 87.

⁵⁰ Glen O. Ream, *Out of New Mexico's Past* (Sundial Books, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1980), 60.

Organic Act were very one-sided. New Mexico had only one friend in Congress in 1850. “New Mexico stands alone with no one to speak for her,” said New York’s Senator William H. Seward, “put New Mexico on equal footing with Texas. Only the voice of Texas is heard.” Seward then proposed immediate statehood for New Mexico. Seward’s proposal failed without a single favorable vote.⁵¹

Going beyond mere proclamations, the emboldened Texans took steps to administrate their fantasized new counties. Spruce M. Baird of Nacodoches, Louisiana, was appointed “Judge of Santa Fe County” and he was sent to take over administration there. He arrived in Santa Fe in November, 1848, after a horrific journey of 1500 miles and showed his commission to the military governor, Colonel John M. Washington. Washington was furious. He shouted at him, “Who in hell is Governor Wood; and where in hell is Texas?”⁵²



J. M. Washington

That was serious cussing in those days (at least in a public office). Although many southerners believed the Texan claim was actually ridiculous, as long as slavery was involved they were going to back it; and, of course, the North would oppose it. It appears that from early on, the South had set its sights on acquiring new land for the slave o’crats in New Mexico. Southerners, including Jefferson Davis, who was currently the U.S. Secretary of War had plotted that upon his election as governor of Mississippi, to support Texan border claims in such a manner as to begin a war between North and South. However, Jefferson lost the election. This was not a new idea. Even before Texas was admitted into the Union southern politicians were thinking that these claims could be used to precipitate such a war.⁵³ Unaware of these political machinations and uninfluenced by robust arguments, New Mexicans still considered themselves to be an independent territory and this continued to irritate the Texans. This complacency and rejection infuriated the Texans who again proposed sending an army to New Mexico “to suppress the existing rebellion in Santa Fe.” They even threatened to fight American troops if they had to. The new Governor of Texas, Peter H. Bell belligerently asked the southern states for support.⁵⁴

This was the point when the Civil War could have begun, but the United States ‘bought’ not only New Mexico, but at least ten more years of peace, before the War would break out in earnest. They paid Texas \$10,000,000 dollars in 1850 to forget the border claims and accept things as they were. The New Mexico Territory would be established with its capital at Santa Fe.⁵⁵ Thus, the Texans were paid-off handsomely by the Federals for what was never theirs and one would think that would have been the end of it. However, paying for the land only legitimized the claims in the minds of some bellicose Texans, and of those, many complained it

⁵¹ Ream, *New Mexico’s Past*, 59.

⁵² Ream, *New Mexico’s Past*, 46.

⁵³ Ream, *New Mexico’s Past*, 62.

⁵⁴ Josephy, *American West*, 16.

⁵⁵ Josephy, *American West*, 16.

had not been a proper price for the acreage. Nevertheless, the deal was done and the Organic Act was passed. Incidentally, during the settlement of the border dispute the survey party 'made a mistake' and put the southern border of New Mexico too far to the north. Because of that, El Paso that had belonged to the Province of New Mexico since its inception in 1680 now became Texan. However, neither the purchase nor the survey was successful in stopping the continuance of Texan incursions into New Mexico. Regardless of what the United States had paid for, Texans who had been given land grants by the State of Texas were moving into New Mexico and forcibly taking land from New Mexicans.

Individual Texans who possessed such land rights relocated to the Rio Grande Valley and forced themselves on to land which had belonged to New Mexicans since colonial times. The courts were indecisive and many New Mexicans who feared hostile aggression left their houses and moved to the Mexican side of the river to the west. Doña Ana was particularly attractive to Texan immigrants since the U.S. Army had decided to build a post there, and they pounced on it in droves. The courts still waver and the deserved protection was not given. Several hundred Hispanic citizens of that town moved to the Mexican side. They selected a location six to eight miles south of Doña Ana known as La Mesilla. Within a year half most of the town had moved there. When the boundary with Mexico was affirmed in 1851 and La Mesilla was south of that line the people there rejoiced. They had already resolved to move again if necessary.⁵⁶

Doña Ana was not an ancient villa. It had been inhabited during the first settlement of New Mexico in the 1600s and Governor Otermin had stopped there during his retreat to El Paso in 1680 due to the Pueblo Rebellion. But after the Reconquest it was never re-settled until a grant was approved in July of 1840, and even then, settlers did not arrive until 1843.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it was a Mexican town and never had belonged to Texas except in imagination. As a note of interest, Colonel Doniphan stopped there in December 1846, bought supplies and rested for two days. It was a welcome respite after traveling through the desert. The Colonel donated a canon to the town for use in defense against Apaches.⁵⁸ So it appears that the town was well-disposed towards the United States in 1846 while maintaining its aversion to Texas in 1850. Another village called Chamberino was also founded by New Mexicans who did not want to remain in the United States.⁵⁹

On the other side of the Rio Grande, La Mesilla still belonged to Mexico and the inhabitants celebrated that fact. People from Northern New Mexico also moved there to avoid becoming US citizens. No doubt, however, the celebrations were very muted when it was sold to the United States as part of the Gadsen Purchase of 1853. As for Doña Ana today, most of the 'Anglos' are gone and it continues to be an Hispanic farming village. The old church is still there as a reminder of days gone by and the names of the residents hark back to the founding families.⁶⁰ Also occurring during the 1850's, there were more Texan schemes to take over northern Mexico through attempts to influence local revolutions as well as attempts to take advantage of the proposed filibusters in Arizona and California but these are not part of New Mexico's story.

The Fifth Texan Invasion 1861

The advent of the Civil War, eight years later, again brought to mind the old grievances as well as the expansionist fever, and besides, to Texans, the United States was the enemy now. So it seemed that it was as good a time as any, to finally take-over what had always been rightfully theirs, so they thought. Incredibly, the Fifth Texan invasion was as ill-conceived as the

⁵⁶ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 294-295, footnote 219.

⁵⁷ Fugate, Roadside History, 43.

⁵⁸ Fugate, Roadside History, 44.

⁵⁹ Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate, Roadside History of New Mexico (Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, 1989), 17.

⁶⁰ Fugate, Roadside History, 44.

others had been. Although better executed, it was still very badly planned. General Sibley had convinced the Texans that:

(1) An army could live off the land. In truth, the inhabitants of New Mexico themselves could hardly live off the land. There had been a drought for several years. Crops were small and stores were low (what hadn't been carried off by the Indians yet). In addition, the villages along the Rio Grande were being ravaged by smallpox.

(2) That the citizens of New Mexico would rise and join them. The New Mexicans hated the Texans – the Texans themselves had made sure of that.

(3) That the South could open a gateway to the California and Colorado gold fields and the California seaports. Nevermind that Sibley's understrength command of 2,600 men would have to fight 4,500 Federal and New Mexican troops, and another 2,300 were on the way from California, 1,000 from Colorado, and 5,000 more were on their way down the Santa Fe Trail...

Since he had been stationed in New Mexico he should have known the conditions of the land, a desert, and its people who could barely feed themselves. They hated Texans and weren't likely to swell their ranks. In addition, most of the leadership was opposed to the Confederacy and its principles.⁶¹



Henry Hopkins Sibley
General of the Army of New Mexico

Conquering New Mexico in those days was similar to conquering Russia. The fifteen years of American occupation had improved almost nothing. There was no infrastructure, just a sea of peasants and sheep in a harsh landscape. Conquer a village and what do you have? ...some scared peasants, some sheep, and a few beans. Conquer the Capital, Santa Fe, and it still wouldn't amount to anything. The only two strategic points of any value were Forts Craig and Union, and Sibley didn't have enough men to take over either one of them. So...into the valley of pestilence, famine, drought, poverty, Indian depredations, fortified Union strongholds, and hostility to anything Texan, rode the unsuspecting Rebels...

⁶¹ Josephy, American West, 53.

Chapter Two

The Stage

The War Begins

When the Confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on April 12th, 1861, they caused a rippling shock, and surge of patriotic emotions (both north and south) throughout the entire United States and all her territories. Even in far-flung New Mexico the reverberations were just as profound and people found themselves suddenly faced with a critical choice: North or South. People everywhere had known for a long time that the choice would be eventually in the making, but after Sumter, they knew for sure that the moment for confirmation was here at last – and it was finally time to ‘ante up.’ Three days later, on the 15th, President Abraham Lincoln called to service 75,000 volunteers for the Union. The entire nation began to think of mobilization, and the US Government, or what was left of it, with a hostile rebel army assembling only miles away from the nation’s capital, was preoccupied, to say the least, with events nearby (‘panicked’ might actually be a more appropriate description).



Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States

Lincoln and his cabinet were a good deal more concerned with Confederate developments in the East rather than the West or even the Midwest. Richmond was only a few miles away from Washington. They had to recruit volunteers, consolidate the Regular Army, stockpile clothing, equipment, arms, ammunition, food, medicines. It was a monumental task and everyone knew the war would be won or lost there, in the East. New Mexico was a remote concern as well an irritation, detracting from more important concerns. And where and what was New Mexico anyway? The inhabitants, “were dismissed as troublesome Mexicans who contributed nothing to the country and whose constant need for protection from the Indians was a costly bother and burden.” When queried about supporting southern New Mexico against a possible invasion, Simon Cameron, the Secretary of War, replied, “measures have been or will be taken commensurate with its importance.” Not a week later, most of the Regulars were ordered to move east. Unlike the Unionists the Confederates were much more interested in New Mexico.⁶²

The Confederacy’s perceptions of New Mexico were largely due to the exhortations of the New Mexico delegate to Congress, Miguel A. Otero, who contributed to pro-slavery rhetoric, both in Washington and in New Mexico. One observer noted, “...Otero has let it be known that if

⁶² Alvin M. Josephy Jr., The Civil War in the American West (Vintage Books, 1991), 390, footnote 20.

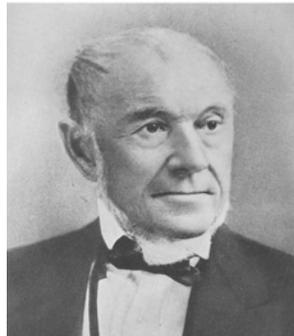
New Mexico expects any favors from Washington, a slave code would be a wise move.”⁶³ To the delight of Southerners everywhere, in 1857 and in 1859, New Mexico passed legislation legalizing and protecting slavery, the latter entitled “An Act Providing for Protection of Slave Property in this Territory.”



Miguel Otero

Miguel Otero was born in 1829 in Valencia, New Mexico, to parents Don Vicente Otero and Doña Gertrudis Aragón de Otero who were both natives of Spain. Miguel attended local schools in his youth and went to St. Louis University in 1841 and then studied law at Pingree College in Fishkill NY. He finished law school in Missouri and returned to New Mexico where he worked as a secretary to Governor Lane, then as state attorney general, and later, as a representative to the Territorial Council. In 1856 he became a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives (as a Democrat) where he served until 1860.

Abraham Rencher, the governor of New Mexico at this time, being a North Carolinian by birth, did not oppose Miguel’s actions. As a young man Rencher had attended a local school, augmented with home schooling, and graduated from North Carolina University in 1822. He studied law and became a practicing lawyer in 1825 in North Carolina. He served five terms in Congress and he became the U.S. Minister to Portugal from 1843 until 1847. In 1858 he was appointed Governor of New Mexico by President Buchanan.



Abraham Rencher
Governor of New Mexico

No doubt, the main thrust of the pro-slavery argument in the Territory, spearheaded by the Otero and Armijo families, was fueled by the fear that the Dons would lose all their peones if they did not join with the South. In addition, due to commercial trade relations with southern Americans, and the number of army officers and public officials from the South, the Ricos were

⁶³ Calvin Horn, New Mexico’s Troubled Years; the Story of the Early Territorial Governors (Horn and Wallace, 1963), 86.

actually more familiar with southern Americans than they were with northerners. Horace Greeley, the famous newspaper editor, wrote about the Territory. “Her Mexican population, ignorant, timid, and superstitious, had been attached to the Union by conquest, scarcely fifteen years before, and had, meantime, been mainly under the training of Democratic officials of strong pro-slavery sympathies, who had induced her territorial legislature, some two years before, to pass an act recognizing slavery as legally existing among them, and providing stringent safeguards for its protection and security – an act that was still unrepealed.”⁶⁴

The slavery law passed in 1857 provided that no free person of African or Mulatto descent could stay in New Mexico for more than 30 days, or they could be fined 50-100 dollars and sentenced to hard labor for one to two years. The law enacted in January, 1859, protected slaves as property and provided fugitive laws similar to those in effect in other southern states. It furthermore attempted to distinguish between slavery and peonage, by clarifying that ‘slavery’ only pertained to those of the African race, while ‘contracted service’ [peonage] related to those of other races. However, many people who were familiar with the custom, considered peonage to be a form of slavery (some even going so far as to say it was worse than slavery), and slavery of captive Indians did not even enter into the discussion.

New Mexico had had a peonage system for more than a hundred years. It was a voluntary agreement of servitude to pay off a debt. The children of a peon were excluded from the burden of that debt. Generally speaking a peon retained his or her personal rights. There also was a custom to have Native American slaves, notably from the hostile semi-nomadic tribes. There was no law regarding this servitude. These, unlike peons, could be bought and sold as property. There were few hidalgos who did not have some Indian slaves. Peonage was finally abolished by Congress in 1867.⁶⁵

The peonage system had developed out of the Spanish Encomienda system, the name deriving from the Spanish word ‘encomendar,’ meaning to entrust. This system was transferred from the conquered Moors in Spain to the Native Americans in the New World. It was nothing more than a grant to hold slaves for labor on plantations and in mines. The missions had a similar system but the reason for their form of ‘slavery’ was salvation and civilization but still included a lot of servitude. Neither system was appreciated by the natives. In New Mexico the Encomiendas were mostly farming and ranching plantations and along with the missions they were pretty much the biggest reason for the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The Spanish crown had not intended the system to produce slavery, and tried to control the abuses of the system, but in the end had to abolish it. When the Spaniards returned to New Mexico in 1693, except for slavery of Indian captives, the system had softened into peonage which was more acceptable. The first peons in New Mexico were probably Genisaros, Amerindians who had become culturally Spanish. Many free men became peons through purchases of credit made in a Rico’s store, and then they were snared for life. Nevertheless, peonage flourished where slavery had not.

Americans who feel superior to and more progressive than the “cruel Spaniards” need to be reminded that, yes, we did not enslave ‘our’ Native Americans. We took their lands through genocide and expulsion and then brought over black slaves from Africa to work on our own encomiendas. And here we were, on the eve of a bloody Civil War in 1861 to fight over what the Mexicans had already given up freely in 1829. Furthermore, when the war would be over, the New Mexicans would free their peones while the system spread into America as a replacement for slavery, especially in the South. It would take many forms such as sharecropping, tenant farming, and outright indebted servitude but it would become a long-standing staple of the American economy. One hundred years later, as late as 1960, some states still legally allowed forms of peonage in the United States. But the North should not feel superior over the South

⁶⁴ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., Leading facts of New Mexican History, Volume 2 (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), 358, footnote 281, a quote from Horace Greeley, American Conflict, 20.

⁶⁵ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 325.

either, because northerners had their own forms of peonage created by the big industrialists. “I owe my soul to the company store...”⁶⁶

Meanwhile, back in 1861, without realizing that New Mexicans were actually apathetic to American issues, once the notice of these slave laws was published in the eastern states, most Americans believed that New Mexico would throw her lot in with the South. In fact, to the Confederacy, it appeared that the entire Southwest could and would become pro-southern...and New Mexico seemed to be the least problematic portion of that equation. Many Southerners believed that this fantastic dream was simply theirs for the taking. They believed they might win California and that a strong presence of southerners in Colorado would prevail there. Arizona was considered to already be secessionist and New Mexicans would gladly join with the South as soon as their accomplishments were made known. They even hoped that the Native Americans would help them win. It was also felt that the remoteness of New Mexico would make it indefensible by the Union, and the valuable military stockpiles would soon be absorbed. The aim of Southern strategists was to capture a seaport on the West Coast and the Colorado gold mines in the Rockies.⁶⁷

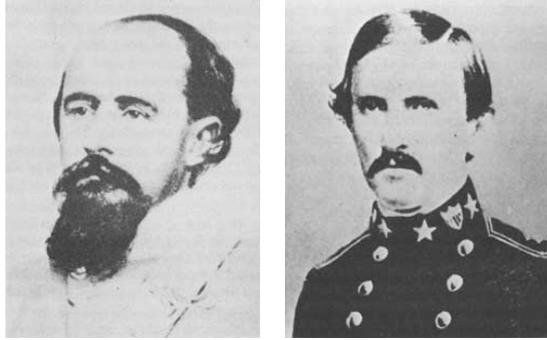
The situation in New Mexico was further dramatized when the two U.S. Army commanding officers of the Territory were revealed to be pro-southern. Even before the activation of Abraham Lincoln’s presidency, the U.S. Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, had contrived to position Confederate sympathizers Colonel W.W. Loring, of North Carolina and George B. Crittenden as commanders of the forces in New Mexico in order to facilitate manipulation of the forces in that state. It was their job to corrupt the patriotism of their subordinate officers as much as possible. It was Major Benjamin Stone Roberts who first realized what was developing and sprang into action to countermand it. First, he would not obey any treasonous orders and second, he hurried to Santa Fe to “denounce Crittenden to Loring.” Then he was shocked to find that Loring thought things were fine just the way they were and Roberts should not meddle with anything but his own business. Loring quickly ordered him to return to Fort Stanton, but on the way he talked with Captain Hatch at Albuquerque and Captain Morris at Fort Craig and others to let them know about the traitorous leanings of Crittendom and Loring. Once the word was out, the pair of miscreants “found it necessary to leave suddenly.” In reality very few of the 1,200 soldiers proved to be for the south but, unfortunately, the ones who did were usually officers, and some were very good officers.⁶⁸

In truth, Loring himself had been left ‘holding the bag’ while he submitted his own resignation. In May, Colonel Fauntleroy, commander of the Department, had resigned because he was also of Confederate sympathies, making Loring the new commander. William Wing “Old Blizzards” Loring was born in North Carolina in 1818 to Reuben and Hanna (Kenan) Loring. He had been soldiering since he was fourteen years old in the Seminole Wars in Florida. Later, he went to college and studied law and graduated from Georgetown College. He volunteered for service during the Mexican War at the age of twenty-seven and was promoted from Captain to brevet Lt. Colonel for valorous conduct. After the war he stayed on in the Army and became the Department commander of Oregon before being assigned to New Mexico under Colonel Fauntleroy. At thirty-eight years old he was the youngest line colonel of the U.S. Army. In addition to Loring, one third of the U.S. Army officers in service resigned from their commands and moved to join the Confederacy, an act which most of the remaining loyal troops considered to be desertion and betrayal. The effect of this on the morale of the remaining troops was nearly devastating.

⁶⁶ Tennessee Ernie Ford, *Sixteen Tons - Classic Country: 1950-1964*, Time Life.

⁶⁷ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 358, footnote 283)

⁶⁸ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 360.



L-R: William W. Loring and George B. Crittenden

Along with Crittenden and Loring Major Henry Hopkins Sibley, Major James Longstreet, Captains Trichard S. Ewell, Cadmus M. Wilcox, Carter L. Stevenson, and Lieutenant Joseph Wheeler resigned and traveled south or east. Each one of them would become a general in the Confederate Army. “We were being deserted by our officers,” complained one man who remained loyal. “We were practically an army without officers.”⁶⁹ With all the gaps in leadership the morale of the troops plummeted. Wherever the defectors appeared they instilled a lack of confidence in the men. At Fort Fillmore near Mesilla Major Sibley shouted from his wagon, “Boys, if you only knew it, I am the worst enemy you have.”⁷⁰

The exodus of so many Union officers caused a vacuum within the leadership of the Union Army in the Southwest. Those who were still loyal had no idea what they should do. They had not been prepared for this. Therefore, much of the normal business of the Federal Army had been neglected for some time. Although Loring had already submitted his resignation and was getting ready to leave, the War Department was too busy to select his successor. Major Edward Richard Sprigg Canby and Major B. S. Roberts were the ranking officers left in the Territory to literally ‘hold the fort.’ Canby was senior to Roberts but being a professional soldier he waited for confirmation of his appointment to command of the department. None came. He searched the official Regulations...nothing there on what to do when all your superiors resign.

Both Canby and Roberts were graduates of West Point and talented career officers that had considerable experience in the West. Canby was born at Piatt’s Landing, Maryland, in 1817 and graduated from West Point in 1839. Like all his peers he served in the Mexican War, the crucible of training for the Civil War, and was twice praised for commendable actions. After the war he remained in the Army, serving all over the west, including a campaign with Sibley against the Mormons in 1857-58. He also had served with Sibley in the recent New Mexico Navajo campaign of 1860-61.⁷¹ Benjamin Roberts came from Vermont from a notable military family. He graduated from West Point in 1835. He was a lawyer as well as an engineer and the final formidable fortification of Fort Craig would be due to his credit. He had worked in the past as an engineer for the railroad and assisted on the construction of the Moscow to St. Petersburg railroad in Russia. He was brevetted in rank twice for bravery during the Mexican War and had been serving in the army in the west when he was not on special assignment elsewhere.⁷² They were both staunch and resolute unionists and, to their credit, they would hold New Mexico as long as they could. Finally, on the 17th of May, 1861, Canby made his move. He announced without

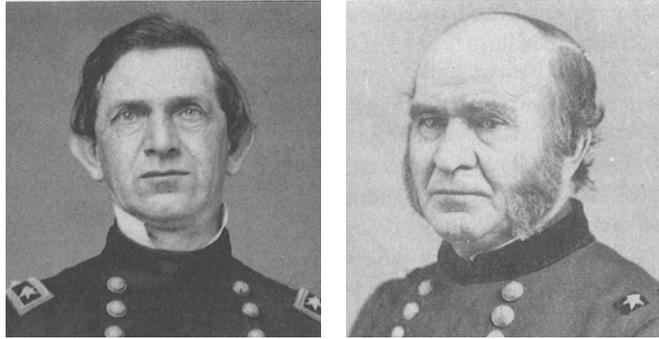
⁶⁹ Josephy, *American West*, 34.

⁷⁰ Josephy, *American West*, 37.

⁷¹ John Taylor, *Bloody Valverde, A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 21, 1862* (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 13-14.

⁷² Taylor, *Bloody Valverde*, 37-38.

orders that he was taking over command to protect the department “otherwise it might be in the highest degree disastrous.” After that he called for volunteers.⁷³



L-R: Edward R. S. Canby and Benjamin Roberts

Meanwhile, as early as May, New Mexicans, especially the younger men, began to talk enthusiastically about enlisting in the army.⁷⁴ But the army in New Mexico wasn't ready to receive them yet and Canby could not set the wheels of recruitment in motion for another whole month. First Canby promoted himself to a brevet Lt. Col. (which was confirmed later) and then also promoted Major Roberts to a brevet Lt. Col. and sent him to command Fort Stanton in the southeast part of the Territory, near the present day town of Lincoln. Canby also handed out brevet promotions to several other officers, including William Chapman at Fort Union and Allen L. Anderson, whom he selected to be his adjutant, working out of Fort Marcy in Santa Fe. Then he began to consolidate his Regular Army troops. There was a great deal of uncertainty reigning in the Federal ranks in both the officers and men at this time. But if the troops in New Mexico were not in very good shape, they were no worse than Union troops anywhere else. It is a strange fact of the Civil War that in the first two years most of the Union officers throughout the North lacked confidence and clarity.

This phenomenon had never existed to such an extent in the U.S. Army before. And if that wasn't enough, most of the Union Regulars, especially Canby and Roberts, also lacked any confidence in the nearest available source of additional manpower, the New Mexicans. Although Canby had been in New Mexico for some time he still had no idea regarding the character of the people who inhabited the area. He thought of them as apathetic, unwilling to prepare for defense, and more concerned with their own petty interests. “I question very much whether a sufficient force for the defense of the Territory can be raised within its limits, and I place no reliance upon any volunteer force that can be raised, unless strongly supported by regular troops.”⁷⁵

The New Mexicans were thought by the Americans to be undependable. In one correspondence a U.S. officer commented with unusual candor, “The Mexicans are a peculiar people, and the sooner I get east of the Mississippi, the better I shall like it. I do not know exactly what to make of them. I do not doubt many of them feel brave enough now, but how it will be in case of actual invasion, time only can determine.”⁷⁶ Although the locals had fought for their very lives throughout centuries of unceasing Amerindian raids Canby and the other Anglos thought of them as useless in a fight. American arrogance, outright prejudice, and lack of cultural understanding convinced them that New Mexicans would not stand up against the Texans.⁷⁷

⁷³ Chris Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest*, (University of Oklahoma, 1965), 237.

⁷⁴ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, *The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican* (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 118.

⁷⁵ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 369.

⁷⁶ John P. Wilson, *When the Texans Came* (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Rossell to Canby, 118.

⁷⁷ Josephy, *American West*, 41.

Is it really possible that the New Mexicans lacked fortitude and bravery? This myth may have stemmed from the days of the Mexican War, in which Americans easily won battles against the Mexican Army. However, veterans who were paying attention realized that this was not exactly the case. W.W.H. Davis who served as a 1st Lieutenant in the 1st Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry regiment during the war wrote:

*I believe the Mexicans have been unjustly accused of cowardice as a race, and denied the attributes of personal courage that belong to every other people. In looking at the source from whence they spring, we see no reason why they should not possess all the physical virtues that belong to the human race.*⁷⁸

In the late war between the United States and Mexico, the rank and file of the Mexican army, in many instances, exhibited a bravery that would have done honor to any troops in the world; and upon the frontiers of New Mexico, in their conflicts with the Indians, the peasantry have frequently behaved in the most gallant manner.

*... With American officers to lead them, they will make excellent troops; and they possess a power of endurance under fatigue which excels most other people.*⁷⁹

Ulysses S. Grant also made similar notations during that war. He said, “The Mexicans... stood up as well as any troops ever did,” and, “...I have seen as brave stands made by some of these men [Mexicans] as I have ever seen made by soldiers.”⁸⁰ Earlier, American explorer Zebulon Pike had visited New Mexico in 1806 and wrote in his journal, “Being cut off from the more inhabited parts of the kingdom, together with their continual wars with some of the savage nations who surround them, render them the bravest and most hardy subjects of New Spain.”⁸¹ Pike also noted that New Mexican soldiers were outstanding, except they were poorly trained and armed. But Pike’s, Davis’ and Grant’s views were unusual, shared mostly by Americans who had ‘gone native,’ and had integrated into New Mexico society before it became American – men like Kit Carson, Governor Bent, Ceran St. Vrain, and Governor Connelly, etc. Even as late as 1866, the qualities of New Mexicans were still not recognized, and Carson felt compelled to explain to his superior, Brigadier General James Carleton, “I am convinced that the best troops that could be used in war with them [Indians] would be Mexicans as they are more energetic and untiring in pursuit, enduring a larger amount of physical fatigue and, when well-officered, their courage is unquestionable.”⁸² However, other than this brief note, these men did not leave us much in writing to go on. Most people who wrote things down felt differently and tended to describe the New Mexicans as ‘inferior.’ Even today, historians try to soften the accusations and implications by describing the New Mexicans as ‘untested,’ ‘untried,’ or ‘inexperienced,’ because they think, due to these early reports, that the New Mexicans were cowardly and undependable in battle. But these are modern misperceptions based on the prejudices of the day.

Apparently there was another concern shared by those in authority. It was that the New Mexicans were still “imperfectly loyalized.” On July 3rd, 1861, in a letter to Simon Cameron, the U.S. Secretary of War, from Judge Perry E. Brocchus, it was advised that if the former wanted to improve conditions in the Territory of New Mexico and instill “in the hearts of her people the

⁷⁸ W. W. H. Davis, El Gringo, New Mexico and her People (University of Nebraska Press, 1857), 217-218.

⁷⁹ Davis, El Gringo, 219.

⁸⁰ Men-at-Arms Series 56, The Mexican-American War 1846-48 (Osprey Publishing Limited, Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford, OX29LP, UK), 20-21.

⁸¹ Time Life Books, The Old West Series, The Spanish West (Time Inc., 1976), 141.

⁸² Charles and Jacqueline Meketa, One Blanket and Ten Days Rations (Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Globe, AZ), 1980, 39.

staff from which floats the 'flag of the free,' you must show the good faith of giving them ample protection, alike against the marauding savage and the rebellious domestic foe."⁸³

In other words, to make them good and loyal citizens, give them the military and civil support they needed. But, unfortunately, the U.S. government wasn't about to do that. They didn't feel they could spare any troops and even wanted to take those that the Territory had. One thing that Judge Brocchus was right about – the best way to help the New Mexicans was to solve their most chronic problem – the Indian problem.

The Indian Problem

Throughout the 1850s, native New Mexicans did not feel they were getting the protection they had been promised and this was further aggravated by the refusal of the military to provide adequate arms and pay for the Territorial militias. With improved arms, they could have protected themselves better than the Army could. At one point, the Governor of New Mexico did receive 100 stand of arms, but they were all determined to be unserviceable. Only 100 weapons – and they didn't even work! Much of this neglect was due to the fact that the United States Congress had long been exasperated with the expense of maintaining New Mexico. The current Secretary of War in 1852, Charles Conrad, let people know that the defense of New Mexico was, "A waste of money." He continued in more detail, "New Mexico, inaccessible, inferior inhabitants, its total real estate value \$2,700,000 costs \$1 million annually for defense, one half the total land value to protect 61,000 inferior people. It would save money to pay settlers to move out; troops could serve better elsewhere." Hearing of this rant the Santa Fe Weekly Gazette replied, "if Conrad's going to sell us out, he better raise his estimate, because New Mexico's cash value now is \$5,171,471."⁸⁴ And the US had paid Texas ten million dollars for one quarter of the Territory! To most Americans, New Mexico was considered more of a burden than an asset. They felt that the U.S. had spent enormous sums with very little return. A list of Congressional budgetary approvals for New Mexico:

Acts of Congress in relation to New Mexico, appropriations, etc., during the decade 1850-1860 are the organic act and appropriation of \$20,000 for public buildings and \$5,000 for a library;

1851, appropriation of \$34,700 for territorial government \$18,000 for the Navajó Indians and \$135,530 for payment of the volunteers of 1849;

1852, \$31,122 for the government of the territory;

1853, appropriation of \$32,555 for government expenses and \$10,000 for Indian service; authorizing legislature to hold extra session of 90 days; authorizing employment of translator and clerks, sessions of 60 days instead of 40 days, payment of code commissioners;

1854, appropriation for government \$31,620, for public buildings \$50,000, roads \$32,000, and Indian service \$45,000; appointing surveyor general and donating lands to settlers; increasing salary of governor to \$3,000, and judges to \$2,500; attaching Gadsen Purchase to New Mexico; authorizing payment of civil salaries for 1846-1851 under the Kearny code; and establishing a collection district;

1855, appropriation for government \$35,500 including \$2,000 for archive vaults, Indian service \$52,500, surveys \$30,000, Texas boundary \$10,000, raising governors salary to \$3,000;

1858, appropriation for government \$33,000, Indian service \$85,000; road \$150,000; creating a land district; confirming Pueblo land grants;

1859, appropriation for government, \$17,000; Indian service \$75,000;

⁸³ Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Brocchus to Cameron 7/3/61.

⁸⁴ Glen O. Ream, Out of New Mexico's Past (Sundial Books, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1980), 63.

1860, appropriation for government \$23,500, Indians \$50,000, capitol \$50,000, confirming private and town land grants;

1861, appropriation for government \$20,500, Indians \$50,000, roads \$50,000; act attaching all north of latitude 37° to Colorado.⁸⁵

Indeed, to many Americans, New Mexico was a veritable financial sinkhole. A wasteland of pastoral, non-industrial ‘Mexicans,’ sedentary but sometimes hostile Pueblo Indians and nomadic and semi-nomadic marauding savages. It was difficult for Americans to see any value in protecting it. Meanwhile, even the well-intentioned territorial governors were almost completely helpless. When early governor Calhoun took over the State of New Mexico he discovered that it was an impossible job due to a lack of support. After six months in office he wrote, “without a dollar in our treasury, without munitions of war, without authority to call out our militia, without the cooperation of the military authorities of this territory, and with numberless complaints and calls for protection, do you not perceive I must be sadly embarrassed and disquieted?”⁸⁶

At the same time, the army was asking “What’s the problem? All is quiet.” Of course it was; Indians didn’t attack forts (not until 1860). No doubt, New Mexicans were amazed by the incredible show of complete indifference and incompetence by their new ‘Owners.’ At least when they were Mexicans, they knew they were on their own and the government didn’t even bother to make feeble promises. In 1852 John Greiner, Indian Agent for New Mexico, reported, that there were in his estimation 92,000 natives in the Territory with 1,000 U.S. troops to keep them in line. The Dragoon horses were heavy and in poor shape while the Native horses were, “as fleet as deer.” “Cipher it up,” he wrote, adding that the Dragoons knew nothing about the countryside and the Natives always had a head start. “So far, although several expeditions have started after them, not a single Indian has been caught!”⁸⁷



Stephen Watts Kearny

A person could get the feeling that the Army was actually there, not to serve and protect, but rather to keep the inhabitants in their place – more like jailors in a vast desert prison. The United States’ real interest was not in New Mexico itself, but in the connection it made to California. It was a giant dust bunny on the road to gold dust Utopia. Somewhere along the way, the benign 1846 American occupation of New Mexico had turned into a perverse and repressive government. In the confusion following General Kearny’s entrance, occupation, and establishment of laws, President Polk had revoked Kearny’s accomplishment and with nothing

⁸⁵ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 310, footnote 235.

⁸⁶ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 284.

⁸⁷ Colonel George Archibald McCall, *New Mexico in 1850: A Military View* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1968), 188.

immediately forthcoming to replace it, left the Territory in utter confusion. The American response was a form of chaotic repression, enforced by the Army, the repercussions of this mismanagement were still being felt up into the American Civil War (and perhaps further). Unfortunately, in 1847, the problem had been further exacerbated by the 'rebellion' of people who still considered themselves to be citizens of Mexico. Since then, although the civil legislature had made great strides in sorting out the laws of the land, apparently the Army still kept their attitude of guarding America against New Mexico. To New Mexicans these conditions represented the mind set of the country that had taken them over, not the promise that Kearny had made in 1846, which was to protect them and their rights rather than repress them.⁸⁸

Old habits die hard. Even the catastrophe of a pending Texan invasion did not prompt supporting action. Once again, New Mexico, along with the inadequate support of the remaining U.S. Regulars, was on her own. And New Mexicans had more than Texans to fight, they had the Amerindians as well: Comanche, Apache, and Navajo. By 1860, the hostile native situation had become intolerable. The Apaches believed that the disappearance of the Butterfield Stage Coaches and the withdrawal of U.S. troops meant that they were winning their fight. It appeared that the Americans were leaving. With renewed force the Chiricahua and Mimbrenño Apaches attacked and by May Mesilla Valley citizens were receiving deadly raids almost daily.⁸⁹ In the southeastern part of the Territory Mescalero Apaches, in the north and east Utes, Comanches, and Kiowas also struck with impunity, but Lt. Col. Canby refused to be distracted from the threat of a Texan Invasion.⁹⁰

The report of the Indian Agent stated that during 1859 and 1860 almost three hundred people had been killed by Natives along the San Juan and Las Animas Rivers alone. The Mines had had to be abandoned. Elsewhere forty Americans and fifteen 'Mexicans' had been killed. The Army foray into Navajo country had been almost fruitless except for the destruction of Native livestock. Many of the peaceful Navaho, the ones who had suffered from the depredations of others asked for a twelve month peace.⁹¹

But New Mexicans knew from experience the Navajo problem was not so easily solved. They had made many treaties in the past. Navajo renegades called 'ladrones' ('thieves' in Spanish), young men who were not under the leadership of any of the established chiefs and did not recognize their treaties had continued raiding at will; and if the Native Americans had trouble keeping treaty agreements, it goes without saying that so did the U.S. government and its agents, and often the civilians themselves. And here in the Territory, some of the New Mexicans also aggravated the already complicated situation. The most western village of Cebolleta was expressly a staging place for slave gathering. The "Cebolleteños," as they were called, made raids upon the Navajos to capture boys and girls who could be sold as slaves. Wealthy New Mexicans had a custom by which they would give newlyweds one or two slaves as wedding gifts.⁹²

During the 1850s, the Native American problem appeared to be insoluble. The raiding by hostile tribes would not end until all New Mexicans were destroyed or the belligerent tribes were decisively defeated once and for all – and no one could see any possibility of the latter occurring. At various times in their history, New Mexicans had solved Indian crisis on their own, through punitive raids as well as through gifts and trading. They could do it again, given the resources. But if the Americans lacked confidence in the New Mexicans, the New Mexicans must have felt even more so about them. To New Mexicans the Americans appeared to be completely

⁸⁸ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, The History of the Military Occupation of the Territory of New Mexico (Arno Press, New York, 1976), 180.

⁸⁹ Josephy, American West, 50.

⁹⁰ Josephy, American West, 51.

⁹¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 319-320.

⁹² Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 304, footnote 228.

incompetent. One resolution of the New Mexico Council in December 1852 read: "...since the entrance of the American army under General Kearny this Territory has been a continual scene of outrage, robbery and violence carried on by the savage nations by which it is surrounded; that citizens daily are massacred, stock stolen, our wives and daughters violated and our children carried into captivity."⁹³

The violence continued almost entirely unabated and by the latter part of the decade, the trust of the people of New Mexico in the U.S. Army was at an all time low. Even though there were more Army troops in New Mexico now than there had ever been in the Mexican or Spanish periods, the Indian problem had not improved. In fact, according to the locals, it was getting worse. The situation was so bad that when the Texan invaders finally overran Socorro, New Mexico in 1862, a leading Hispanic merchant and farmer named Pedro Baca, said, "The United States Government was a curse to this Territory, and if the Texans would take and keep possession of New Mexico the change could only be for the better."⁹⁴ Little did Baca know that the Texans had just as many problems with the marauding natives as the Federals. Some people take Baca's statement to indicate a marked disloyalty among the New Mexicans, but needing protection is not disloyalty. In actuality his words are an indication of the complete and utter frustration of New Mexicans with the United States and particularly with the US Army. A typical statement of the pre-Civil War period is as follows: "The American troops are at war with the Indians, and if they could only catch them (the Navajós), would give them fits, but Colonel Sumner is on his way back from their country without even seeing one of them." Not to mention that while Sumner was ranging out to capture the Natives many of them had apparently doubled back to within twenty miles of the capital and stolen livestock.⁹⁵ Another civilian wrote that the entire countryside was controlled by the Natives and Citizens were only safe at an Army Post, or in villages or towns. And when they traveled they had to go in large groups for safety, "or at night by stealth, trusting to Providence, or luck, each according to his faith."⁹⁶

The American reluctance to arm the New Mexicans turned out to be a mistake, because in response to Indian raids, the locals usually reacted quicker and chased the raiders longer and harder than the U.S. troops did. Traditionally, at the first sign of trouble, a drummer in a village plaza would sound the alarm. Grabbing weapons and ammo from the town's armory, and a few rations, all the available able-bodied men would quickly assemble in the plaza and ride off after the perpetrators. Immediately following, the villagers would begin packing a supply wagon with extended rations and when ready, the wagon and more men would follow the pursuers. Meanwhile, a message had to be sent to the nearest military installation, an army detail had to be assigned; they would draw a few days rations and then ride out, often hours after the crimes had been committed. When the rations ran out, the soldiers returned. By then, in most cases, the New Mexicans had already caught or lost the raiders and the event was closed. Consider this typical event written down by Samuel Woodworth Cozzens in his book "The Marvelous Country."

At La Mesilla, approximately in 1858, a family of Mr. E. J. White were traveling to Fort Buchanan near Tucson. His party included himself, his wife and infant, and two Mexican servants. Cozzens and his group were staying in town to replenish supplies. He was awakened early in the morning by the beating of a drum in the town plaza. He hurried outside to where a group of New Mexicans were hearing an account by two ranchers from the Rio Mimbres area. They had found the scalped bodies of two men, an American, and a New Mexican. The women and infant were assumed to have been captured. Cozzens rode hastily to Fort Fillmore a few

⁹³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 292.

⁹⁴ Jerry D. Thompson, Ed., With the New Mexico Militia: The Civil War Diary of Major Charles Emil Wesche (Password, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1994), 46.

⁹⁵ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 284, footnote 206.

⁹⁶ William Wallace Mills, Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898, W. W. Mills, 1901, 26.

miles away. He returned to find that an expedition had been gathered to chase after the marauders. Cozzens and about six other Americans volunteered to go with them. They were aware that the group was very encouraged because Don Manuel Chaves and Don Jesús Armijo, two of the most celebrated Indian fighters had agreed to go with them.⁹⁷

Despite the best efforts of the Volunteers, Mrs. White and the infant did not survive, and, even though a fort was nearby and the troops were alerted early on, the promised soldiers never arrived. Even after the Civil War, army practices were still no better and one New Mexican commented: "It is really a melancholy, if not shameful way in which the military go to work to protect the settlers on the frontier, especially so in time of actual danger." He continued his lament with the statement, "As soon as the news reaches a post that depredations by Indians have been, or are being committed, a troop of cavalry or even infantry, is called out, on the spur of the moment, who, reaching the scene of the disaster, either find the bird flown or if in the neighborhood, the supplies of rations which were taken along, will not justify the troops to follow on the trail, and home they go again."⁹⁸

The army was not always lethargic. There were instances when they took the field aggressively after an emergency, as in the case of another Mrs. White who unfortunately met the same fate. On that occasion, the U.S. Cavalry was assisted by Kit Carson as well as by Captain Valdez' mounted New Mexico Volunteers from Mora. But the lack of response happened all too often nonetheless. From the Army's point of view they had been very active during the 1850's. Here are the highlights of their engagements:

1849 October 24 near Las Vegas, detachment of 3rd Artillery [precipitated the Jicarilla/Ute War].

1849 Nov. 15, Co. I 1st Dragoons, destroyed a Jicarilla Camp on the Canadian River.

1852 Feb. 2 fight on the Jornada del Muerto, detachment of Troop H, 1st Dragoons.

1852 Jan. 24-Feb. 19 near Laguna on the Jornada del Muerto, Troops D, E, and K, 2nd Dragoons.

1852 Feb. 6, near Ft. Webster, N.M., K Company, 3rd Infantry.

1854 March 30, Battle of Cienguilla versus Jicarilla Indians at Cienguilla NM, detachments Co. F & I, 1st Dragoons [the most decisive Indian battle of the decade, the dragoons were almost destroyed].

1855 Jan. 15 White Mountains, Troop H, 1st Dragoons.

1855 Jan. 19 Peñasco River, near White Mountains, Troop B, 1st Dragoons.

1855 March 19 Cochotopé Pass, Chowatch Valley, N.M., Troops D and F, 1st Dragoons and D Company, 2nd Artillery.

1855 May 1-2, Chowatch valley N.M., Troop D, 1st Dragoons and D Company, 2nd Artillery.

1855 June 13, on Pecos River, Company I, 5th Infantry.

1856 March 20, Almagre Mountains, N.M., Companies B and I, 3rd Infantry.

1856 March 29, Mimbres Mountains, Companies B and I, 3rd Infantry.

1856 November 30, Sacramento Mountains, N.M., detachment of Company C Mounted Riflemen and G Company, 1st Dragoons.

1857 March 9, Mimbres Mountains, Detachment Company G, Mounted Riflemen.

1857 March 11, Ojo del Muerto, detachment Company B, Mounted Riflemen.

⁹⁷ Marc Simmons, *The Little Lion of the Southwest* (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 140-142.

⁹⁸ William A. Keleher, *The Fabulous Frontier* (The Rydal Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1946), 6, footnote.

1857 May 24, Mogollon Mountains, Companies C, D, and I, Mounted Riflemen; Company B and detachment of Company E, 3rd Infantry.

1857 June 27, Gila River, Companies B and G, 1st Dragoons; B, G, and K, Mounted Riflemen; Company C and detachments F and K, 3rd Infantry; Companies B, H, and I, 8th Infantry.

1857 December 7, Ladrones Mountains, detachment Company F, Mounted Riflemen.

1857 December 13, Dragoon Springs, detachment Company F, Mounted Riflemen.

1858 March 11, Huachuca Mountains, detachment Company G, 1st Dragoons.

1858 May 30, near Fort Defiance, detachment Company I, Mounted Riflemen; Companies B and G, 3rd Infantry.

1858 August 29, Bear Springs, detachment Company I, Mounted Riflemen.

1858 September 9-15, Laguna Chusca and vicinity, Companies A, F, H, and I, Mounted Riflemen; Companies B and C, 3rd Infantry.

1858 November 9, Carrizozo, Company F, 3rd Infantry.

1859 January 25, Whetstone Springs, detachment Company D, 1st Dragoons.

1859 February 8, Dog Canyon, Sacramento Mountains, detachment Company D, Mounted Riflemen.

1859 April 27, near Ft. Fillmore, Company D, 1st Dragoons.

1859 November 12-26, various fights with the Pinal Apaches, Company D and detachment Company G, 1st Dragoons; Company A and detachments Companies C and H, Mounted Riflemen.

1859 November 14, Tunica, detachments Companies B, C, E, and G, 3rd Infantry.

1859 December 3, Santa Teresa, detachment Company A, Mounted Riflemen.

1859 December 18, detachment Company A, Mounted Riflemen, at Santa Teresa.⁹⁹

Notice how the number of skirmishes escalates in the latter years – and the escalation would continue well into the Civil War when it would reach peak proportions. But this list of battles only represents responses to a tiny fragment of the number of atrocities that were committed by marauding Native Americans almost daily. The Memorial of December 28th, 1854, for example, by the New Mexico Council, cited innumerable losses of livestock and property, yet the Federals list only one battle in that year, and it was one that had gone very badly at that.¹⁰⁰ At the battle of Cienguilla two companies of the 1st Dragoons were almost wiped out, the survivors barely escaped with their lives. It was the worst defeat at the hands of Native Americans of the decade. This did nothing to promote confidence in the U.S. Army. But throughout the decade a steadily growing problem soon ensured that the Indian problem was not the only issue. Though most Americans felt that by conquering New Mexico the U.S. had inherited its ‘Indian problem,’ no one stopped to think how New Mexicans had received America’s problem – slavery and the Civil War. New Mexicans must have wondered what they had gotten themselves into.

The New Mexicans

Before 1846, Americans who traveled into New Mexico came as people who visit a foreign country. They came with a respect for the customs and language of the inhabitants. They had to treat the New Mexicans as equals, as business partners, neighbors, and sometimes as family. If they wanted to stay, they had to integrate and live with the people that were here.

⁹⁹ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 300, footnote 225.

¹⁰⁰ Keleher, *The Fabulous Frontier*, 9-10, footnote.

Once New Mexico became American, the majority of people who came did so as opportunists; as those taking advantage of ‘new ownership,’ where laws and enforcement were minimal. Some were just running from the law or some other misfortune. Others came to carve out personal financial and land-based empires; while others were soldiers who had been assigned to harsh duty on the frontier. Almost overnight, the native inhabitants found themselves to be second-class citizens in their own country. Only with difficulty did they begin to understand the laws, customs, and speech of the newcomers. Even before the American conquest, it was apparent to leading New Mexicans that the United States would eventually cause a profound influence on the Territory. This prompted more than a little concern among Hispanic New Mexicans who deliberated on how to deal with these problems. “Reportedly in 1841, when he [José Francisco Chaves, future Lt. Colonel of the 1st NM Volunteer Infantry] departed for St. Louis to enter college, his father, Mariano Chaves, said: ‘the heretics are going to overrun the country. Go, learn their language; come back to defend your people.’”¹⁰¹

As noted by Keleher in his book “The Fabulous Frontier” the problems faced by New Mexico were entirely unique to that region. “No other state or territory had language or racial difficulties comparable to those with which New Mexico was obliged to contend.” The American occupation had disturbed the everyday affairs of the New Mexicans and now they were faced with new laws and customs. The federal government should have helped lessen condition there but it didn’t.¹⁰² Conversely, Americans did not easily understand the New Mexicans either and continued to keep many misperceptions. They needed to learn about the historical developments that had brought New Mexico into the Union in the first place. General Kearny had invaded the province in 1846, arriving in Santa Fe and raising the flag of the United States in the plaza on August 18. Later that year, resistance against the American invasion broke out in several locations. It was suppressed by U.S. Dragoons and Artillery with the assistance of a company of New Mexico Volunteers, most of which were Americans living in New Mexico. But, surprisingly, at least two of the volunteers were Hispanic New Mexicans. Thus the volunteering of New Mexicans to fight alongside Americans began with at least two men, not in 1861, but early in 1847.

Ceran St. Vrain was commissioned as Captain of a volunteer company known as the “Emergency Brigade” and he quickly recruited sixty five men to enlist. But he specifically talked to two New Mexicans that he wanted, Nicolás Pino and Manuel Chaves. He must have known of their exploits and skills. He offered Chaves an officer’s commission but he only would join as a private. Perhaps he did not want to have any confrontations with the other Americans during their term of service. “Thus, after taking a formal oath of allegiance to the United States,” Marc Simmons writes, “Chaves entered service as a private, and his friend Nicolás Pino followed suit.”¹⁰³

St. Vrain’s volunteers participated in the three main clashes of the 1847 rebellion. They guarded the supply wagons at the Battle of Santa Cruz de la Cañada, and successfully warded off a large party of rebels who attempted to capture them. A few days later at Embudo Station, they led the U.S. Forces as skirmishers and drove the enemy from the valley on their front. At Taos, they helped surround the Pueblo and guarded against any possible escape by rebels. During one breakout attempt, Ceran St. Vrain was repaid for his trust in Manuel Chaves, when Manuel saved his life from certain death. A Rebel had knocked Ceran off his horse and was about to stab him with a knife when Manuel hit the attacker on the head with his Hawken rifle, rendering him senseless.¹⁰⁴ In the same year another company of New Mexican volunteers campaigned against

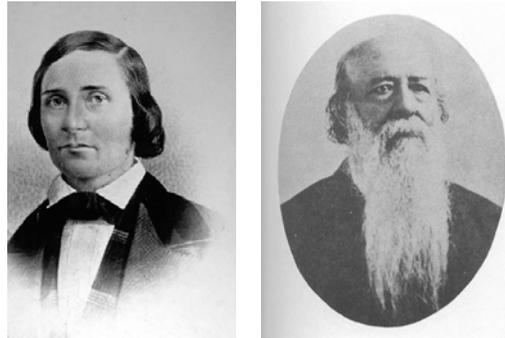
¹⁰¹ Ream, *New Mexico’s Past*, 42.

¹⁰² Keleher, *Fabulous Frontier*, 6.

¹⁰³ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 102.

¹⁰⁴ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 108.

Apaches under the command of Major Edmundson in May. Then in August a company organized by Captain Ramón Luna from Las Lunas went against the Navajos.¹⁰⁵



L-R Manuel Chaves, Nicolás Pino

After the Mexican War, the Territory of New Mexico was officially ceded to the United States and there was no longer any question to which country it belonged. Furthermore, New Mexicans were given a choice. “The treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo [in 1848] provided that residents could choose: leave New Mexico entirely, or remain by declaring their preference of citizenship – Mexico or the United States.”¹⁰⁶ About 1,500-2,000 citizens chose to become Mexican and were relocated with aid from the Mexican Government to Chihuahua and southern New Mexico, which was still part of Mexico at the time. The remainder had decided to become Americans, and after that, New Mexicans did not consider themselves to be anything but Americans. But Americans did not think of them the same way – to them, they were still ‘Mexicans’ and were not even considered to be citizens.



José María Chaves

More Militia initiatives followed. In 1848 companies from Taos under Captains Marcial Tafoya and José María Valdéz went out after the Utes and Jicarrilla Apaches in June and July. After that, in the Spring of 1849 three more companies campaigned against the Navajos; guided by Captains John Chapman and Henry L. Dodge of Santa Fe, and Captain A. L. Papin of San Miguel. Two years later, two more battalions were organized against Apaches in 1851-52 and again in 1854. These battalions were commanded by Brigadier Generals José María Chaves and Manuel Herrera. But except for use as auxiliaries and guides, the army was more than reluctant to accept them as equals. Eventually, by 1855, Ute and Comanche depredations forced the U.S. Army to admit that it needed the New Mexico Militia, not just in defense of their own communities, but rather to assist the Regulars on campaign against the hostiles. They had done

¹⁰⁵ New Mexico Adjutant General Records 1847-1911; <http://elibrary.unm.edu>.

¹⁰⁶ Ream, *New Mexico's Past*, 56.

so before in smaller capacities as guides, but this time they were considered additional troops. Governor David Meriwether authorized the organization of a battalion of mounted militia.

The volunteers were not to be paid but they would be armed and supplied by the army. The battalion was to be commanded by Ceran St. Vrain. Ten companies were raised; two were posted on the frontier to protect vulnerable towns and four companies were sent on campaign in Colorado. The other four companies probably did garrison or escort duty for the Army. The company captains were Charles Deus of Santa Fe, Miguel E. Pino also of Santa Fe, José María Valdéz from Mora, Antonio María Vigil of Abiquiu, Pedro León Luján also of Abiquiu, William S. Cunningham from Santa Fe, Charles Williams of Taos, Francisco Gonzáles also of Taos, and Manuel A. Chaves from Santa Fe¹⁰⁷ Manuel Chaves became the captain of Company D, and Rafael Chacón served as the First Sergeant of Company B. Albert Pfeiffer served as a lieutenant. It must be noted here that the volunteers were not all Hispanic. A few were Americans, but in addition, a sizable number of men were Pueblo Indians. The Puebloans had traditionally served as allies and auxiliaries to the Spanish and then to the Mexicans in defense of the province, and they continued this practice into the American period up to and including the Civil War.

Colonel Thomas T. Fauntleroy was commander of the campaign. The base of operations was Fort Massachusetts, a miserable excuse for an outpost in south-central Colorado. It was a difficult time and the weather was bad. Both Chacón and Fauntleroy were taken sick at one point. After many fruitless days on the trail Manuel Chaves' Company D was sent on ahead where they located a Ute camp which they destroyed. After the campaign Fauntleroy commented, "The regular troops and the officers acted with the most admirable decision and promptitude, while the conduct of the volunteers excited my warm approbation."¹⁰⁸ The campaign was a success and the New Mexicans' abilities were finally recognized by their fellow soldiers in the field as well as by other American observers. W. W. H. Davis wrote:

An evidence of their patriotism and courage came under my observation. In the month of January, 1855, the governor of the Territory called for a battalion of mounted volunteers to assist the regulars in chastising the Indian tribes who were in hostile array, and in a very few days more companies offered their services than could be accepted. They served for a period of six months; and it is the unanimous testimony of the United States officers who were on duty with them, that in all the conflicts with the enemy they exhibited a courage equal to, and power of endurance greater than, the troops of the line. They were ever among the foremost in the fight, and were noted for their good order and discipline; and I am justified in saying that a desire to serve the country sent them into the field, since the greater part of them had nothing to lose from Indian depredations.¹⁰⁹



William W. Loring

¹⁰⁷ New Mexico Adjutant General Records 1847-1911; <http://elibrary.unm.edu>.

¹⁰⁸ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Davis, *El Gringo*, 219.

At various intervals the Army continued to call for New Mexico Volunteers, companies were formed, and pressed into service. Usually they were limited to guarding or garrisoning a location, or moving supplies, or to scout ahead.¹¹⁰ No one failed to notice that on extended campaign, the New Mexicans rode harder and longer, and engaged the natives ahead of the US troops. Colonel Loring found this out first-hand. In June 1857 “Old Blizzard” was on a campaign with 300 men against the Apaches in the Gila River area. He was guided by Captain Manuel Chaves’ company of spies and guides. At one point, Loring asked Manuel for his advice. Chaves replied that they must travel without stopping for rest or they would not catch the raiders. He asked Loring to allow him to go ahead with his company and he promised to overtake them. Loring realized Manuel’s scouts had much more endurance than his own troopers who were falling asleep in their saddles.¹¹¹

Chaves’ plan worked and the column caught up with and chastised the hostiles. Again, Loring was impressed. Meanwhile another campaign was simultaneously going on southern New Mexico in the area we now call Arizona. Colonel Bonneville at the head of a large force, including elements of the 3rd and 8th Infantries, some companies of Mounted Rifles, and Captain Ewell’s Company G of the 1st Dragoons. Paddy Graydon was in Ewell’s company at this time. This group was assisted by a company of spies and guides under the command of Blas Lucero. His company was a mix of Pueblo Indians and Hispanos. This column was after Apache tribes, including Mogollon, Coyotero, and others.¹¹²

A few years later, the volunteers were needed again. A war caused by the military and the government Indian agents had been going off and on with the Navajos since September 1858 and over three hundred citizens in the area had been killed since then. The military and the Indian agents were pushing the natives too hard in their demands, causing them to go on the warpath. New Mexicans tried to solve the problem on their own. In January 1860 Captain Jesús Velásquez of Conejos took a company out in January and another company of Pueblo Indians from Laguna took the field in June. Then Captain Francisco Leiva of Galisteo also campaigned in August, but it wasn’t enough.¹¹³ In August of 1860 several people were murdered near Santa Fe and the citizens could stand it no longer. They conducted a meeting in Santa Fe on August 29, 1860, and voted to raise a volunteer battalion.¹¹⁴

A battalion of 450 New Mexicans was quickly raised. Governor Abraham Rencher originally supported the formation of this battalion but the U.S. Secretary of State, Lewis Cass, ordered him to oppose it. One factor that did not help New Mexico’s position in Washington D.C. was that Congressional Representative Miguel Otero had stated that New Mexicans could take care of themselves in regards to Indian depredations. Rencher asked Col. Fauntleroy for support. However, Fauntleroy also was against the battalion and refused to provide them with arms or ammunition. So they went out on their own anyway – an unprecedented event in N.M. history under American rule, which no doubt, alarmed some of the authorities to a great degree. Obviously New Mexicans were tired of American incompetence and apathy, and they had decided to act on their own. Miguel E. Pino was elected Colonel and Manuel Chaves became the second in command as the Lt. Colonel. Chaves directed the companies in the field while Pino administrated the unit. There were six companies in all under Captains Narciso Santisteban from Bernalillo, Andrés Tapia from Santa Fe, Juan N. Gutierrez of San Miguel, J. Francisco Chaves

¹¹⁰ Simmons, Little Lion, 127.

¹¹¹ Simmons, Little Lion, 136-137.

¹¹² Jerry D. Thompson, Desert Tiger, and the Civil War in the far Southwest (University of Texas at El Paso), 1992.

¹¹³ New Mexico Adjutant General Records 1847-1911; <http://elibrary.unm.edu>.

¹¹⁴ Horn, New Mexico’s Troubled Years, 81.

from Peralta, Juan Gallegos of Cañada [Santa Cruz], and Ygnacio Baldéz of Santa Fe.¹¹⁵ The men supplied their own rations, clothing, arms, ammunition, and mounts.¹¹⁶

The march was very difficult in the winter weather and many mules and horses were lost to exhaustion and a lack of provender. The New Mexicans met the Navajos in a series of sharp engagements and returned in December when food and ammunition gave out. “Navajo hostilities were by no means ended with this foray, but it had been shown that the New Mexicans, acting under their own competent leader and campaigning in a country they knew intimately, could perform as well or better than regular army troops.”¹¹⁷ Navajo raids continued that winter and due to another public outcry, Colonel Fauntleroy reluctantly ordered another campaign, this time with both Regulars and Volunteers commanded by Major Edward R. S. Canby. Sibley was on this campaign too. Unlike the previous Volunteer campaign, Canby moved slowly and cautiously and it’s easy to imagine that the hardy Volunteers chafed under his command. “Colonel Canby did not accomplish much other than the destruction of large numbers of cattle and sheep belonging to the Indians, which caused the hostiles to sue for peace and an armistice of twelve months was agreed upon.”¹¹⁸

At one point in the campaign, an officer of Volunteers captured a Navajo prisoner and Canby sent a lieutenant to collect him. The New Mexican officer, newly promoted Captain Román Baca (Manuel Chaves’ half-brother), informed the subaltern that Canby should get his own prisoner and he hanged him from a tree rather than turn him over to the commander. And when the lieutenant returned to arrest him, with hands on his weapon, Román stated that he was ready to shoot it out to settle the question. Chaves, who was standing nearby, said, “He means it.” Presumably, the rest of the Volunteers appeared ready to back them up. The lieutenant and Canby backed down. Canby did not understand that the Volunteers who fought in defense of their homes were not normally paid; their only pay was any plunder they could pick up and, to them, prisoners were plunder. It was an ancient practice that could not be swept aside so casually. Even Governor Rencher had promised them they would be able to keep items captured from hostile natives and that included slaves.¹¹⁹

These were not the actions of timid or cowardly Volunteers. These were hard men who had thrived on a harsh frontier, and the fact that they were able to intimidate the U.S. Regulars is a significant one. Canby must have felt that the New Mexicans were not entirely controllable, and this incident may have been one that helped him form his opinion that the natives were not capable of looking to the common good. And more than likely, his professional pride had been damaged as well. Therefore it’s more accurate to say that Canby feared and mistrusted the Volunteers, and was not worried about their willingness to fight. He knew they were brave and he knew that they would fight, but in his confused mind, he may have wondered who they would fight. He would not forget the unauthorized campaign and the prisoner incident, which would cloud his judgment in the months to come. He was not alone in his mistrust. Many U.S. officials believed that the New Mexicans exaggerated the Indian problem and clamored for the organization of volunteers and extended campaigns merely to gain plunder and captives, perhaps some did, however, this would have been a completely moot point if the Volunteers on campaign were armed and paid by the government. Ironically, the refusal of the United States authorities to organize, arm, train, and pay New Mexico volunteer companies completely backfired on them, because if they had been doing so, they would have had a ready territorial guard to call up when the Civil War began.

¹¹⁵ New Mexico Adjutant General Records 1847-1911; <http://elibrary.unm.edu>.

¹¹⁶ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 159.

¹¹⁷ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 161.

¹¹⁸ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 319-320.

¹¹⁹ Simmons, *Little Lion*, 126.

By the time of the American Civil War, New Mexicans volunteering for military service alongside the Regulars was nothing new, and the Regulars knew that. In other parts of the Union, militia units dressed in parade uniforms and performed drills on Sunday afternoons; marched in civic parades, or appeared at patriotic holidays and community picnics. The majority of them were young men who had little or no military experience; and the same for the older men, unless they were veterans of the Mexican War. These militias may have had experience in modern drill, but not in campaigning and fighting. However, in New Mexico, not only were the volunteers anti-Texan to a man, they had been on at least one campaign, and many of them had been on several. Their officers were very experienced, Hispanics and Whites, mountain men, ciboleros (buffalo hunters), comancheros (Indian traders), rancheros, and freighters; men like Ceran St. Vrain, Kit Carson, Miguel Pino, Nicolás Pino, Manuel Chaves, José Francisco Chaves, Santiago (James) Hubbell, William Mortimore, José María Valdez, Rafael Chacón, and many others. They knew their troops, and the lay of the land, and the habits of the hostile natives as well. They were formidable allies, who had often guided, aided, and out-performed the Federals. As W. W. H. Davis wrote, "...in all the conflicts with the enemy they exhibited a courage equal to, and power of endurance greater than, the troops of the line [the Regulars]." If Canby and his officers had but realized it, they were receiving as experienced and campaign-hardened a militia as any other state in the Union. The New Mexican Volunteers entered the Civil War at a complete cultural disadvantage. Yet they proved themselves time and again.

Setting the Stage

As stated before, most Civil War historians tend to 'surgically' remove the events of the Civil War in New Mexico from the bigger picture, namely, that the Civil War in the west was actually a war within a war – the Indian wars. This is a mistake, because using only Civil War sources leads to misperceptions; such as the one that New Mexicans were cowardly. Or that they were unpatriotic because they were slow to join the volunteer army and thus leave their families open to Indian attacks. Another example is that historians point out the "pronounced disloyalty" of the 200 New Mexicans who joined the Confederate army in the Mesilla area. But how pronounced was it? These traitors were mostly transplanted Texans and Mexican renegades, some of them outlaws. Even after what the Texans considered to be a benign occupation, the New Mexicans did not rally to the Southern 'Cause.' Colonel Baylor, Confederate commander at La Mesilla was completely unconvinced of their support. He wrote to Sibley that the 'Mexican' population was definitely pro-Union. "Nothing but a strong force will keep them quiet," and he begged Sibley to send reinforcements."¹²⁰

A few American officers like Colonels Fautleroy and Loring did appreciate the abilities of the volunteers. Loring appreciated them enough to offer Manuel Chaves a commission in the Confederate Army, but Chaves answered that he had sworn an oath to the United States and its flag....so had Loring. He also asked other New Mexicans but none agreed to join.¹²¹

Another cultural barrier came from the fact that many New Mexicans who were proud and aware of their abilities exhibited a bravado that made many Americans uncomfortable. After all, their country had been stolen, their way of life was disappearing – what else did they have besides their personal pride? They were a 'kept' people and probably felt more like prisoners than Americans. Even the powerful Hispanic families were often made to feel like second class citizens. This is not difficult to imagine, especially since they were still referred to by the authorities as 'Mexicans,' not Americans. Ralph Twitchell, a leading New Mexico historian, laments that New Mexico should have become a state early on and the real character of the

¹²⁰ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 359, footnote 284.

¹²¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 360, footnote 285.

natives would have been revealed earlier. But as it turned out, their contribution of volunteers showed their true colors anyway.¹²²

To the utter surprise of Southerners everywhere, in 1861, Henry Connelly, newly appointed Governor of New Mexico, stated in his opening address before the legislature, “The [slavery] law is not congenial with our history, our feelings or our interests”,¹²³ and the law was repealed. Too late, Southern politicians realized that congressional delegate Miguel Otero did not speak for New Mexicans at all. In fact, the only person he had ‘spoken for’ was his new bride, Mary Josephine Blackwood, a native of Charleston, South Carolina. In 1861, after Miguel’s stint in Congress, President Lincoln asked him to become the U.S. minister to Spain, but Miguel declined the offer and went back to New Mexico where he was nominated to become secretary of the Territory. However, this position was not ratified by the Council because of his pro-southern politics. To Otero’s surprise, New Mexico was no place for a Confederate.

Even Governor Rencher attested to that fact. Soon after the surrender of Fort Sumter, he had become concerned when rumors regarding his loyalty began to circulate in Santa Fe as well as in Washington D. C. But there was no reason to worry. Although he was an avowed Southerner, he had taken an oath when he became governor and he stood by it, remaining true to the people of the United States and New Mexico. On April 20th he wrote to William H. Seward, Lincoln’s Secretary of State: “In all the popular meetings which I have noticed, the people express great attachment to the Union, and an earnest desire that it may be preserved...”¹²⁴

Thus, the character and temperament of New Mexico was not at all as it had initially appeared to the Southern States. Ironically, the abolition of slavery was not a new idea to New Mexicans, such as it was to Americans. It had already been illegal under Mexican rule. The slave laws that had been passed and repealed here had not changed anything for the locals. In their minds, there was no slavery in New Mexico. There was peonage and there were captive Indians but no slaves. And states rights? That argument did not seem to apply either, especially since they lived in a territory and were not even considered citizens. Some of the *Hidalgos* did have feelings for the South but these were stifled by the news of a new Texan invasion. That was enough to make anyone change sides.¹²⁵

Unfortunately for the South, very few people understood how New Mexicans felt about Texans. Even General Sibley didn’t have a clue. When rumors of yet another pending Texan invasion reached the populace, all thoughts of altruistic debates of freedom, slavery, peonage, and state’s rights took a back seat to that one concern. Now it was personal, and for some, it was extremely personal. The news brought the few recalcitrant *Ricos* into line with the sentiments of the majority of the Territory. Now the native Hispanic element either supported the Union, or at least were not openly opposed to it. This left transplanted southern whites as the majority of the pro-Southern, pro-Texan element in the Territory. And although at a disadvantage, they still tried to demonstrate their presence in order to sway or force the opinions of the people towards the South. Thus the actual mobilization for the Civil War in New Mexico began the same way it started in many border and western states, with shows of patriotism to either cause and demonstrations intended to influence the sympathies of the general populace. But events here were not as dramatic as in many places, including Colorado and California. Inauspiciously, the Civil War here in New Mexico began with a very small incident in the village of Taos. Someone took down the American flag in the village square. The entire village was incensed. Kit Carson, St. Vrain, Simpson, and five other men went to the mountains and cut a long pole and brought it back to town. They nailed a new flag onto it and raised it in place of the old one. Carson ordered

¹²² Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 278.

¹²³ Ream, New Mexico’s Past, 71.

¹²⁴ Horn, New Mexico’s Troubled Years, 87.

¹²⁵ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 357.

that it would fly night and day and he placed two men at the Bent-St. Vrain Store to keep an eye on it. No one touched it.¹²⁶



Christopher "Kit" Carson

In honor of this incident and under the approval of the United States Congress the flag in Taos traditionally still flies day and night. Prophetically, Kit had 'set the stage' of the development of New Mexico as a northern state, and events followed suit. Except for a lot of tongue-wagging, and the declarations of Texans living in Mesilla, that was pretty much the end of overt Southern demonstrations of loyalty in New Mexico. Although a few natives would join with the Southern forces, the state itself was overwhelmingly Union and its volunteers would fight for that cause. Unlike the U.S. Army, and the rest of America, there would be no 'pronounced disloyalty,' and when it came time to 'ante up,' contrary to prejudiced reports, they would fight toe-to-toe, equal or better than the U.S. Regulars. On May 4th, 1861, General Order No. 15 called for the mustering of 39 companies of New Mexico Volunteers, but it was not until June 16th that Canby was finally awakened from his confusion and indecision by another order from headquarters which required that the U.S. Regular Army troops leave the Territory.

¹²⁶ M. Morgan Estergreen, Kit Carson, a Portrait in Courage (University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 230.

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.”¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸ 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

¹²⁷ Canby to Headquarters 6/17/61, Official Records of the War of the Rebellion.

¹²⁸ 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.”¹²⁹ 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.¹³⁰

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.”¹³¹ 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.”¹³²

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.”¹³³ 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

¹²⁹ Paul to Anderson 6/16/61, Official Records.

¹³⁰ Canby to Headquarters 6/16/61, Official Records.

¹³¹ Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

¹³² Sibley to Loring 6/12/61, Official Records.

¹³³ 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.”¹³⁴ 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.”¹³⁵ 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, 1861.¹³⁶

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.¹³⁷ 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

¹³⁴ Anderson to Chapman 6/19/61, Official Records.

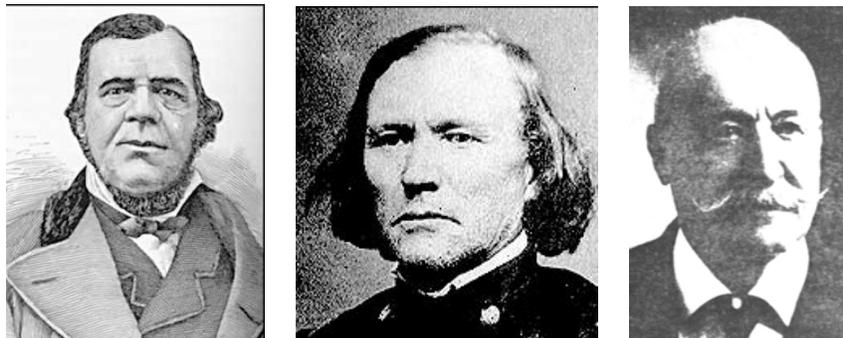
¹³⁵ Anderson to Chapman 6/19/61, Official Records.

¹³⁶ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., *Leading facts of New Mexican History, Volume II*, (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), page 371.

¹³⁷ 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.”¹³⁸ 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.¹³⁹ 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

¹³⁸ Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 2003), 113.

¹³⁹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 400-401, footnote 326.

made a mistake and determined to return to the priesthood.¹⁴⁰ 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.¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴² 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."¹⁴³

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.¹⁴⁴

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

¹⁴⁰ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 129.

¹⁴¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 338-340.

¹⁴² Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 374-375, footnote 8.

¹⁴³ Chris Emmett, Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest (University of Oklahoma, 1965), 237.

¹⁴⁴ 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.¹⁴⁵ 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.¹⁴⁶

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.¹⁴⁷ 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,¹⁴⁸ 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.¹⁴⁹

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."¹⁵⁰

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.

¹⁴⁵ Canby to Washington D.C. 6/20/61, Official Records.

¹⁴⁶ Canby to Rencher 6/22/61, Official Records.

¹⁴⁷ Canby to Headquarters 6/23/61, Official Records.

¹⁴⁸ Canby to Lynde 6/23/61, Official Records.

¹⁴⁹ John P. Wilson, *When the Texans Came* (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Anderson to Chapman 6/23/61, 55.

¹⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵¹ 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."¹⁵²

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.¹⁵³

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

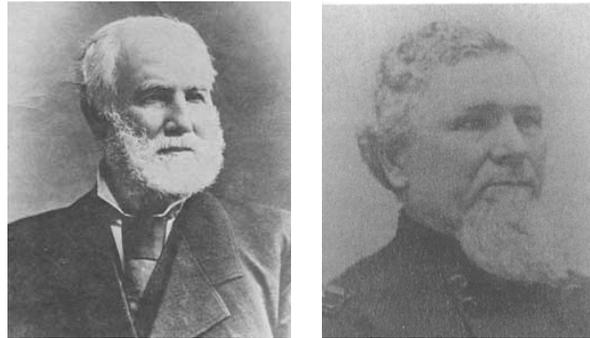
¹⁵¹ Mills, *Forty Years*, 11-12.

¹⁵² Mills, *Forty Years*, 38.

¹⁵³ Canby to Morris 6/25/61, Official Records

volunteers would be outfitted as mounted rifles rather than as cavalry. Rafael Chacón notes that 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.¹⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵



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

¹⁵⁴ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 192.

¹⁵⁵ Canby to Chapman 6/30/61, Official Records.

against that liability.¹⁵⁶ By now Canby was convinced that the horse raids in the south were not 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.¹⁵⁷

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.¹⁵⁸ Canby wrote to the Governor the same day asking again for two more companies of volunteers to muster at Albuquerque.¹⁵⁹

The same day, on the 1st of July, Colonel Chapman received the first company of New Mexican Volunteers to report for duty.¹⁶⁰ 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.¹⁶¹ Valdez was also a brother-in-law of St. Vrain as he had married one of the famous Jaramillo sisters, Manuela.¹⁶² 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 old¹⁶³ 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.¹⁶⁴ This was to be the first of many disappointments.

On July 2, Captain Arthur Morris [Morrison] brought in another company,¹⁶⁵ ninety-one men from Las Vegas.¹⁶⁶ 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

¹⁵⁶ Canby to Washington D.C. 6/30/61, Official Records.

¹⁵⁷ Canby to Lynde 6/30/61, Official Records.

¹⁵⁸ Anderson to Roberts 7/1/61, Official Records.

¹⁵⁹ Canby to Rencher 7/1/61, Official Records.

¹⁶⁰ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

¹⁶¹ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

¹⁶² Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives, 113.

¹⁶³ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 25.

¹⁶⁴ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

¹⁶⁵ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

¹⁶⁶ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

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 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.¹⁶⁷ Morrison must have gotten through the trial somehow, paid the fine, served some time, or cleared himself.¹⁶⁸ 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.¹⁶⁹ 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.¹⁷⁰

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

¹⁶⁷ National Park Service, Fort Union; www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books

¹⁶⁸ National Park Service, Fort Union.

¹⁶⁹ Jerry D. Thompson, Desert Tiger, and the Civil War in the far Southwest (University of Texas at El Paso, 1992), 79, footnote 213.

¹⁷⁰ Brocchus to Cameron 7/3/61, Official Records.

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.

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 his men were on foot.

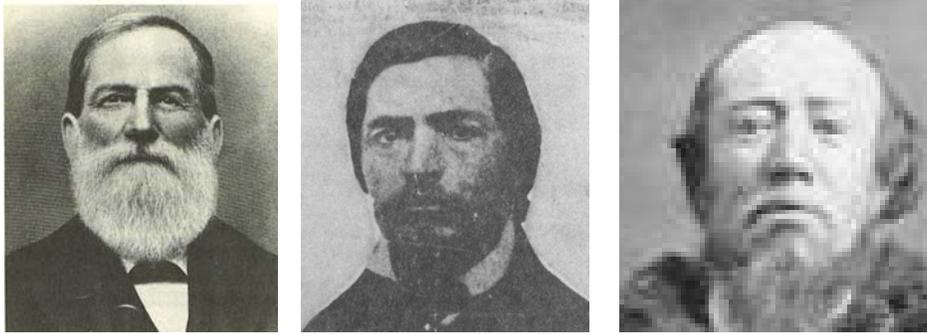
On July 4, Independence Day, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to Congress, calling for 400,000 volunteers and 400 million dollars to pay for them. The money and the authority to raise volunteers were granted. But precious little of that money would come to impoverished New Mexico, at least not for 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 volunteering wasn'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."¹⁷¹ 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.¹⁷² 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

¹⁷¹ Emmett, *Fort Union*, 241.

¹⁷² National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

emigrated from his native Germany at the age of twenty-two and arrived in New Mexico in 1846 where he became a Taos trapper, guide, and mountain man. He had served as a lieutenant in St. Vrain's 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."¹⁷³ 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.¹⁷⁴

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.¹⁷⁵ 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.

¹⁷³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 374, footnote 298.

¹⁷⁴ Emmett, Fort Union, 239.

¹⁷⁵ Anderson 7/6/61, Official Records.

On the 6th of July Canby wrote to Governor Gilpin 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 be armed and equipped but no clothing would be issued.¹⁷⁶ 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.¹⁷⁷ 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.¹⁷⁸ He placed Captain Francisco Abréu, 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 Abréu 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 was to be surrounded by brush to screen it from view."¹⁷⁹

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

¹⁷⁶ Canby to Gilpin 7/6/61, Official Records.

¹⁷⁷ Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 368-369, footnote 291.

¹⁷⁸ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Anderson 7/7/61, 59.

¹⁷⁹ Emmett, *Fort Union*, 240.

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 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.¹⁸⁰

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.¹⁸¹ 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]."¹⁸²

On the 8th Captain Jesús María Sena y Baca and his Company F of the 1st Regiment was mustered in at Santa Fe.¹⁸³ 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.¹⁸⁴ 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.¹⁸⁵

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 and 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."¹⁸⁶ This is

¹⁸⁰ Canby to Washington 7/7/61, Official Records.

¹⁸¹ Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

¹⁸² Lynde to Canby 7/7/61, Official Records.

¹⁸³ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

¹⁸⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Chapman 7/8/61, 61.

¹⁸⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Morris to Canby 7/19/61, 62.

¹⁸⁶ Canby to Washington D.C. 7/14/61, Official Records.

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 directive to capture the supplies at Fort Bliss, but Lynde remained inactive.¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸



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."¹⁸⁹ 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.¹⁹⁰

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

¹⁸⁷ William Wallace Mills, Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898, W. W. Mills, 1901, 46.

¹⁸⁸ Mills, Forty Years, 48-54.

¹⁸⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 7/21/61, 62-63.

¹⁹⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 7/21/61, 62-63.

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.

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.¹⁹¹

Three companies of Regulars were not present with the 7th US Infantry Regiment at Fort Fillmore at this time. Company F was at Fort Union and Companies 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.¹⁹² 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.”¹⁹³

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

¹⁹¹ Lynde to Canby 7/21/61, Official Records.

¹⁹² John Taylor, Bloody Valverde, A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 21, 1862 (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 64.

¹⁹³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Gay to Chapman 7/24/61, 63.

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 them. Apparently, rumors of whiskey in their canteens were true.¹⁹⁴ 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 enlisted 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 August 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."¹⁹⁵

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 Union¹⁹⁶ – a quiet but momentous event for the First Volunteer 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."¹⁹⁷ 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

¹⁹⁴ In conversation with John Wilson who did research on this subject.

¹⁹⁵ Canby to H.Q. St. Louis 8/16/61, Official Records.

¹⁹⁶ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

¹⁹⁷ Calvin Horn, New Mexico's Troubled Years; the Story of the Early Territorial Governors (Horn and Wallace, 1963), 88.

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 the treaty hereafter.”¹⁹⁸ 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 Volunteer 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 being the same situation as at the time of his previous report.¹⁹⁹

On July 30th Captain Duncan’s command returned to Fort Union from duty on the Santa Fé Trail. In his report on the 31st to Lt. Col. Chapman he stated 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 Instant [the current month], in command of Cos. “D”, “E”, and “H”, R.M.R. [Regiment Mounted Rifles], and Companies “A” & “B” 1st Regt. N.M. Volunteers.”²⁰⁰

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.²⁰¹ 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 Spiegelberg he joined a small congregation of Jews that met at the Spiegelberg 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, and probably didn’t like clerking much anyway.²⁰² No information 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

¹⁹⁸ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Gay to Chapman 7/28/61, 64.

¹⁹⁹ *Canby to Washington 7/29/61*, Official Records.

²⁰⁰ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Duncan to Chapman 7/31/61, 65.

²⁰¹ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

²⁰² Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, *Louis Felsenthal: Citizen-Soldier of Territorial New Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1982), 1-32.

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 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.²⁰³ The US Regulars were still supplying the enemy with materiel.

By this time there were seven companies of N. M. volunteers at Fort Union; five foot and two mounted.²⁰⁴ Kit Carson returned to the Fort on the 2nd of August and he related to Chapman some worrisome news he had heard on the way and 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 idea²⁰⁵

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.²⁰⁶

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 New Mexicans were thinking. To be fair, the New Mexicans must have 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 reports, the Volunteers would be doing a lot more digging than

²⁰³ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 370, footnote 293.

²⁰⁴ National Park Service, Fort Union.

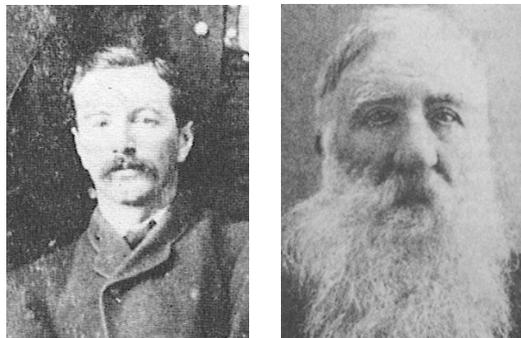
²⁰⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman 8/2/61, 67.

²⁰⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/2/61, 69.

drilling. On the 3rd of August Lt. Col. Carson assumed command of Camp Chapman, the camp of Volunteers.²⁰⁷

Captain Charles Deus, in charge of Company I which was mounted, mustered in his men on the 4th of August.²⁰⁸ 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 of 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.²⁰⁹ 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."²¹⁰ 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 field works: "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."²¹¹ 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 Canby had forgotten about it. Not wanting to admit the omission, Anderson's reply to Carson glossed over the fact that the Volunteers were already authorized to receive clothing as of two months earlier and instead 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. In his

²⁰⁷ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

²⁰⁸ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

²⁰⁹ Anderson to Chapman 8/5/61, Official Records.

²¹⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 8/6/61, 72.

²¹¹ Chapman to Anderson, 8/7/61, Official Records.

communication, Anderson reiterated the instructions of General Order #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.”²¹² This statement is contrary to other correspondences and therefore 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.²¹³ 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.”²¹⁴ 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.²¹⁵ 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.²¹⁶

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 very 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 in an emergency. St. Vrain maintained his home 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 just excuse he needed to keep them.²¹⁷

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.²¹⁸ 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

²¹² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Carson 8/7/61, 74-75.

²¹³ Anderson to Carson 8/7/61, Official Records.

²¹⁴ Canby 8/8/61, Official Records.

²¹⁵ Canby 8/8/61, Official Records.

²¹⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Carson 8/10/61, 76.

²¹⁷ Townsend to Canby 8/13/61, Official Records.

²¹⁸ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

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 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.²¹⁹ Seemingly for this purpose, each man's horse and furniture was rated by the Army for their value upon mustering into service.²²⁰ Unfortunately, the Regulars were quite disdainful of the New Mexican horses which they thought were unsuited for cavalry work, and they unfairly rated the value of each horse accordingly. After the issue of arms, Chacón's company also received camp equipage, and tents, one for the Captain, one for both Lieutenants, one for cooking the officer's meals, and ten large tents for the company.²²¹

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..."²²² 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

²¹⁹ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 119.

²²⁰ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 119; and National Park Service, Fort Union.

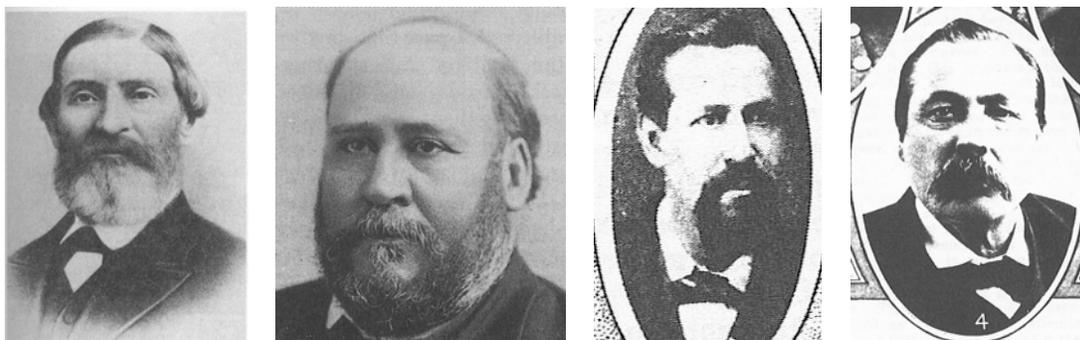
²²¹ Jaqueline Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 130.

²²² 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.

Chapter Four Recruitment Continues

July-August 1861

Sometime in July, the 2nd Regiment of New Mexico Volunteer Infantry also began recruiting. Colonel Miguel Estanislado Pino was appointed commander. Miguel was born in 1821 into a prominent New Mexican merchant family from Galisteo. His parents were Don Pedro Bautista Pino and María Baca. His father had represented New Mexico in the Spanish parliament. During that time, he had written *The Exposition on the Province of New Mexico, 1812*, which was first published in Cádiz, Spain, in that year. Like Manuel Chaves and his brother, Nicholas, Miguel was involved in the Santa Fe conspiracy against the Americans in 1846, but after the plot was discovered they all swore allegiance to the United States. Miguel had served in the New Mexico militia all his life. He was a Captain in St. Vrain's battalion in 1855, a Colonel of a battalion in 1860, and currently was appointed a Colonel of Volunteers by President Lincoln. His brother, Nicolás de Jesús Pino, who was two years older than he, would become Colonel of the 2nd New Mexico Militia. The eldest of the three brothers, Facundo Pino, was at this time the President of the Territorial Council. Miguel Pino selected his old comrade in arms, Manuel A. Chaves, as his second in command with the rank of Lt. Colonel. The Major of the regiment, third in command, was Jesús M. Baca y Salazar who was a good friend of Rafael Chacón. He had given Rafael a sword which he "preserved as a remembrance."²²³ Chacón considered him to be a very brave man. On the 1st of August Lt. Col. Chaves reported for duty at the army post in Albuquerque where the regiment was based. He was sworn in by brevet Major N. B. Rossell. Chaves' first assignment would be as commander at Fort Fauntleroy, located at Cubero, sixty miles west of Albuquerque. Because Col. Fauntleroy had turned out to be a Confederate the Fort was officially renamed Fort Lyon. However, the soldiers continued to call it Fauntleroy.²²⁴



L-R: Manuel A. Chaves, Lt. Colonel; Román A. Baca, Captain Co. E; José D. Sena, Captain Co. B., Candelario Garcia, 1st Lt., Co. E; 2nd Regiment

Along with reporting the muster of Manuel Chaves, Major Rossell stated that the people of Albuquerque "are a good deal scared. If we only knew who we could trust, but it seems as if the Devil had possession of so many that it makes me suspicious, and I am by nature just the contrary."²²⁵ Rossell was the man who had written that he wished he were back east and away from the New Mexican people. Certainly, the news regarding the 7th US Infantry had already

²²³ Jaqueline Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 170.

²²⁴ Marc Simmons, *The Little Lion of the Southwest* (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 241, footnote 15.

²²⁵ John P. Wilson, *When the Texans Came* (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Rossell to Canby 8/1/61, 112.

reached Albuquerque by this time and the people were very uncomfortable with the protection offered by the Regulars. Their discomfort and animated conversations in Spanish could have been interpreted any number of ways by the Americans.

The first eight companies of the Second Regiment were mustered in at Albuquerque while the First Regiment was gathering at Fort Union, but a little lagging behind their progress as the last two companies came more slowly. The first company to enlist was Company A under Captain Manuel A. Pino, possibly a younger relative of Col. Pino. Company B was commanded by Captain José D. Sena, a native of Santa Fe. His father, Don Juan Sena had immigrated to New Mexico from Mexico and had become a merchant trader. His wife was Isabel Cabeza de Baca. Captain Sena, along with the help of Lt. Col. Francisco Perea, quickly raised a company of infantry; most likely they were also men of Santa Fe.²²⁶ Company C reported for duty under the direction of Captain Manuel Baca y Delgado while Company D swore in under Captain Gregorio Otero. Following them, Company E, was commanded by Captain Román Antonio Baca. Baca was Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves' half brother. After Manuel's father died his mother had remarried to Román's father, José Antonio Baca. Often by his older brother's side, Román had risen through the ranks of New Mexico volunteers through personal exploits of bravery and he had been appointed Captain of a company during the Navajo campaign. It was he who had hung the Indian prisoner rather than turn him over to Canby and it was his older brother, Manuel Chaves, who had been present at the time, and Col. Pino had been their overall commander. As this incident had occurred barely six months earlier, it is more than conceivable that Canby had not forgotten nor forgiven it yet. Politically, this put the 2nd Regiment in a difficult position with Col. Canby from the very beginning of its inception. Its leadership had defied him before and he might have thought they would do it again. Canby definitely would keep a close eye on them, watching for defects.

On August 8th, Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves arrived at Fort Fauntleroy and took command of the garrison of three companies of the 2nd Regiment: Companies A (Pino's), B (Sena's), and C (Baca's). Fort Fauntleroy was a very important post as a frontier guard against marauding Navajos. Supplies were kept here to be used for future campaigns against the Navajos when necessary. It also served as a place for trade with the natives and it was the location from which the US Indian agent gave the allotted disbursements to the various Navajo tribes. Therefore, there was a lot of Navajo traffic at this post. Chaves' duty at this time was to maintain (or enforce) Canby's recent peace agreement with them. The other companies of the 2nd Regiment were stationed with Col. Pino at the headquarters in Albuquerque.

Throughout early August, enrollment of the volunteers continued and despite Canby's incessant worrying, volunteer companies were rolling in. So much so that on August 13, 1861, Anderson reported to Chapman at Fort Union that a third regiment of New Mexico volunteers would now begin recruiting: "Sir: I am instructed to inform you that the Governor has appointed José Guadalupe Gallegos of San Miguel, Lt. Colonel, José María Chaves of Abiquiu, Lieut. Colonel, Manuel Baca of Socorro and Joseph Cummings of Santa Fe, Majors of the Regiment of New Mexican Mounted Volunteers."²²⁷

Strangely enough, none of these three men, Col. José María Chaves, Major Manuel Baca, or Major Joseph Cummings, are listed in the enlistment records for the Third Regiment of volunteers. Possibly this was either a militia unit, or it was the early command structure of the Third Regiment and it was reorganized later. Some of Canby's later remarks seem to support this. José María Chaves was a longtime figure on the frontier and had been a General of New Mexico militia since 1851 and probably prior. Little could be found regarding Major Manuel Baca. Major Joseph Cummings was a professional Santa Fe gambler and a person of 'colorful'

²²⁶ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., Leading Facts of New Mexican History Volume II (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912, 388), footnote 314.

²²⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/13/61, 78.

repute. Later, Cummings would serve as Gen. Carleton's Provost Marshall when his true 'colors' as a self-serving scoundrel would be revealed.²²⁸



José María Chaves

The next day, on August 14th, Canby again wrote to Governor Gilpin of Colorado asking for the two companies of volunteers, however, the Governor had already complied with that request. He reported back to Canby that he had organized Company A and Company B, each of which had 101 men. The first was under the command of Captain J. P. Slough and the second, Captain Samuel F. Tappan. They had both been ordered to muster at Fort Garland in southern Colorado. Gilpin went on to report that there was in Colorado, "...a strong malignant element essential to be controlled." He also remarked that the state was fairly cut off from its sources of supply, namely, the United States, a supply line that snaked across 800 miles through Indian country. Self-defense was imperative, he declared.²²⁹

On the 16th Lt. Col. Roberts reported to Canby that Albuquerque had a sizeable garrison there. He now had ten companies: companies F, C and H, of the 7th Infantry, D and F, 5th Infantry; C, G, and K, Mounted Riflemen, D & G, 1st Dragoons; Captain James "Santiago" Hubbell's company of Mounted Volunteers, and the 2nd Regiment's companies of Captains Gregorio Otero, Company D, Ethan W. Eaton, Company F, and Román A. Baca, Company E. Of this number, he reported, "675 are regular troops, in effective condition, and all loyal and true men."²³⁰ Roberts also reported that at least half of his men did not have canteens and he understood that there were none to be had in the department.²³¹ Many of the volunteers would have crafted their own gourd canteens; others might have used bottles, tied with ropes or leather, anything to hold water.

Also on the 16th of August Canby wrote a long report to General Fremont at Army Headquarters in St. Louis which was to be the HQ for all western operations for the Union Army. He reported that Col. Loring had left the N.M. department and that he had not received any further instructions concerning the Volunteers. He reiterated Indian problems and also re-stated that he believed the Volunteers could not be relied upon "for defense of this Territory, unless supported by a considerable force of regular troops." Then he went on to relate how a superior force of these reliable Regulars had surrendered to a few hundred Confederates and were now, after having been paroled, on their way to Fort Union. He also notes that the headquarters of the 1st Volunteer Regiment was stationed at Fort Union and the 2nd Regiment at Albuquerque. He finished by wondering where the supply train was and whether Army Headquarters wanted to defend this department at all. In light of his lack of instruction it was a fair question. Then he

²²⁸ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 192-203.

²²⁹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 368-369, footnote 292.

²³⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 8/16/61, 114.

²³¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 8/16/61, 114.

spoke of his supply problems referring to the Department as “destitute...in military resources and supplies of every kind.” There wasn’t enough artillery, remounts for cavalry, draught animals, or ordnance stores. “If it is the intention of the Government to retain this department,” he wrote, “I urgently recommend that the supplies necessary for the efficiency of the troops (regulars or volunteers), and especially those already estimated for, should be furnished as soon as practicable.”²³²

On the 17th of August Captain W. R. Shoemaker, commander of the Ordnance Depot at Fort Union, wrote to Col. Canby to report that the stores at his depot amounted to two hundred and seventy thousand dollars worth - which he noted would be a great loss to the Union if the Texans attacked after the Regulars had been sent to the east. He also stated that the New Mexicans would not be able to defend this property without the support of the Regulars. He had Ceran St. Vrain and Christopher Carson sign agreement to the letter. Then he wrote a similar cover letter to Major General J. C. Fremont in St. Louis and enclosed the first letter. To Fremont he wrote, “I know that you are well acquainted with the character of this population, and need only to inform you that the volunteers recently raised here are not composed of the rancheros, or even of the better class of Mexicans, but, on the contrary, for you to see how entirely defenseless the Territory will be if the U.S. Army is withdrawn.”²³³

This was the same Fremont that Kit Carson had guided years ago to California and back. They had become fast friends and Carson visited him as often as he could. Fremont esteemed Carson’s friendship and judgment. He was also the guardian of Carson’s Arapaho Indian daughter, Adeline, daughter of Waa-nibe, Carson’s first wife.²³⁴ Perhaps it was this letter alone that convinced Fremont to allow the remaining Federals to stay in the Territory until the crisis of the Texan invasion had passed. Some people feel that this often-quoted letter is proof that Carson also lacked confidence in the Volunteers. However, we shall see later that this is not at all the case and more likely, Carson simply felt that New Mexico could use all the help it could get.

Fremont was born in Georgia in 1813. His mother moved her two sons and a daughter to Charlestown S.C. where they struggled to get by. The youthful John was described as “brilliant, unpredictable, and egotistical.” At 25 years he became a 2nd Lt. in the Topographical Engineers. He soon gained a very good reputation. He secretly married Jessie Benton in 1841 because it was against her parent’s wishes. In 1842 he was assigned to map the Oregon Trail with Kit Carson along as a guide. His report of that trip was a bestseller and launched Carson into instant national fame. In 1843-44 Fremont and Carson tried to find a trail through the Rockies. That idea failed and in 1845 Fremont organized a battalion of volunteers to go to California. It was because of this trip that Carson missed the Taos revolt. Later, Fremont had a disastrous expedition without Carson in 1848-49. He moved to California and served as a senator there in 1856. He was now a Major General in the Union Army but he would soon be removed for freeing the slaves in Missouri which caused an uproar in that unstable state.²³⁵

On the same day, the 17th, Chapman reported to St. Vrain that 400 Texans were now in possession of Fort Stanton. However, the actual number was closer to forty than 400. He asked that St. Vrain have Carson send the Utes in that direction to “annoy this party.” He felt that Fort Union was vulnerable at this point and decided to keep the Volunteers “close in hand.”²³⁶ Then he wrote to Lt. Joseph G. Tilford of the US Regiment of Mounted Rifles (Third US Cavalry) that Captain Pfeifer would leave for the Fort Stanton area with a party of Utes. At this point Canby still wasn’t sure if the Confederate invasion would come from Fort Stanton or from the Mesilla

²³² Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Canby to St. Louis 8/16/61.

²³³ Official Records, Shoemaker to Fremont 8/17/61.

²³⁴ Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 2003), page 24; and Twitchell, Leading Facts II.

²³⁵ Story of the American West (Reader’s Digest Association, Pleasantville, NY, 1977), 166-167.

²³⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to St. Vrain 8/16/61, 80.

area. His new plan was to have ten companies of Volunteers, six foot companies of the 2nd Regiment and four mounted independent companies, stationed at Fort Craig with the 1st Volunteer Regiment at Fort Union and he would place a body of Regulars in reserve at midpoint in Albuquerque.²³⁷ That way he could easily reinforce whichever direction was threatened first. He continued to cling to his previous idea to employ the New Mexicans in static positions. While Volunteer foot companies continued to work on the earthworks at both forts, the mounted companies were employed in scouting on the eastern and southeastern plains. And the rumor mill kept grinding them out. Another rumor soon appeared that placed 150 Texans near the Rio Bonito. It was said they had treated the locals badly. This would have been Walker's men at Fort Stanton.²³⁸

On the 19th of August Canby again expressed his fears to Chapman, "I have not much faith in the disposition of the Mexicans to second us in this matter [the defense of NM] but will do whatever I can to rouse them and put the Territory in the best possible position for defense."²³⁹ Chapman replied the next day that the mounted scouts had reported in. They had found no sign of Texans in the Sierra Gallina area (towards Fort Stanton) and points in between there and Fort Union. He looked forward to Captain Pfeiffer's return with the Utes and he noted that the Volunteers had a better system for getting news than he did. "There appears to be a regular system of expresses between Santa Fe and the volunteer camp here, and I frequently hear news from the volunteer officers some hours, or even a day before it is communicated through the official channels."²⁴⁰

The next day Anderson sent out a circular that mounted volunteers were wanted at all locations.²⁴¹ Roberts reported to Canby on the same day on affairs at Fort Craig. He wrote that the people in the villages along the Rio Grande would readily fight to defend their communities but they did not want to join the Army in order to defend the forts. They didn't understand why it was necessary to organize in military units. Although volunteers were arriving at the fort in small groups more would undoubtedly join when the harvest season was over. "I am of the opinion that after the crops are secured, the Regiments of Volunteers will be filled up as well as the National Guards."²⁴²

On the 21st of August Captain Pfeiffer and the Utes returned to Fort Union. They found no signs of Texans on the eastern plains. Chapman complained that the number of volunteers out on scout duty would impede the work on the new fort, and he informed Anderson in Santa Fe that the Utes were on their way home because of sickness in the chief's family.²⁴³ Carson and Pfeiffer could not convince them to stay. At this time Chapman was aware that wagon trains containing uniforms for the volunteers had left Fort Leavenworth on the 22nd of July. "That train contains some seventy boxes of clothing &c. for the Volunteers..."²⁴⁴ To protect the incoming trains Chapman dispatched Lt. Col. Carson in charge of three companies of the 1st Regiment; Pfeiffer's (E), Sena's (F), and Deus's (I); as well as Captain Vigil's Independent Mounted Company. Chapman also organized a hand-picked group of mounted men from the 1st Regiment to leave on the next day to watch the approach from the Pecos River.

About this time the Federal officers noted that the lack of pay among the volunteers was beginning to be a problem and it would continue to get worse unless something was done. It was starting to affect morale. Since the last payroll had been stolen with the group of wagon trains

²³⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Roberts, 8/17/61, 82.

²³⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Rossell to Anderson 8/19/61, 161.

²³⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Chapman, 8/19/61, 84.

²⁴⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/20/61, 85.

²⁴¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson circular 8/20/61, 86.

²⁴² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 8/20/61, 121.

²⁴³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/22/61, 88.

²⁴⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Special Agent E.O. Perrin to Chapman 8/23/61, 89.

that were taken into Mexico, most of the Regulars and none of the Volunteers had been paid. Rumors began to circulate among the New Mexicans that it was not intended that they would ever be paid. Chapman, El Viejo, reported as much from Fort Union. Captain Vigil's Company of Mounted Volunteers had refused to reenlist after their three month hitch was up. "His men have become dissatisfied from a report...that they are not to be paid by the U.S. Govt. from the funds of the Territory." He also noted a significant problem in the distribution of horses among the volunteers. "The men and horses of the Mounted Companies at this post are unequally distributed, some companies having more men than horses and others the reverse."²⁴⁵ Anderson quickly emphasized that the Volunteers would be paid and the unequal distribution of horses would be rectified by direction of the Chief Quartermaster.²⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Captain Barrientos returned from his patrol to the Fort Stanton vicinity and reported on the conditions at the fort which he had learned from the locals. There were Confederates at Fort Stanton, the rumor had been true. It was a company of 80 men under the command of Captain James Walker. According to the locals they intended on occupying Manzano. It did not seem that they would be reinforced. Barrientos had received this information from a Don Francisco Sanches who was a prisoner of the Confederates for over a week.²⁴⁷ Captain Saturnino Barrientos' Mounted Independent Company had begun service in early August at Fort Craig for three months duration.

Also on the 24th Major Lynde of the 7th US Infantry and several of his officers reached Fort Union, the rest of his command arrived the next day. They encamped on a stream just to the north of the fort. The morning after they had settled in beside the stream that provided them with fresh water it suddenly dried up. Captain J. H. Potter followed it upstream and discovered that Captain Shoemaker had turned it aside to water his cabbage patch. Thus began the Cabbage Patch War. When Potter complained to Chapman the latter said it was not on government property and was therefore out of his jurisdiction. Potter took that to mean that he could take matters in his own hands and placed sentinels to watch the flow of the water. Then Shoemaker complained to Chapman saying he had been watering his garden for the last ten years without dispute. So Chapman negotiated a temporary settlement by which the water took redirections from camp to cabbage patch and etc. Then he sent word to Canby about the problem. Without joining in Chapman's duplicity Canby reminded him that the fort was at the center of an eight mile square and therefore the use of the stream by the men overruled Shoemaker's cabbage patch.²⁴⁸

These ill-fated men of the 7th Regiment seemed to have been cursed with water problems. First they were parched in the southern desert between Mesilla and San Augustine Pass, then they played second fiddle to a cabbage patch at Fort Union, and when they finally would set out across the plains bound for the east, many of them would become deranged with thirst and some of them would even drink their own blood. Hopefully, they fared better back 'in the States.'

Meanwhile Lt. Col. Benjamin Roberts had sent twenty men of the Dragoons and Mounted Rifles with Captain Hubbell and his company south from Fort Craig to scout the area around Robledo where the Texans were known to keep their advanced guard. Hubbell found them, about one hundred strong, thirty miles south of Fort Craig. On the 25th Confederate Col. Baylor reported to Confederate Headquarters that Captain Hubbell had been captured with nine of his men.²⁴⁹ However, the next thing we hear is that Captain Hubbell is chasing the Texans back to Mesilla. Most likely, if the Confederate report is true, his brother Charles rescued him and the

²⁴⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/24/61, 90.

²⁴⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Anderson to Chapman 8/25/61, 92.

²⁴⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Barrientos to Canby 8/24/61, 163.

²⁴⁸ Chris Emmett, Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest (University of Oklahoma, 1965), 245-246.

²⁴⁹ Official Records, Baylor to C.S. HQ 8/25/61.

battle continued. Captain Moore of the 1st Dragoons does not mention any capture of Hubbell in his report but instead states that Hubbell “opened a spirited fire upon their Camp, and seizing a good position, he skirmished with their entire force until daylight, when they abandoned the Camp and returned toward the Laguna.” Upon learning of this, Roberts immediately dispatched two groups of eighty Regulars, one under Captain Moore to reinforce Hubbell and one under Captain Lane to attempt to cut off the Texan retreat. When Moore arrived, he and Hubbell set off after the Texans.²⁵⁰ The next day, on the 26th Roberts reported that the Texans were not overtaken as they were “well mounted and had extra horses.”²⁵¹ As can be seen, Hubbell and his men were not, “more afraid of Texans than they were of death.” The NM Volunteers had fought their first engagement and they had won, with the Texans fleeing as fast as they could back to their base in Mesilla.



Santiago Hubbell
Captain Ind. Co.

On August 30th the Third New Mexico Regiment began recruitment. This new regiment would consist of mounted volunteers. There was some confusion at the time as to whether this regiment would be called the Third Regiment or the 1st Regiment of Mounted Volunteers. The designation as the Third Regiment eventually won out. This regiment was commanded by Colonel José Guadalupe Gallegos, Lt. Col. José María Valdez, and Major Luis Baca, Later, Major Faustino Baca y Ulibarri. Now there occurred something that fully illustrates the preference of the New Mexicans. Canby couldn't fill out the Second Infantry Regiment and the First still needed some recruits. He thought the New Mexicans were just being totally unpatriotic, but then he called for the Third Regiment to be mounted. It was originally intended to have only four companies but so many men joined that it soon had eight and finally ended up with a full ten...and this occurred in a very short time. Keep in mind that almost half of the First Regiment was mounted and several companies of the Second were unofficially mounted also. Following this, it soon became obvious that another mounted regiment, the Fourth, could also begin recruitment.

On the first day of recruitment Manuel Ortiz reported to Fort Union with a company of forty-eight men from Las Vegas. They became Company A of the 3rd Regiment and Ortiz became the 1st Lt. of the company. Chapman also reported that another thirty men would arrive that afternoon, presumably belonging to the same company.²⁵² The Third Regiment quickly mustered companies A, B, and C with Captains William Mortimore, Ricardo Branch, and Pedro Sánchez respectively. Records are unclear but the regiment would muster at least somewhere between 900 and 1,000 men. These companies were soon followed by the Regiment's 4th and 5th companies; Company D under Captain Severiana Martínez and Captain José Esquibel with

²⁵⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Anderson 8/24/61, 121.

²⁵¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Anderson 8/26/61, 124.

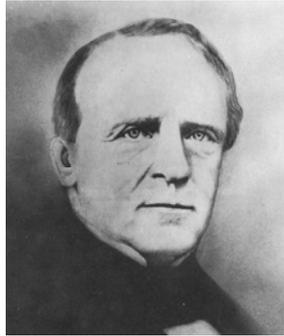
²⁵² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chapman to Anderson 8/30/61, 98.

Company E; soon after by their 6th, Company F under Captain John Brosee and 7th, Captain Juan Sarracino in command of Company G. The final companies were: Company H with Captain Pablo S. Martínez, Company K under Captain Tomas Valencia, and Company L, commanded by Captain Santiago Gonzales.

While the Third Regiment was gathering the recruitment of the 2nd Regiment continued to plod along and by the end of August they had picked up two more companies and their respective captains: Captain Ethan Eaton with Company F and Captain Anastacio Garcia of Company G. At the end of the month or in the first part of September, the eighth company of the 2nd Regiment would also be mustered. They would be designated as Company H under the command of Captain Juan Labadi. The last two companies of the Regiment would come in later. On the 31st of August, Captain José María Valdez joined the new Third Regiment. He resigned as Captain of Company A of the 1st Regiment to become a Lt. Colonel of the Third, apparently replacing Lt. Col. José María Chaves as second in command. 1st Lt. Francisco Gonzales became the new Captain of Company A, 1st Regiment.

September 1861

September brought New Mexico a change of governors and on the 4th, Governor Henry Connelly was sworn into office. He had been appointed by President Lincoln. It's surprising how much attention the beleaguered Lincoln paid to this far-flung Territory in these dark times. As has been suggested by some historians Lincoln was very interested in the American West. Unlike many governors before him (and after), Connelly took his office very seriously. Col. Canby now had a very firm and active supporter in public office. In his confirmation letter he wrote that he would accept the post noting that he had lived in New Mexico a long time.²⁵³



Doctor Henry Connelly
Governor of New Mexico

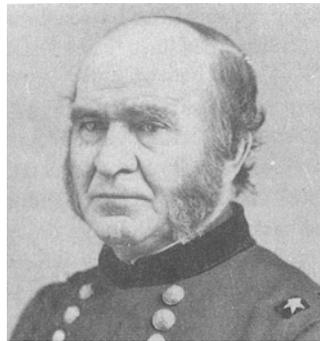
Henry Connelly had attended medical school at Transylvania University at Lexington Kentucky. He graduated in 1828 and that same year he moved west and became a clerk in a store in Jesús María, Chihuahua, Mexico. By 1830 he had bought the store. He married a Mexican woman (name unknown) in 1838 and she gave him three sons. He brought his family to live in Missouri but his wife died soon after. During this time, Connelly tried to find an alternate trade route from Independence, Missouri, through Texas straight to Chihuahua. He made the trip in a caravan of one hundred men, but it must have been a difficult journey because he never tried it again. In 1842 he formed a business partnership with Edward J. Glasgow. He re-married in this period to Dolores Perea Chaves, the wife of the late Don Mariano Chaves, parents of Maj. J. Francisco Chaves. Connelly built a mercantile store at Peralta near the Chaves family mansion. In 1846, he assisted Governor Armijo in his negotiations with Captain Philip St. George Cook

²⁵³ Calvin Horn, New Mexico's Troubled Years: the Story of the Early Territorial Governors (Horn and Wallace, 1963), 93.

and James Magoffin prior to the American invasion. He served on the Territorial Council from 1853-1859.²⁵⁴ Once in office Connelly moved fast. On September 9th he issued a proclamation.

*Citizens of New Mexico, your Territory has been invaded, the integrity of your soil has been attacked, the property of peaceful and industrious citizens has been destroyed or converted to the use of the invaders, and the enemy is already at your doors. You cannot, you must not, hesitate to take up arms in defense of your homes, firesides and families...*²⁵⁵

At Fort Craig, on 9/4/61, Col. Roberts wrote to Canby that he wanted to take the Regulars to the grassy open plains east of the mountains to “avoid all the river towns, where the small pox is making its ravages.” He intended to escort a train of equipment to Fort Union while leaving the Volunteers guarding Fort Craig and points south. The small pox and malaria had not reached the fort as of yet, though it was all around it. He reported that he was bringing the extra tents, horse furniture, and everything “not needed by the volunteers,” which could be used by Lynde’s command as they traveled to the east. He was depleting his small arms ordnance at the fort, and his commissary was almost empty but there was a new supply train enroute from Albuquerque. Referring to the disease he wrote, “It is thought crossing the country will do more than the entire pharmacopeia to remove this malaria.”²⁵⁶



Lt. Colonel Benjamin Stone Roberts
NM Military Department

On the 6th of September Captain I. N. Moore of the First Dragoons was ordered to set up an advanced guard at Abo Pass east of Fort Craig to give early warning as to any movements of the Texans in that quarter. Provisions would be sent to sustain them there. Abo Pass is in the Manzano Mountains near the present day town of Mountainair. It was on a route that could have been used by an invasion force coming from the direction Fort Stanton. When the Volunteers were ready they would be sent to relieve the Dragoons.²⁵⁷ On the 8th Canby notified Army HQ in St. Louis that he would be happy to arm the Coloradan Volunteers but at present he only had enough arms for the New Mexicans. He asked for more supplies to be sent from Fort Leavenworth.²⁵⁸ Canby must have received his promotion to full Colonel, because he now signed his correspondences as Colonel of the Nineteenth Infantry. The Nineteenth was a new Regular Army unit but it was not deployed in New Mexico. With this correspondence he enclosed a letter

²⁵⁴ Horn, *New Mexico's Troubled Years*, 93; and Twitchell, *Leading Facts II*, 391 footnote 316)

²⁵⁵ Horn, *New Mexico's Troubled Years*, 99.

²⁵⁶ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Roberts to Canby 9/4/61, 124.

²⁵⁷ *Official Records*, Anderson to Moore 9/6/61.

²⁵⁸ *Official Records*, Canby to St. Louis 9/8/61.

from Governor Gilpin of the Colorado Territory reporting that the two companies of the 1st Colorado Volunteer infantry had been recruited.

On the 8th Canby also reported to St. Louis that the defensive works at Fort Union were nearly complete and could be turned over to the volunteers in a day or two. Actually work would go on for several more months. He also announced that volunteering had slowed and would be supplemented by martial law. "Governor Connelly will call out the militia of the Territory, and then force the people to do what they seem indisposed to do voluntarily."²⁵⁹ On the same day, Canby reported to Governor Connelly the requirements needed for the defense of the Territory. Two regiments of Infantry that would enlist for three years and two of Cavalry for terms of six months, would be needed, 3,724 men in all, who would enlist for three years.

Of this force the regimental organization of the First (Col. St. Vrain's) Regiment of Infantry is completed, but the companies are not yet full." They needed two hundred more men to reach full strength. It will require at least 200 men to bring this regiment up to its maximum organization. In the Second (Colonel Pino's) Regiment only eight companies have been mustered in, and it will require at least 400 men to complete the organization of this regiment. The organization of the cavalry regiments has just commenced, and only one company has been mustered in. Four other companies are reported to be nearly ready, but it will require at least 1,000 men to complete the two regiments, or 1,200 if they are raised to the maximum. In addition to the above force, independent companies of mounted volunteers are called for, but only three have been organized. It is intended to incorporate these companies with the cavalry regiments if the men consent to that extension of their term of service. If they do not, they will be disbanded at the expiration of the present term.

To recapitulate, there will be required for the infantry regiments 600 men and for the cavalry regiments 1,000 men: total, 1,600. The necessary expenditure incurred by the Territory in the organization of these regiments will be defrayed by the Government of the United States, and, as the appropriation for this purpose has already been made, there will be but little delay in securing the reimbursements.²⁶⁰

It had only been nine days since the Third Regiment had been authorized to begin recruiting, yet Canby continued his habit viewing the glass as half full. Eventually the wagon trains arrived and clothing was issued to the 1st Volunteer Regiment. Three of the company captains had something to report about that.

Captain Albert Pfeiffer, Company E: "The clothing supplied by the Commissioner is very bad in quality and will not stand ordinary wear. The camp and garrison equipage is also very poor in quality. There being no prices furnished the uniform is not charged on the roll."

Captain Louis Felsenthal, Company G: "The clothing (uniform) which the men received could not be charged on this Muster Roll because we do not know the price of the same. The uniforms received are of a very inferior quality and can not withstand long wearing."

Captain Santiago Valdez, Company H: "The clothing supplied by the commissioner is very bad in quality and will not stand ordinary wear. The camp garrison equipage is also very poor in quality. There being no price furnished with the

²⁵⁹ Official Records, Canby to St. Louis 9/8/61.

²⁶⁰ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 9/8/61.

uniform it is not charged. Every man on the roll has received a complete outfit including clothing, blanket, knapsack, canteen and etc."²⁶¹

A letter to Carson from Anderson on 8/7/61 states that the Chief Quartermaster would purchase uniforms and send them to Fort Union; and another letter states that these uniforms were provided by a Special Agent named E. O. Perrin, which seems to indicate that all of the clothing for the Volunteers was furnished new and was not surplus.²⁶² As Mr. Perrin had been contracted to furnish uniforms for the Volunteers any surplus clothing in New Mexico store may have been given to militia units. One clothing list for a private Ruperto Burgorques, a musician with Captain Abréu's Company C, was found in the archives. The list is dated 7/3/61 which was the date that Company C mustered in. It cannot be determined exactly when Burgorques received his full lot of clothing – but the companies listed above did not remark on upon their clothing until this time period. It's possible that there were several clothing issues and this list is what he owed money for upon mustering out.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| One U.S. Uniform jacket and pants | 10.50 |
| 1. Fatigue jacket | 1.50 |
| 1. Uniform hat | --- |
| 1. Great coat | 9.50 |
| 1. Amer. blanket | 2.44 |
| 2. Mex. Blankets | 3.00 |
| 2. Pr. Shoes 1/1.50 1/2.20 | 3.70 |
| 2. [blue?] Mex shirts .92 | 1.85 |
| 1. [illegible] shirt | 1.46 |
| 2 Pr stockings .25 | .5 |
| 1. Knapsack | 1.50 |
| 1. Haversack .65 canteen .46 | 1.11 |
| 1. Plate cup knife fork spoon | .32 |
| 2 Pr. [illegible] flannel drawers .68 | 1.36 |
| 2 Pr. [illegible] flannel drawers .92 | 1.85 |
| Total | \$40.59 |

Francisco P. Abréu

There was no way for the New Mexicans to know it at the time, but poor quality clothing for Volunteers was not unique to New Mexico. All over the nation and on both sides of the conflict, this type of thing was happening in various degrees. In the rush to clothe and equip thousands of volunteers orders were given to contractors who furnished the various items a soldier needed. Some suppliers were conscientious and some were not, and all were trying to make a lot of money. Many regiments found themselves with outdated muskets, cheap equipment, and clothes that fell off their backs. The 1st NM Volunteers seem to have made out better than some, not as well as others – having received a full issue of clothing, but it was of poor quality. Even Col. Canby remarked on it a one point. From this list we can deduce that with some slight variation (Mexican style blankets and shirts and surplus US equipment), the Volunteers looked pretty much like most Civil War Union troops. And we can assume that once the men received their uniforms, the officers tried to keep their men looking as 'regimental' as

²⁶¹ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 25 – these notations come from the regimental histories that were compiled after the war, but as they are written in the first person, they are presented here as quotes. Special thanks to Tony Campisi for his help with the UNM microfiche records.

²⁶² Wilson, When the Texans Came, 74-75 & 89.

possible. In fact, the Confederates at Valverde mistook the First Regiment to be Regulars and their clothing must have contributed to that fact. Based on the amount of money that at least one enlisted man owed upon mustering out, Corporal Juan Chaves of Pfeiffer's Company D, it can be surmised that most of the men only received a basic uniform, probably a fatigue jacket and trousers and full equipment, knapsack, haversack, canteen and tinware. Burgorquez may have received a dress uniform due to his position as a senior sergeant of the regiment.

On the 10th of September Anderson in Santa Fe informed Roberts at Fort Craig that he could not set up an advanced camp yet because, "none of the companies of mounted volunteers that were to have been stationed at the Abo Pass have yet been raised."²⁶³ But he had men soon enough and Captain Saturnino Barrientos with his Independent Mounted Company was sent there on picket duty. On the 16th Barrientos reported that he had captured two men, Tedosio Aragon and Gregorio Montaña, whom he believed were Texan collaborators.²⁶⁴ Four days later Captain Moore captured another New Mexican in the same area whom he believed was also a Texan collaborator. His name was Pablo Direts [Alderete?].²⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the 2nd Regiment was still garrisoning Fort Fauntleroy, Fort Craig, and Albuquerque, with Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves at Fauntleroy with three of the companies. Now, as stated before, if Manuel Chaves had a fault it was horseracing and it was going to get him into trouble again. The surgeon and sutler of Fort Fauntleroy was one Dr. F. E. Kavanaugh. He had been appointed sutler of the post by virtue of being the owner of a store in nearby Cubero, a small town of about 500 people, and also as post surgeon because he was the only doctor in the area. He was one of only four non-Hispanic inhabitants of the town. He had once served in the Territorial Council and he had been a surgeon in St. Vrain's Battalion in 1855. His origins are unknown except that he was a southerner who had move to New Mexico and lived in Taos for a few years. Apparently his prices as post sutler were very high.²⁶⁶



Manuel A. Chaves
Lt. Colonel
2nd NMVI

Kavanaugh had a fine race horse, a Kentucky thoroughbred. The soldiers had nothing to equal to it but if they did manage win horses in other races Manuel would allow them to sell the new horses to the Army, and if they lost, the post clerk had some juggling to do. It seems that even though they were designated as an infantry regiment many men of the 2nd Regiment had horses. It happened that the Navajos were also avid horse racing gamblers and as they came to the fort regularly to trade and draw rations, they also wanted to give it a go. In a short time they

²⁶³ Official Records, Anderson to Roberts 9/10/61.

²⁶⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Barrientos 9/16/61, 164.

²⁶⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Moore 9/20/61, 165.

²⁶⁶ Marc Simmons, The Little Lion of the Southwest (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 241, footnote 19.

lost a lot of goods to the avaricious Dr. Kavanaugh against that thoroughbred. In the first week of September a delegation of Navajos under Chief Miguelito entered Kavanaugh's store, which also served as a kind of officer's club, and informed Captain José Sena that they wanted to challenge the thoroughbred to a race in the following week. When the day came, two lesser races were run in the morning. Suddenly just as the time for the race neared, 200 fully armed and mounted renegades, known as Ladrones de Chelly (pronounced 'shay'), appeared. Chaves probably should have stopped the racing at that point, but he couldn't resist. In all likelihood, there was no stopping it anyway. The Native's champion turned out to be a sorrell owned by a six-foot four inch tall Navajo called Pistol Bullet. An Indian boy would be his jockey. Lt. Ortiz of Company A would ride Kavanaugh's thoroughbred.²⁶⁷

It was the custom in New Mexico at this time that horse races had no starting signal and the jockeys themselves would determine the exact moment to begin the race. They had three false starts when the Native jockey stated that they had not started at the same time. The fourth start was not stopped. Through the dust and the close-packed crowd no one could see clearly what had happened to the Native jockey as it ran off course. Sergeant Nicolás Hodt, the 1st Sgt. of Company C] said, "I could not see the cause of it, but the report was that the Indian's bridle broke."²⁶⁸ The Navajos took the loss of the race very badly. It had appeared to them that the bridle had been tampered with, and it didn't help any that the New Mexicans celebrated their victory just a bit too much. While Chief Miguelito attempted to calm his people, the Ladrones broke into two groups, one towards the fort and a smaller band towards the post's horse herd that was out to pasture. Some of Miguelito's people, including women and children, followed the first group. The Ladrones and guards opened fire on each other. Manuel sent a platoon to help the horse guards. When it was over he had to report to Canby, whom he knew would not receive it well, especially since his mission was to keep the peace.

It is with deepest grief that I have to report that about the hour of four o'clock, a large meeting [200 men] of the Navajo Indians [the Chelle Ladrones], were racing their horses about 200 yards in front of the guardhouse. Then they all approached to 100 yards and one attacked a sentinel, trying to take his arms from him. Immediately the Officer of the guard, supported by the whole command fired into them, leaving 12 dead and forty prisoners. At this time, another party of Indians attacked the herd party and their escorts. First Lt. Jose M. Sanchez of Capt. Jose D. Sena's company was sent with 12 mounted and 32 foot recovered all the property except 5 horses volunteers and 1 mule and 2 oxen (US Govt.) without losing a man and capturing 7 of the Indian horses. "I hope you will send me the companies that have to fill the garrison of this Fort as soon as you think proper, as our circumstances require it."²⁶⁹

This was exactly the kind of thing Canby had been waiting for. He began his own investigation into the affair and found some discrepancies in the post books although none of it was incriminating. He decided to abandon the Fort and move the supplies to Cubero.

On September 17th, 1861, Colonel Ceran St. Vrain stepped down from command of the 1st Regiment. He went to his home in Mora to run his mills. His reason for resigning was given as on "account of a multiplicity of private business," which made him unable "to do justice to myself or be efficient in the service."²⁷⁰ "The real reason, stripped of his vague phrasing, had to do with his physical condition. Nearing 60, overweight, and apoplectic, he was not up to the

²⁶⁷ Simmons, Little Lion, 167-168.

²⁶⁸ Simmons, Little Lion, 167-168.

²⁶⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Chaves to Canby 9/13/61, 126.

²⁷⁰ Emmett, Fort Union, 249.

Herculean demands on mind and body the job required.”²⁷¹ St. Vrain owned two mills at this time, one at Talpa, near Ranchos de Taos, and one at Mora. In 1850 he had purchased the millstones called “French buhrstones” in Kansas and brought them to New Mexico, when he began to supply the Army with flour. His first mill at Mora was built out of wood that same year.²⁷² Throughout the 1850s and up until the present, the US Army had been the greatest promoter of commerce within the Territory, with its constant need of flour, hay, corn, salt, and cattle.²⁷³

Meanwhile, smallpox and malaria were still ravaging the river towns along the middle Rio Grande. As noted before Lt. Col. Roberts wanted to get the Regulars out into the open country which he said would be better than any doctor or medicine. Writing to Canby again from Fort Craig on the 17th, he outlined his proposal to keep the Regulars at the Fort and disperse five companies of Colonel Pino’s 2nd Foot Regiment along the river villages to guard his supply line. By doing this escorts would not have to march more than two days and the defense of the river towns would be increased. He lamented, “The habit of Mexican soldiers to have their wives follow the Camp, can in this way be somewhat indulged, as their families can be housed with them, and their general poverty will find relief in sharing the rations of the men.” He believed these measures would increase the flow of volunteers into the ranks and would also allow him to keep the Regulars and the Mounted Volunteers at the Fort, ready for any crisis. Of the latter, he wrote, “They serve exceeding well for scouting and picket duty.”²⁷⁴

The Regulars were very happy to receive all the new recruits coming in, inferior though they supposedly were, but every new company that was formed brought additional problems in supply and equipage. Chapman at Fort Union was especially beset by these difficulties. The situation of the inferior equipment and uniforms was aggravating the already strained relations between the Volunteers and the Regulars, and partial issue or no equipment at all was even worse. It is remarkable that the Volunteers endured all the shortages of rations and equipment, clothing and pay, not to mention the racial castigation quite patiently. But things were getting a bit thin in the Third Regiment - even they had limits. When Governor Rencher and his party, including his family, arrived at Fort Union he presented his orders to be furnished with “transportation and the Necessary Camp Equipage....and any other arrangements that may be necessary for the Safety and Comfort of the party.” After Rencher’s party had passed, Assistant Surgeon B.J.D. Irwin also needed an escort of “one non-commissioned officer and eight men to protect him on his journey to Fort Leavenworth.” It was more than Chapman could do since there were “no more kettles on hand.” Company C under Captain Sanches of the Mounted Third Regiment, newly recruited, had only mess pans and one iron pot and the next company to arrive, Company D, had just mustered in from Mora at the Fort and were given only mess pans and axes. On the 20th Doctor Irwin and a detail of six mounted Volunteers left for Fort Wise. But the Doctor, noted that “they are very destitute of the proper outfit,” and sent them back to Fort Union.²⁷⁵ Without pay, and without the necessities of life in the field, with constant derision by the ‘Gringos,’ the volunteers everywhere were beginning to fairly seethe with rage. A very indignant Captain Severiana Martínez, Company D, Third Volunteer Regiment, wrote a scathing letter to his superior Colonel José Gallegos. He had been sent on patrol and he found his destitute men who had been detailed for the escort, straggling back towards Fort Union.

²⁷¹ Simmons, *Kit Carson and His Three Wives*, 114.

²⁷² Ray Marchi, *A Brief History of the St. Vrain Mill*, http://moravalley.com/st_vrain_mill.htm

²⁷³ National Park Service, *Fort Union. Chapter Five Fort Union and the Army in New Mexico During the Civil War*; www.santafetrailresearch.com/fort-union-nm/fu-oliva-5a.html

²⁷⁴ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Roberts to Canby 9/17/61, 128.

²⁷⁵ Emmett, *Fort Union*, 248.

I meet Six men of my Company, who by order of old Chapman were dispatched [sic] to the U.S. [with] a certain Doctor, a man of consideration, to whom my men were delivered by the accoused [sic - probably meant 'accursed' rather than 'accused'] old man, seeing that they were not in any manner recommended by him [referring to Chapman's apparent dislike for the volunteers], to suply [sic] them with what was necessary to live upon nor on account of their pay, I determined to return them back to my Company. These miserable and unfortunate men with difficulty arrived here with their horses with their provisions behind them, and all this the fault of the old commander, I have referred [sic] to. I suppose he does so believing that we greasers, as they treat us, do not know to distinguish the bad faith with which they [the Anglo officers] conduct themselves in their duty.

My Colonel, I pray you, will have the kindness to cause your interpreter to explain to the commander Chapman what I say in this letter. I have met with no accident and will proceed on my march, God willing, with all the regularity posible [sic] to defend and protect the property of the federal government which has been confided under my orders...²⁷⁶

Because most of the correspondences in the Official Records were written by 'Anglo' Officers it is difficult to appreciate what the Volunteers were going through at this time, however, this letter gives us a good idea. They were met with revulsion and condescension wherever they went. Almost everyone referred to the Hispanics as 'Greasers' and 'Coyotes,' even respectable people back in the States.²⁷⁷ The Anglo volunteers fared better but they were still slighted by association with the 'inferior' people. Even men such as St. Vrain and Kit Carson were not always taken very seriously in their recommendations, as some people sometimes referred to them as having 'too much Injun in them,' or, as having 'gone native.' On the 20th of September Kit Carson took over in St. Vrain's stead as commander of the First Regiment. This was formalized by Governor Connelly on October 4th when he promoted Kit to Colonel and J. Francisco Chaves to Lt. Colonel.²⁷⁸ As a result of the vacancies, Captain Arthur Morrison was promoted to Major and José Gutierrez became the Captain of Company B in his place.

By the 22nd of September Captain Moore of the 1st Dragoons (1st Cavalry) was reporting in from his camp near Manzano at Abo Pass. He was searching for a good location for a scout camp for the Volunteers in order to post them to watch the eastern and southeastern approaches from the Pecos River and Fort Stanton. Barrientos' company was still in the Manzano area under Moore's guidance. Moore was ordered to send them once again to the vicinity of Fort Stanton.²⁷⁹ There seems to be some confusion in the correspondences between Captain Moore of the 1st Dragoons and Captain Morris of the Mounted Rifles no doubt because their names were so similar. On the same day, Canby reported to HQ in Saint Louis that recruitment of the Volunteers was proceeding well, "650 volunteers have been mustered into the service since my last report, and I think that six companies of the Fourth Regiment can be raised in this Territory and the remainder can be procured in Colorado." Canby also briefly reported Lt. Col. Chaves' altercation with the Navajos at Fort Fauntleroy.²⁸⁰ Most of these new recruits would have been members of the Third Regiment.

On September 25th Mink's volunteers clashed with the Texans at Cañada Alamosa. This time the Volunteers didn't do so well. Mink had just been sent from Fort Craig to set up an advanced camp there. It seems from the start that Captain Mink did not enjoy a good rapport

²⁷⁶ Official Records, Martínez to Gallegos 9/20/61.

²⁷⁷ Sister Blandina Segale, At the End of the Santa Fe Trail (Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee), 18.

²⁷⁸ Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives, 114.

²⁷⁹ Official Records, Chapin to Morris 9/22/61.

²⁸⁰ Official Records, Canby to St. Louis 9/22/61.

with his men and things quickly disintegrated. He wanted to set up some breastworks for the protection of the camp but some of his men were not very cooperative about that. About 5pm his pickets reported seeing horsemen towards the south. He sent six men towards Laguna who reported back that they were Hubbell's men who were pasturing horses. Knowing that Hubbell was stationed on the east side of the river, Mink took this group to be deserters and he intended to arrest them if he got the chance, thus revealing his attitude towards the Hispanic Volunteers). Later when his pickets reported seeing mounted men again, he assumed they were still Hubbell's men. This was a big mistake. They were two companies of Texans under the command of a Captain Coopwood. Sometime between 2 and 3 in the morning Mink was aroused by a guard who had heard noises from the direction of the town.

He assembled his men and ordered them to saddle the horses, but something stampeded the herd, some said it was a gunshot but Mink did not hear it. He told 8 or 10 men to retrieve the mounts but more than 30 men left after them. As he had already detailed 10 men to guard a wagon train and five more were in the hospital at Fort Craig his company was seriously reduced. He only had about 40 men left in the camp. He was now outnumbered three to one. Then he heard a "terrible Indian yell" from the direction of the town but before he could give any orders he heard a shout that their camp had been located by the enemy, "Here's their camp; give them hell!" Firing broke out and the Texans retreated back to the town. John Morrin, a Union teamster, was wounded in the leg. Mink deduced from the amount of return fire that there were not very many of them and he and a few men went to the edge of town but did not find any Texans there.

When he returned to camp more of his men had skedaddled, probably after the horses. He asked for volunteers to mount and ride into the town with him and Lt. Medina, Sgt. Menett and a few others agreed to go with him. They quickly found out there were far more Texans than he had thought and they retreated back to camp. By daybreak he found he only had ten men left with him. Some Texans had taken a position on a hill to watch the area for any movement they might make and seeing that he was about to be charged by 60 men and could not retreat, he surrendered. Then he found out the Texans actually numbered 114 men. The next day Lt. Medina was wounded by friendly fire from some of Mink's men presumably that had not been captured. This indicates that some of Mink's scattered men were still fighting. Coopwood wrote that he had captured the two officers and 23 enlisted men of Mink's Company.²⁸¹ The enlisted men were paroled and sent away but Mink and Medina were held as prisoners. The war was over for them. Confederate Lt. Col. Baylor reported, "Capt. Coopwood with one hundred and eighteen men was ordered up to Fort Craig to reconnoiter, and had an engagement with the enemy, 180 strong, about Fort Thorn [Alamosa], losing two men killed and several wounded, he killing ten or twelve of the enemy."²⁸² Mink had not reported the loss of the two men killed but it's possible he had not known of any other casualties. At any rate, Captain Morris of the Mounted Rifles (3rd US Cavalry) arrived on the scene with Mounted Rifle companies C, G, and K. He sent word for Captain Hubbell to join him from across the River but Hubbell was out, presumably on patrol, so his brother Charles brought the remainder of the company to help Morris. With one contingent of his men flanking the Texan camp on the right, Morris advanced until both sides opened up a firefight which lasted one hour and forty-two minutes. Then he pulled back to see if he could draw them out of their position but they wouldn't follow, so he made camp in the village.²⁸³ The Texans retreated the next day.

²⁸¹ Official Records, Coopwood 9/29/61.

²⁸² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Baylor to Stith 9/28/61, 150.

²⁸³ Official Records, Morris to Selden 9/29/61.



Alexander McRae

Meanwhile, Rossell, the commanding officer in Albuquerque, warned Chapin in Santa Fe that citizens in the Albuquerque area were refusing induction into the New Mexico Militia forces and that the Regulars would have to be ready to apply force as necessary.²⁸⁴ Chapin had replaced Anderson as acting adjutant for Col. Canby. Alexander McRae at Fort Craig sent Rossell orders to send the two new companies of Volunteers from Albuquerque to Manzano to relieve Captain Moore's company.²⁸⁵ With replacements on the way, on the 29th of September, Captain Moore left the camp near Manzano and headed for Fort Craig.²⁸⁶

Alexander McRae was born in 1829 in Fayetteville, North Carolina to a family that kept a few slaves. He studied at Newark College in Newark, Delaware and was accepted to West Point at seventeen years old. Four years later he joined the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen (RMR) which had been organized during the Mexican War. The Regiment performed very well during the war, but was plagued with desertions in its later years in the western United States, as most of the Regular units were. McRae joined the RMR in 1851 and was sent to serve in western Texas. After a leave of absence he returned to duty at Fort Union, New Mexico, in 1856 and was placed in command of Company E as a lieutenant for the next five years. Then he was transferred to Company F. He was sent east in early 1860 on recruiting duty and returned to New Mexico in September of that year when he was placed in command of Company K, since Captain Walker was away on leave. In January, 1861, he had participated in a battle under the command of Lt. Col. Crittendon against a Comanche-Kiowa coalition which was defeated. In April, 1861, he was sent to assist Alexander Hatch and neighbors in securing a treaty with the Comanches. No doubt, this is the peace referred to earlier. When the Civil War broke out McRae did not resign along with his fellow Southerners. In June he was sent to Fort Stanton as part of the garrison and received confirmation of his promotion to Captain while he was there. When brevet Lt. Col. Roberts shifted his command to Fort Craig in August McRae and his men went with him.²⁸⁷

October 1861

On October 1st Confederate Colonel John Baylor reported to HQ that Captain James Walker had captured 48 New Mexican militiamen near Fort Stanton, however the captured unit was not identified. "They were disarmed and released on parole."²⁸⁸ This unit is a total mystery since none of the Federal officers report this incident. It is possible that it was a local militia. At any rate, Baylor decided to abandon Fort Stanton as his force was spread out too far and Walker was losing too many men to Indians. On October 3 the Mesilla Times reported that the Apaches

²⁸⁴ Official Records, Chapin to Rossell 9/27/61.

²⁸⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, McRae to Rossell 9/27/61, 129.

²⁸⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Moore 9/29/61, 167.

²⁸⁷ Marion Cox Grinstead, Destiny at Valverde: the Life and Death of Alexander McRae (Socorro Historical Society, 1992), 31.

²⁸⁸ Official Records, Baylor 10/1/61.

in southern New Mexico were on the warpath in a very big way. Messages from Pino Alto and the Rio Mimbres region brought surprising news. The small Apache groups had united as never before and appeared to be bent on the extermination of the foreigners. They were determined enough to attack a town of two or three hundred houses in broad daylight.²⁸⁹ The Confederates continued to have more trouble from natives than from Yanks.

On a lighter note, on the 4th of October, Lt. Col. Chaves of the 1st Regiment complained that he was required to share his tent with Fr. Damasio Taladrid, the regimental Chaplain. He stated that the officers of the Regiment had only received fifteen tents out of the thirty-two authorized for an infantry regiment. It can be assumed that the enlisted men were no better off at this time. Without a doubt many of them just slept on the open ground. Chaves closed the letter with, "Hoping that the department commander will authorize me to retain this tent for my personal use."²⁹⁰

Col. Roberts at Fort Craig had other problems on his hands. On the 5th he wrote to Canby that all his problems at Fort Craig stemmed from drink. He charged that all the problems of the Territory came from the drunkenness of the officers. "If officers daily debauch themselves with whiskey, what can be expected of [the] men?" he lamented. He stated that he had decided to destroy all the whiskey houses near the Fort.²⁹¹ Chapman at Fort Union was beginning to encounter drinking problems also. Liquor vendors had moved onto the Army reservation again and started selling booze. Since none of the soldiers had been paid yet it was a good bet that the enlisted men were taking the fort apart, one piece at a time, for trade to the vendors. Col. Roberts also reported that Captains Moore and Mink were still posted with their companies ten miles below Fort Craig. He added that of the five Independent Volunteer companies under his command, they did not average 50 men each (Canby states that Roberts had four companies). Roberts was possibly counting Graydon's company which had not begun recruitment yet. He had Hubbell's, Mink's (what was left of it), Barrientos', Vidal's, and Hatch's, whose company was also just being currently organized. Captain James Graydon was on temporary duty in charge of Mink's men until his own company could be mustered.²⁹² With Mink and his Lieutenant captured someone had to run the company and luckily, Graydon was available. As it was, Graydon's company would not be ready until the end of October.

Captain Patrick "Paddy" Graydon was born in Lisnakea, Ireland, in 1832. He came to the US in his teens and joined the US Army, 1st Dragoons, as a bugler, arriving in Santa Fe in 1853. He had fair skin, blue eyes, and was about 5' 7" tall. In 1856 Graydon's company was sent to present-day southern Arizona where he served out his term. At the age of twenty-six he left the Army and opened a hotel called Casa Blanca, also known as the United States Boundary Hotel, in Arizona, near Fort Buchanan, 60 miles south of Tucson. His place was run with a good deal of controversy but not too much of it bothered him as he was also the self-proclaimed law in the area. In addition he served as a guide to the troops at Fort Buchanan. When the Dragoons left Fort Buchanan for New Mexico, Graydon went with them. He received a commission as a Captain authorized to recruit an independent company and he quickly mustered 84 Hispanics from Lemitar, New Mexico. Graydon designed his own silk battle-flag, a blue field with a white cross, and each recruit swore to the banner on his knees by "Jesús Cristo y Santa María" to be loyal and true to the Union. In all likelihood most of his recruits did not actually volunteer. Many people consider Graydon to be the most colorful man of the era, a quintessential western, self-made, "tough hombre." And this style of volunteering would have been entirely in keeping with his reputation. But it's also possible that he was more in tune with the cultural systems of

²⁸⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, 150.

²⁹⁰ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 22.

²⁹¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 10/5/61, 130.

²⁹² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 10/5/61, 130.

the Hispanics and knew how to motivate a large number of volunteers quickly, by using influential people to get the volunteers for him.²⁹³

In view of events in the south, Canby decided to shift more of his forces to the middle reserve point in Albuquerque during October. He ordered that the Regimental Headquarters and four companies of the 1st Volunteer Regiment be sent there – companies I, K, E, & H. However Fort Union did not have enough flour to provision the column so they had to wait for some to arrive from St. Vrain's mill at Mora before they could leave.²⁹⁴ The flour arrived on October 10th and the companies finally left for Albuquerque on the 15th with Chacón designated as battalion commander. At Algodones a large number of the men somehow located a quantity of alcohol and became drunk. The Regular officers in the group began to fear for their lives and had to hide. Chacón, with the flat of his sword, and the help of his cousins and the rest of his company soon made short work of the carousers. Chacón states that after that the Americans treated him with respect.²⁹⁵



Rafael Chacon
Captain Co. K
1st NMVI

Col. Carson and the Regimental Staff established their Headquarters at Albuquerque on October 19th. At this time he was engaged in gaining recruits to fill out the regiment as well as training the men he had.²⁹⁶ The remaining companies of the 1st Regiment stayed at Fort Union under the command of Lt. Col. Francisco Chaves, and were still working on the star fort (field works). Chacón says that at this time many officers, Carson and Chacón included, sent for their wives to come live with them at Albuquerque, and he fondly recalled Carson's conduct with his family, how loving he was to his wife and how playful with the children.²⁹⁷

Sometime in mid-October the trading company owned by the Spiegelberg Brothers was officially designated as the Sutler for the 1st Regiment at Fort Union. They moved in beside the other Sutler, William H. Moore, who was serving the Regular troops. As the Volunteers had not been paid yet, and the Regulars hadn't seen cash in a year, both Sutlers must have accepted a lot of credit if they did any business at all. Yet, despite regulations to the contrary, somehow liquor was still getting to the troops, some of whom became too drunk to work. Although it was known that others were selling liquor too, the Spiegelberg Brothers were accused of illegally selling it. They responded that their agent on site had been carefully instructed not to sell any liquor to the troops. Chapman replied that he had been doing that anyway, and now he had been ordered to stop. There doesn't seem to have been any further violation from their firm for the rest of the

²⁹³ Jerry D. Thompson, Desert Tiger, and the Civil War in the far Southwest (University of Texas at El Paso, 1992).

²⁹⁴ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

²⁹⁵ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 132-133.

²⁹⁶ Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives, 114.

²⁹⁷ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 123.

year.²⁹⁸ Canby reminded Chapman about the eight mile limit (again) and told him he had authority to clear out the rumrunners. Besides drink, another problem occurring at Fort Union was that the jails were filling up with alleged Confederate sympathizers. Canby suggested that the jail at Mora could also be used and tried to find means to get hearings and trials to move faster.²⁹⁹

On October 11th Canby wrote to Governor Gilpin in Colorado that he was disappointed in the lack of recruits in Colorado. He had hoped the Coloradans could have relieved the Regulars at Fort Wise and Fort Garland for duty in New Mexico.³⁰⁰ It didn't help that Captain Vidal's Independent Company was mustered out on October 12, 1861. On the 13th Canby authorized Captain E. Otis of the 1st Dragoons at Fort Wise to begin to raise his own volunteer companies, two infantry and two cavalry.³⁰¹ On the 18th of October Captain Samuel Archer commanding Albuquerque received Deus' and Chacón's companies (Companies I and K respectively, 1st Regiment) at his post. "The oaths of allegiance, which were administered to the above named Officers to-day, will be forwarded by tomorrow's express."³⁰² He didn't specifically mention Captain Deus himself. Perhaps he was absent at this time.

Deus was having problems with mounts. He states in his memoir that his company had been recruited as cavalry but had been mustered in as infantry. He was considering selling the horses and saddles that he owned in the company but Col. Carson told him not to, as he promised the company would be officially mounted. A man named O. P. Hovey was trying to buy horses for the N.M. Militia and Deus was tempted to take him up on it. But Carson prevailed and kept his promise to Deus.³⁰³ Since these companies of the First Regiment had already been sworn in at Fort Union, the fact that they were sworn in again at Albuquerque indicates the confusion reigning as to the Volunteers. In addition, for some reason, some of Chacón's men had been enlisted for a shorter duration than the rest of the Regiment, for only six months instead of three years. Companies I & K remained at Albuquerque but companies E & H continued south to Lemitar, probably escorting a supply train on its way to Fort Craig.³⁰⁴ Later, they returned to Fort Union. By the 22nd of October, companies of the 3rd Regiment were being sent out on patrols east and southeast of Fort Union. They were taking over responsibilities previously handled by the 1st Regiment.³⁰⁵

On the 23rd Governor Gilpin wrote to Canby that he had his hands full. He believed that the Confederate sympathizers in his Territory could be as many as 7,500 men and were well organized. The rebels had withdrawn for the present to gain strength from Native tribes who could form a formidable foe, and he believed they would soon return in force. Since the land in the eastern part of the Territory had no natural defenses he would require men in numbers to meet them. He also believed they intended to capture Fort Wise and Fort Garland. Thus he would not be able to send aid to New Mexico.³⁰⁶ Once again battered by bad news, Canby reported to headquarters in St. Louis that nothing had changed since his report on of the 20th. Twelve companies of Regulars and eleven of Volunteers were now stationed at Fort Craig. Two of the Cavalry companies had been combined into an artillery battery of four tubes (two 6#, and two 12# howitzers) were soon to be on their way to Fort Craig. Garrisons for Forts Garland and Wise

²⁹⁸ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

²⁹⁹ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁰⁰ Official Records, Canby to Gilpin 10/11/61.

³⁰¹ Official Records, Canby to Otis 10/13/61.

³⁰² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Archer to Canby 10/18/61, 131.

³⁰³ Ed. Daniel B. Castello, Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier (written at Deus' dictation - a manuscript memoir located by Tim Kimball in the NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 27.

³⁰⁴ National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 22.

³⁰⁵ Official Records, Nicodemus to Chapman 10/22/61.

³⁰⁶ Official Records, Gilpin to Canby 10/23/61.

had not yet been furnished by Colorado, and he reported that recruiting was also very slow in New Mexico.³⁰⁷

Canby, whose investigation of the events at Fort Fauntleroy had apparently been stalled, was still keeping a close watch on the officers of the 2nd Regiment. On the 30th Captain Alexander McRae of the Regulars reported that Colonel Miguel Pino was AOL [absent without leave] in Santa Fe, since he had not gained any new recruits. "That this want of success is due to a lack of exertion on the part of the officers detailed for this duty is plain from the fact that Captain Graydon of the independent Mounted Volunteers, who has just returned here, after an absence of less than eight days, has succeeded in raising sixty men. ...the aggregate of the four volunteer companies [of the 2nd Regiment] is 254..."³⁰⁸

Obviously, Pino had not tried Graydon's recruiting methods. Captain James Hubbell's company mustered out the same day. The remainder of Captain John Mink's company had mustered out the day before. Mink could not reenlist but Hubbell proceeded to organize a new company which became Company B of the 5th Mounted Volunteer Regiment. Hubbell's brother Charles would remain with him as his 1st Lt., but his 2nd Lt., Francisco Aragon, decided to go out on his own. He joined the Perea Battalion as a Captain and proceeded to 'recruit' his own company by hiring expressmen. The constables that were combing the countryside provided him with seventy-four 'volunteers.' When the men were delivered those who had rounded them up turned in receipts such as the following:

*The United States to O. P. Hovey, November 13, 1861, For amount paid for Collecting recruits from the 3d Division for Captain Francisco Aragon's Co. as per....vouchers herewith viz: For Amount paid Expressmen, constable, \$68.75. [signed] Francisco Aragon, Capitan, N.M. Militia.*³⁰⁹

Men who had not joined the Volunteers or Militia were rounding up those who would. O. P. Hovey had been appointed by Governor Connelly as the commander of all New Mexico Militia with the rank of Major General. His Adjutant was General Clever.³¹⁰ As noted before, there wasn't enough money to supply the militia, but it is curious that there was enough to pay to round them up. The Perea Battalion was raised by Colonel Francisco Perea to serve for three months. They were in fact the 3rd New Mexico Militia Division but they are referred to historically as the Perea Battalion. Francisco Perea was a cousin to José Francisco Chaves of the 1st Regiment. He was born in Las Padillas to Juan Perea and Josefa Chaves in 1830. He attended local private schools in his youth and from 1843 to 1845 he studied at a Jesuit college in St. Louis. He received further education in New York City from 1847 to 1849. After that he raised cattle and conducted trade on the Santa Fe Trail. Like his cousin, Francisco, he became a member of the Territorial Council in 1858. He was appointed Colonel by President Lincoln. "...after consultation with his grandfather and with his uncle, José Leandro Perea, became active in his efforts for the Union, visiting many localities in the Territory and urging the people to remain steadfast for the government." During the summer he had helped raise the 2nd Regiment and now he was mustering his own unit at his own expense.³¹¹ Perea's unit recruited almost 500 men in five companies to serve for three months. Besides Aragon, the other four captains in the battalion were Juan de Dias (Dios?) Baca, Francisco Montoya, Augusto del Balle, and John R.

³⁰⁷ Official Records, Canby to St. Louis 10/27/61.

³⁰⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, McRae 10/30/61, 133.

³⁰⁹ Emmett, Fort Union, 242.

³¹⁰ Ed. Jerry D. Thompson, "The Civil War Diary of Major Charles Emil Wesche," Password Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1994, 43.

³¹¹ Twitchell, Leading Facts II, 399, footnote 323.

Hubbell who was probably a relative of James and Charles Hubbell. It appears that recruitment for the militia was so difficult at this point, that men were being pressed into service at gunpoint.



Colonel Francisco Perea

Some things must be said in order to understand why New Mexicans who were ‘dragooned’ into service performed so well once engaged in their duties. They certainly had many opportunities to desert on the lonely frontier, but by and large they didn’t. A few Hispanos deserted but less than Anglo companies on the frontier, whose desertion rates were sometimes as high as 25%. In California some entire companies of US Regulars ran for the gold fields. It is a fact that thousands of New Mexicans showed up willingly, or unwillingly, and stayed on duty despite poor food, hard labor, lonely vigilance, lack of pay, and worse, constant disparagement by the foreigners they were serving. In addition, most of the men knew that their families were hungry and exposed to Indian attacks back home. Americans in the northern states did no better when only small percentages of them enlisted voluntarily and a draft had to be invoked in order to bring the numbers up. Was the American who stood on the docks to find the next pauper just off a boat from Europe in order to pay him to be drafted in his place, any better than a New Mexican peasant who hid in the woods because this war of foreigners didn’t make any sense?

So why, once ‘dragooned,’ did they fight so well under Americans? Why did the New Mexicans respond well to men like James Hubbell, Paddy Graydon, Kit Carson and others, and so poorly to other Anglo leaders? The answer was aptly explained by Kit who said that, “When well officered, their courage is unquestionable.” That went for their loyalty also – loyalty and courage. New Mexicans really appreciated a competent leader who was aggressive and knew what he was doing. What troops ever didn’t. The New Mexicans asked a lot of themselves and in turn they expected even more from their leaders. That’s why bookworms like Canby, Roberts, and Chapman could never gain their respect. To be sure, Canby was personally very brave in battle, but his actions up to this point were not inspiring anyone. He must have appeared terribly confused and indecisive – a man who only wanted to have his men build forts and stand in line for roll call, without pay. A more aggressive man would have retaken Mesilla, Fort Fillmore, Fort Stanton, and Fort Bliss by now. Action would have satisfied many a volunteer. But Canby would not even allow the troops to respond to Indian depredations, and sometimes, to the New Mexicans, they were personal ones. This was a fact that only corroborated what they had learned about him during the previous Navajo campaign. He was a slow and cautious leader. The NM Volunteers knew from experience that such a man would not win peace on this frontier.

Another good question is why did New Mexicans go along with the drafting by agents of the law, and once caught serve so well? Surely the answer goes back to the ancient Hispanic traditions of recruiting for a campaign. It was done by custom and peer pressure. Tio Juan or some relative or neighbor would send a son, vaquero, or peon over to your place to let you know your services were required and if you didn’t want to be at odds with your extended family and neighbors you showed up. If you didn’t want to go you could conveniently be out hunting. The peones, if they didn’t want to be found, would go looking for a lost sheep or out to fetch

firewood, etc. If it was a genuinely urgent need almost everyone would show up, leaving enough peones and younger sons to protect the homesteads and flocks of course. Governor-General Manuel Armijo, whom almost no one respected, had once collected 3,000 men in three days in this way and more were on the way. The simple truth was that New Mexicans loved to go on campaign - the thrill of the hunt, the camaraderie on the trail, the exhilaration of battle and honors it brought to the individual as well as the group. And the plunder that could be captured was more of a sign of bravery and honor rather than just an extension of riches. But these were not just mere trophies for bragging rights. They were proof of the skills needed for survival. Also, as an ancient law, military service was officially expected of every male citizen in lieu of paying taxes. Often it had to be done at great expense to impoverished families who sometimes sold children to pay for the horse and equipment.³¹² It was all just part of the game and if you were caught shirking you pretended innocence, went along with it, and did your best, or were shamed when you went home. It was a harsh life but that's the way it was.

The First Militia Regiment, the umbrella organization for the Territorial National Guard had at least three "divisions." This was a New Mexico term and was not used in the regular military sense. They were actually quite small and should have been termed regiments or battalions instead of divisions. The First Militia Division (1st NMMD) was commanded by Colonel Manuel Armijo, either a descendent or namesake of 'His Excellency' Governor-General Armijo. His second in command was Lt. Colonel Diego Archuleta, the son of Juan Andres Archuleta, the Colonel of Militia who had found the Texans at Laguna, NM, in 1841.

Diego Archuleta was born in 1814 in Plaza Alcalde. As a boy he studied under Fr. Martinez in Taos and later, in Durango, Mexico. He intended to become a priest, but after giving up that idea he returned home to New Mexico in 1840 where he was made a Captain of Militia. He had served in the 1841 Texan Invasion crisis as a Captain when he helped Manuel Chaves round up Colonel Cooke. Also in 1841 he married Jesusita Trujillo by whom he had seven children. He was elected as a Deputy to the National Mexican Congress where he served for two years. Returning in 1845 he became a member of the Territorial Congress. At the time of the American Invasion crisis in 1846 he was second in command of the New Mexico forces under Armijo. During the negotiations with the Americans he agreed not to fight them in exchange for land which he never received. In late 1846 and early 1847, although he had helped organized the conspiracies to overthrow the Americans, he escaped capture and was exonerated, and swore allegiance to the United States. In 1857 he became the US Indian Agent to the Utes and Apaches. He and part of the 1st Militia Division would serve at Fort Union. However President Lincoln would soon send him back to his position as Indian Agent, and Governor Connelly would promote him to Brigadier General of the Militia.³¹³



³¹² Don Pedro Baptista Pino, The Exposition on the Province of New Mexico, 1812 (El Rancho de las Golondrinas and the University of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, 1995).

³¹³ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Military Occupation of New Mexico (Arno Press, New York, 1976), 240-247.

Diego Archuleta

The 2nd Division was led by Colonel Nicolás Pino, older brother of Miguel E. Pino, Colonel of the 2nd Regiment. Nicolás was born in 1819 in Galisteo to parents Don Pedro Bautista Pino and María Baca and had moved to Socorro as a young man where he became a successful merchant like his father. He married Juana Rascon in 1842. Nicolás had begun his militia career with the Americans the same time as Manuel Chaves with Ceran St. Vrain's volunteer company of 1846-47 and he remained active with the militia mostly in the Socorro/Lemitar area. His second in command was Lt. Col. Jesús Maria Baca y Salazar, who was followed by Major Charles Emil Wesche.



L-R: Col. Nicholas Pino, Major Charles Wesche; 2nd Militia Division.

Major Wesche was a Prussian by birth, born in 1831, the youngest of twenty-four children. When 18 years old in 1849 he emigrated to Guatemala and Costa Rica where he became successful as a merchant. Eventually he moved to San Francisco and then Durango, Mexico, but he lost most of his wealth during the 1857 revolution. Then he moved to Santa Fe and did quite well. He could speak seven languages, five of them fluently. He became an American citizen and a War Democrat in 1861. The unit included ten medium-sized companies, some of which were infantry, but as of yet they had not been activated.³¹⁴

On the 30th of October Captain Barrientos, still near Manzano, had trouble with Native Americans who were trying to steal horses. He solved the problem almost single-handedly, a fact that he could not help mentioning in his report, adding that the deed “seems to me mere child’s play...” Navajo raiders had stolen most of the horses belonging to Captain Gonzales’ and Captain Sarracino’s companies who had been posted at Abo (near the current village of Mountaineer). Barrientos had chased the thieves with fifty-seven men only two of which were able to keep up with him. Fifty-eight horses were recaptured, one was killed and another injured, and one Native had been killed.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Thompson, Civil War Diary, 46.

³¹⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Barrientos to Canby 10/30/61, 168.

Chapter Five

Five Percent!

November 1861

Not much is recorded in official correspondences for November, 1861. The First Regiment foot companies were still working on the star fort at Fort Union. It is assumed that Companies E & H had returned to Fort Union by this time from their escort to Lemitar. Towards the end of October Captain Barrientos' Independent company had been mustered out after three months service and apparently he really wanted a new one badly, so he began recruiting at once. On the first of November he reported from the Manzano area, "As of now I have thirty-three men in my company and expect to fill it up this week. I will then leave promptly for Albuquerque to receive your orders."³¹⁶ Captain Rafael Chacón's Company K had also been assigned to Manzano to search out some bandits who were terrorizing the area, and he noted Barrientos' recruiting techniques. "In Manzano I encountered Captain Barrientos, who was there recruiting his company in a very original manner; it was nothing less than obliging the men to enlist by means of force."³¹⁷ Obviously the idea to recruit in this manner was quite foreign to him. Captain Juan José Herrera, (Co. D, 4th Regiment) who had also been sent there for the same purpose as Chacón apparently was not too diligent in the task. Chacón captured the outlaws and returned to Albuquerque with the prisoners.

In the eastern and mid-western United States the fighting thus far consisted of small sporadic skirmishes, the most notable of which was Ball's Bluff on October 21. Although it was a small conflict it was a spectacular Union defeat. It received great publicity because a Congressman who had volunteered was killed. President Lincoln wept while Congress fumed with rage. They responded by creating the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War to oversee further Union efforts. The next battle of note was the Battle of Belmont on November 7. Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant loaded his Union brigade on steamboats and sailed to Belmont, Missouri, where he landed his troops and routed the Rebel garrison there. He destroyed large stores of Confederate supplies and withdrew just as a counterattack was being organized. During the fighting the Confederates lost twice as many men as the Union. Finally, there was a little piece of good news.

In New Mexico, however, things were still watchful. At Fort Union, Lt. Col. Chaves of the 1st NMVI was supervising the regiment's work on the Field Works and was posed with a particular problem. In October, Ruperto Burgoquez, musician of Company C, had been promoted to Principal Musician. Carson had sent orders on Oct. 24th for him to report to the Regimental Headquarters at Albuquerque at the earliest opportunity. Chaves received these orders with some dismay and hastily sent a note to Carson on the 9th of November saying that he did not wish to comply.

I would respectfully state for the information of the Colonel Cmdg., that I have taken the liberty of detaining Mus. Burgoquez here; the reason for so doing this is the fact that there is nobody else in this battalion who can blow the calls; and our being still engaged upon the trenches and building Winter Quarters, it would be nearly an impossibility to get along without him. Hoping that my course in this matter will meet with the Colonel Commanding's approbation.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ John P. Wilson, When the Texans Came (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Barrientos to Canby 11/1/61, 170.

³¹⁷ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 135.

³¹⁸ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23, Chávez to Carson 11/9/61.

Unfortunately for Chaves and his battalion, Carson won out and Principal Musician Burgoquez left Fort Union on the 16th, bound for Albuquerque. This letter is interesting because it reveals the sorry state of the First Regiment's field music. However, this was a common occurrence at this early stage of the war; in fact, it was very remarkable to find a good volunteer field music corps. Since the Regulars had formal music schools of instruction at Governor's and Bedloe's Islands, NY, and Newport Barracks, KY, they did not have this problem. Neither did pre-existing Militia and National Guard units who already had their own music. It was most detrimental to the effectiveness of the volunteers that many recruiters all over the country thought that any boy who was too short to carry a musket could be a musician, without testing him for music ability or even inclination. Incidentally, none of the correspondences in this series indicate what instrument Burgoquez played, probably bugle but it could have been a fife.

Meanwhile, Paddy Graydon's Spy Company was now on guard at the Cañada Alamosa, as he had done previously with the remnant of Mink's Company. On the 10th of the month, Alexander McRae at Fort Craig felt it necessary to warn Graydon that he should be careful. "To avoid a misfortune similar to that which occurred to Captain Mink's Company, it will be necessary for you to observe the utmost vigilance, and to watch well not only the movements of the Texan Scouts, but those of the people at the Canada."³¹⁹ But McRae's admonishment came too late. If anyone on this frontier would not be careful it was Graydon and Benjamin Roberts was obliged to inform Col. Canby of yet another altercation with a Texan patrol. "Captain Graydon's Spy Pickets fell upon a party of 13 Texans scouting some 30 miles from this Post on Friday; killed one of them and took one officer and two prisoners. They are now in confinement here." Roberts apparently considered this group to be outlaws rather than scouts and did not hold them as prisoners of war.³²⁰

In the middle of November Baylor was reporting to Confederate Headquarters in Texas the appearance of smallpox in the area.³²¹ Possibly it had moved downriver. Continuing his investigation on the 2nd Volunteer regiment Canby had asked Roberts to compile a report on the officers. Roberts replied in the third person and stated that he had been ordered to do the investigation of the 2nd NMVI and that it was "in order to point out those who deserve advancement..." rather than censure. Then he proceeded to censure three officers. He recommended they should "be dropped." "Captains Román Baca [Co. E] and Gregorio Otero [Co. D] have been on recruiting service some six weeks, without securing a recruit....2nd Lieut. Mexicano, of Capt. Otero's Company D has been AWL [AWOL] and 2nd Lieut. [Diego] Sisnero [Co. H] is incapable of instruction." Then he praised two 'Anglo' officers 1st Lieut. William Brady, Adjutant of the regiment, and 1st Lt. C. E. Cooley Regimental Quartermaster, "are considered officers of merit and are recommended for promotion."³²² His recommendations may or may not have been accurate but conditions being such as they were at this time these statements would seem to be inappropriate rather than instructive.

This was bad. The commander of the regiment was considered AWOL, the second in command was under official scrutiny, and several officers including company commanders were recommended for dismissal. If Col. Canby had been able to act on these recommendations, things might have become worse for the Second Regiment but, luckily for them, he had bigger problems at the moment. He was still plagued with the immense financial conditions that were crippling the Territory. To his credit he really was trying to put things into better straits. He and Major Donaldson, the District Quartermaster, looked everywhere to borrow money. Canby described his woes in a correspondence to the Paymaster-General on the 18th of November.

³¹⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, McRae to Graydon 11/10/61, 134.

³²⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 11/10/61, 134.

³²¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Baylor, 152.

³²² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Anderson 11/13/61, 135.

“SIR:” he wrote, “The military operations in this department have for several months past been greatly embarrassed, and are now almost entirely paralyzed, by the want of funds in the pay department. The Regulars had not been paid for a year and the Volunteers had never been paid. He admitted that this had created “dissatisfaction” in both elements, and he reminded the Paymaster that he had reported this condition last June and continuously since then.³²³

Unfortunately, Canby wasn't the only one who was embarrassed; the Paymaster-General was just as embarrassed as he was since Confederate General Sterling Price had carried off the cash that was on its way to New Mexico.³²⁴ Sterling Price was the US commander who had put down the 1847 Taos Rebellion. Oddly enough, Confederate Colonel Baylor in Mesilla was fully aware of the loss of funds for the New Mexico Department and he wholeheartedly hoped that this would cause the New Mexican Volunteers to revolt against the Yankees. Meanwhile, ‘Yankee’ Edward Canby knew the Territory was in trouble. He borrowed money from private investors at 7.3 percent interest, using the personal credit of himself and two of his officers. He even had to make a personal guarantee for the interest. But even this was not enough. Then he started charging fines to suspected Confederate sympathizers. But it wasn't enough. A rumor began to circulate among the soldiers that the US Government was bankrupt. Canby believed, perhaps correctly, that these rumors were the work of “elements of discontent.”³²⁵ Canby had a lot to worry about. As he related above, the Regulars were not very happy and volunteering had dwindled, and worse, he felt the Volunteers already mustered would desert en masse. He was wrong. To be sure there were some deserters, and likely in the Regulars too, and yes, they were unhappy, but the main body of the Volunteer forces was loyal and remained intact.

On November 20th Captain Francisco Abréu and his Company C of the First Regiment were sent to northern New Mexico to build a road for a shorter cut-off for the supply trains coming from Fort Leavenworth. The road through Raton Pass was considered to be a safer route but there was concern that winter snows would close the pass, so it was decided to improve a cut-off trail that led more directly to Fort Union. Another company of volunteers was sent to begin work from the direction of Fort Wise but it was not identified.³²⁶ This was possibly Martínez' Company D of the Third Regiment which seemed to be usually deployed in that area. The two Volunteer companies would work towards each other. It is not described how the road was improved.

Throughout the previous months the hostile natives had not stopped raiding the countryside almost at will and by this time Governor Connelly was becoming fairly frantic. In response to the many requests for aid, which were mostly being ignored at this time, Canby laid out a plan to placate the Governor. He hoped to cut out the raiders and send them to reservations and somehow to get the New Mexicans to stop contributing to the vicious cycle of raiding and counter-raiding as well.³²⁷ This seems to have placated Connelly for a while.

On November 26th Lt. Col. Francisco Chaves of the 1st Regiment protested the treatment that the Volunteers were receiving at Fort Union and no doubt everywhere else. His complaints echoed those of Captain Martínez. Part of his complaint was that the quarters assigned to the volunteer officers were “unfit for any officer or gentleman to occupy.” He also charged that the Volunteers had been harassed with disrespect and “insulting language.”³²⁸ Soon, on November 26, Chaves also filed a complaint against discrimination. He stated that the New Mexicans had

³²³ The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Canby to Paymaster-General 11/18/61.

³²⁴ Chris Emmett, Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest, University of Oklahoma, 1965, 250.

³²⁵ Emmett, Fort Union, 250.

³²⁶ National Park Service, Fort Union. Chapter Five, Fort Union and the Army in New Mexico During the Civil War, www.santafetrailresearch.com/fort-union-nm/fu-oliva-5a.html

³²⁷ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 11/22/61.

³²⁸ NPS, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

been “slighted in every respect.” Chapman responded that “they not been slighted in any respect whatever,” and added that the Volunteers “of your command have never been so well fed, clothed and quartered as at present, and never will be again after they have left the Service of the U. States.” Canby threw another log on the fire when he voiced his opinion that if Volunteer officers “enter the service with the expectation of carrying with them the luxuries, or even the comforts of the home, it is an idea of which they cannot too soon divest themselves.”³²⁹

Of course, Lt. Col. Chaves was not simply talking about luxuries. The New Mexicans were used to a very hard life, especially when on the trail. Even at best, life on the frontier was not easy. Chaves was an educated man; he had been schooled in the east, at St. Louis and New York, and knew the difference between good social treatment and bad. He was concerned about his men and he was basically talking about racial discrimination. But neither Chapman nor Canby ever admitted that. There was an investigation of sorts but no discrimination was found. Even so, not forgetting to remind Chaves that most of the troops would be wintering in tents, Canby ordered Chapman to issue mattresses to the Volunteers.³³⁰ On November 27th a forty-wagon supply train rolled into Fort Union. It was loaded with clothing, camp and garrison equipment, and ordnance.³³¹ The uniforms for the remaining Volunteer regiments had arrived. New clothing, shoes and camp equipment would greatly help the comfort of the Volunteers.



J. Francisco Chaves, Lt. Col., 1st NMVI

Even as the supply trains were arriving another critical shortage was becoming obvious. Late in November Captain Rafael Chacón wrote a letter to Col. Christopher Carson requesting replacement horses, “My horses are in a dying condition from a want of protection from the inclemency of the weather and from starvation.”³³² The Volunteer’s horses could not be stabled in inclement weather and by starvation Chacón is referring to the fact that the Regulars would not give the Volunteers fodder or forage for their horses even when it was amply available. It is difficult to understand why Canby would allow his mounted forces to be crippled that way. The Volunteers must have reacted vociferously to this treatment but were powerless to change it.

On the 28th of November, Captain Chacón was ordered by Col. Carson to lead 70 men to Mesa Prieta which was considered to be off limits to the Navajos. He was accompanied by Lieutenants Antonio Gallegos of Co. I, 1st Regiment, and Pancho Griego, possibly Francisco Griego of Co. H, 3rd Regiment, and details of their men. Because of the condition or loss of many of the horses the Volunteers were forced to assemble parts of companies in order to put together a decent mounted force. As they had done for the past few months (and centuries past) Navajo raiders were using camps close to New Mexican settlements as bases from which to launch their raids. One raiding party that passed near Corrales with stolen horses was believed to

³²⁹ Emmett, Fort Union, 250-251.

³³⁰ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³³¹ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³³² Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 134-135.

be based at Mesa Prieta. Under treaty the Navajo were required to remain west of Fort Fauntleroy. Chacón's orders were to send peaceful natives back to Navajo country and to kill or capture raiders if caught, except for women and children. Chacón's column went to Prieta Mesa but the raiders had fled so he followed their tracks as far as Ojo de San Miguel where the tracks were lost. Eventually a trail was found and Chacón followed it to Zia Pueblo. Some Navajos were hiding in some houses there. Through an interpreter Chacón ordered them to come out. There was no reply, so with his men surrounding the houses, he and his cousins, the Velardes, broke the doors down and went in. There was a brief fight in which Chacón was very nearly killed. The surviving natives surrendered.³³³

December 1861

On the first of December Col. Canby reported to Headquarters in St. Louis that the only change in the situation in New Mexico was that the Indian attacks had become worse - now New Mexico was beset on all sides by the Navajos (from the west), Mescalero Apaches (from the southeast and east), Kiowas, and Comanches (from the north and northeast). He also noted that his army still greatly lacked supplies. He stated that the consequences caused by the Ladrona raiders usually fell upon the peaceful Navajos. The New Mexicans sometimes perpetrated injuries to the Navahos also for the purpose of plunder, thus complicating the situation. "These acts are not restrained by the moral sense of the community, and so long as these marauders find a ready sale for their plunder and for their captives, it will be impossible to prevent these depredations and the consequent retaliations by the Indians." Canby hinted at the not too distant future when he wrote that the only solution for the Natives would be, "absolute extermination or their removal and colonization at points so remote from the settlements as to isolate them entirely from the inhabitants of the Territory."³³⁴ He was right. The vicious cycle had gone on for centuries and there was no good solution. The New Mexicans had never had the option of implementing either of Canby's plans and probably wouldn't have if they could. When they weren't on the warpath the Natives were good trade partners and at least one Spanish attempt to establish hostiles on a reservation in the 1700s was a deplorable failure. Unfortunately, Canby's words turned out to be all too prophetic, particularly for the Navajos and Mescaleros.

On the 4th of December, Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves of the Second Regiment was formally relieved of his command at Fort Fauntleroy and sent to Albuquerque to be placed under house arrest by Colonel Carson. Carson offered him a choice to stay at his (Chaves') own home instead, but under the same conditions. No charges had yet been preferred. Perhaps Canby was not finished with his investigation. It seems that, perceiving no pardon in sight, Col. Manuel Pino had no choice but to promote Major Jesús M. Baca y Salazar to Lt. Colonel and Captain Manuel D. Pino to Major. Rafael Ortiz y Chaves was then promoted in his place from 1st Lieutenant to Captain of Company A. Captain Andrew W. Evans of the 6th US Cavalry took over command of the three companies of the Second Regiment at the Fort.

³³³ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 137-138.

³³⁴ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/1/61.



Manual A. Chaves, Lt. Colonel, 2nd NMVI

At this time Captain Juan Barrientos, whose command was now designated as Company A of the 5th Volunteer Regiment, was guarding the crossing of the river south of Fort Craig across from the town of Paraje.³³⁵ Paraje was located seven miles south of Fort Craig on the east side of the river. The next day, on the 6th, Col. Carson reported that twenty locals in the Fort Stanton area had gone to the fort to see about the crops they had abandoned. They had a fight with Indians and then they saw a party of Texans which left as soon as they were seen.³³⁶ Most likely they were another Texan scout.

On the 8th of December Canby wrote to Headquarters in Washington DC regarding the situation of his troops. This letter is significant because he describes the arms and equipment of the different forces under his command. First, he was very upbeat about his Regulars, saying “The regular troops are in excellent condition.” They needed some replacements and officers to fill the gaps in the ranks but they were still “well-instructed and disciplined, zealous and loyal.” The Volunteers however, were another matter. He cited that they were “improving slowly,” and were “not efficient,” and never would be “in any reasonable period.” They lacked self-confidence, couldn’t speak English, and did not possess the ability to learn. They were, however, valuable as auxiliaries of “regular troops or volunteers of American origin.” He desperately wanted more Americans in his command. The Regular infantry units were armed with the newest .58 caliber Springfield rifle muskets and the cavalry with the Harper’s Ferry Rifle and Colt’s Navy Pistol. Some had Maynard Carbines and a few carried Colt revolving rifles as an experiment. The Volunteer infantry were issued the .69 rifle muskets some of 1842 and some older. The mounted Volunteer riflemen had older Harper’s Ferry models of .54 and .58 calibers, the musketoon. Some companies had been issued old .69 smoothbores that still had not been re-bored into rifle-muskets. “These arms are all in serviceable condition,” he wrote, “but the troops are imperfectly equipped, as there is a great deficiency of all classes of accouterments,” meaning their leather gear (cartridge boxes, straps, belts and cap pouches) was hodge-podge. The great deficiency meant that many a soldier carried his cartridges and caps in a haversack or pocket. The clothing of the Regulars was adequate and the clothing for two volunteer regiments had already been distributed but “It is reported to be inferior in quality.” The clothing for the remaining two regiments was reported to be in the vicinity of Fort Union.³³⁷

Then Col. Canby proceeded to give the current estimates of the Confederate strength in Mesilla, adding that he thought they were very well armed. He also described that the horses and mules of his Department were not satisfactory for cavalry or draught use, being too light. He echoed the belief of the Union Cavalry officers that the New Mexico horses were not worth anything. This must be the reason the Volunteers were denied fodder wherever they went. Then Canby talked about subsistence supplies, saying that local beef was too expensive, but flour,

³³⁵ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, McRae to Barrientos 12/5/61, 136.

³³⁶ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Carson to Canby 12/6/61, 171.

³³⁷ *Official Records*, Canby to Washington DC 12/8/61.

beans and an inferior salt could be obtained, with only beans and salt being plentiful. Next he wrote about money. He described again the “embarrassments” he had experienced “from the want of coin.” Finally, he asked for troops from the east to be sent to New Mexico if and when the Regulars were to be withdrawn and he reiterated that, “The New Mexican volunteers, without the support of regular troops or of volunteers drawn from some other section of the country, cannot be relied on to resist an invasion of the country, if one is attempted.”

An invasion of the country, if one is attempted? It seems that Col. Canby did not consider the occupation of southern New Mexico an invasion and he really believed it was Confederate Territory. But he may have been aware of some incongruousness in his thinking because later, on the 14th of the month, he reported to Washington that he hoped to invade the Mesilla Valley. Still, the Mesilla Valley would be ‘invaded’ instead of ‘liberated.’ But regardless of how he perceived the situation, Canby remained characteristically passive. He also noted that the Department of New Mexico was still desperate for horses and mules. “Our operations are still greatly embarrassed by the want of transportation. The arrival of mules from the East in a few days will probably enable us to overcome this difficulty.”³³⁸ In short, New Mexico needed just about everything except food. Again, on the 14th he stated, “The contractors for supplying horses for the regular and volunteer cavalry have failed entirely, in consequence of the disturbed condition of affairs on the Western frontier. New contracts have been made, and it is hoped that the contractors will prove more successful.”³³⁹ He didn’t mention that he could have taken better care of the horses his troops already had. The lack of replacement horses would be almost as much of a problem as the lack of payroll.

About this time the First Regiment received two new recruits sent to them by Col. Canby. They were both from Colorado and had journeyed to Santa Fe to enlist. According to Canby the men were unsuited for soldiering except that they were very good musicians and he advised Carson to use them to create bands for the First and Second Volunteer Regiments. Carson was pleased. Music could entertain and inspire everyone, civilians and troops alike. He wrote a requisition for twelve brass instruments and the musicians themselves made some drums. But suddenly General Order #91 was received. It disallowed individual volunteer regiments to have their own bands. Only one per brigade was allowed now. Suddenly the two musicians were obsolete and Carson had to ask Canby, “Will you please advise me what I had better do with them?”³⁴⁰ One has to wonder, though, why four New Mexico Regiments could not have been considered a brigade, and therefore could have had a band. These two musicians were 2nd Lt. Lucien B. Jewell who became the Band Leader for the First Regiment and Charles Hopping who was perhaps meant to be the Assistant Band Leader. Charles Hopping later served as a bugler for Company G in the 1st New Mexico Cavalry Regiment after the Confederate threat had passed.

On the 9th of December Fort Union received a new commander. Colonel Gabriel R. Paul. Paul had just been selected by Governor Connelly as Colonel for the new regiment, the Fourth Regiment New Mexico Mounted Volunteers. But apparently this action had not yet been ratified through Regular Army channels. The Fourth Regiment had actually begun recruiting in September at Fort Union. It had six companies totaling about 450 men: Company A - Captain Julian C. Shaw, Company B - Captain Julius, Company C - Captain Alonzo Adams (later Captain John Thompson), Company D - Captain Juan José Herrera, Company E - 1st Lt. George W. Cook, and Company F - 1st Lt. John Carmody. Carmody had transferred from the Third Regiment to the Fourth.

When Col. Paul arrived at Fort Union he immediately began drilling the Volunteers at Camp Cameron, the Volunteer Camp of Instruction near the field works, and he was not satisfied

³³⁸ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/8/61.

³³⁹ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/14/61.

³⁴⁰ Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 2003), page 115.

with what he saw. Apparently, the Volunteers didn't know 'hayfoot' from 'strawfoot,' or in this case, 'izquierda de derecha' (left from right), but they were hell at shoveling and construction. Col. Paul noted that while under Chapman's command the Volunteers had received very little time for instruction. This may explain why Canby had written earlier, "The volunteer troops are improving slowly in discipline and instruction." Realizing the need for it Paul immediately petitioned Canby to change that and even went ahead with drilling before he got approval.³⁴¹ Canby did approve and Paul put the political prisoners at the fort to work in order that the Volunteers could spend more time at drill. Actually, although the new fort was basically defensible, the finishing work would go on for six more months, until June, 1862.³⁴² Sometime prior to this, some Confederate spy must have viewed the structure because a description of the fort was printed in the Mesilla Times on December 12th, 1861, and it was described as, "one of the best pieces of engineering ever done in America."³⁴³ It probably wasn't but it was darn good advertising especially in Confederate occupied territory. Work was still continuing on the defenses of Fort Craig also.

Except for Indian raids New Mexico remained quiet for the rest of December, but rumors continued to abound. The Texans were not able to begin their invasion and Canby had not mounted his counter-invasion, so the troops just watched and waited, and those not watching worked or drilled and waited. On the 22nd of December Captain Francisco Abréu's Company C, First Regiment, returned to Fort Union from their road building detail. He stated that they had made a very good road but it is not known if this road was ever used.³⁴⁴ On the 23rd Captain Barrientos was ordered to relieve Graydon on watch in the south near Alamosa. Apparently, at this time the advanced camp was located at Fort Thorne.³⁴⁵ But Graydon was not there. Without orders, he had made a scout south to El Paso. On the 25th Captain Lord of the 1st Dragoons (1st US Cavalry) reported that Graydon's Company had returned from their patrol. "Graydon has just arrived from El Paso. He left there on the night of the 23rd. He says he counted on the 22nd at Harts Mill 900 Mt. [mounted] Men just from San Antonio. 11 Companies, 3 of Lancers, and two of Negros."³⁴⁶ The reference to two companies of black troops is inexplicable, but one thing is sure. Paddy was a man of action who did not rely on rumors but rather investigated for himself the movements and strengths of the Texans. One can't help feeling that if Paddy Graydon had been in charge the Union Army would have been half-way to San Antonio, Texas, by now, and there would be hell to pay on the way.

Graydon's report must have energized Canby from his lethargy because on the next day he reported to Donaldson, the Department Quartermaster, "... I have ordered six companies of volunteers to be concentrated at Albuquerque as soon as possible, and can add two or three more if the news by the express should indicate its necessity. ...send an express to Fort Garland with the orders for the company from that place."³⁴⁷ Then he lapsed back into worrisome inaction. On the 28th Canby received more information of the Texans through Col. Roberts' spies in Mesilla. Canby relayed it immediately to Washington. The Texans in Mesilla had been augmented by 1,400 more troops. He had also heard that 2,000 Texans were proceeding up the Pecos River. "The first part of this information is no doubt mainly true," he wrote, "but the second I think doubtful, and circulated by the Texans for the purpose of dividing the force at this point." He

³⁴¹ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁴² National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁴³ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁴⁴ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁴⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Moore 12/23/61, 139.

³⁴⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Lord to Fort Craig 12/25/61, 140.

³⁴⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 12/26/61, 141.

also described how he had beefed up his garrisons at Fort Union, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque though he did not specify where he had found the extra men.³⁴⁸

By now everyone knew for sure that the Texan invasion of northern New Mexico was imminent, but it was still not known from which direction it would come. Col. Paul at Fort Union increased his defenses by having a well dug in preparation for a siege.³⁴⁹ On the 30th Lt. Col. Roberts ordered that the small towns of Paraje and Alamosa, as well as the advanced camp, be evacuated. He directed that all the townspeople and livestock be sent north. Only Barrientos' company or part of it would remain on picket guard in the area.³⁵⁰

On the 31st of December Canby finally received the report that listed the number of troops under his command and their locations. He had 4,752 men total. According to Governor Connelly's December report 3,500 of these men were volunteers, not counting militia and independent companies. This is quite plausible since the first three regiments had nearly 1,000 men each, and the last two easily had over 500 combined. In addition, the two activated militia divisions, the 1st & 3rd, and the many independent companies could easily mark more than 1,000 men, so this would mean that Canby had in excess of 4,500 New Mexicans in the ranks or ready to go at this time. Because the population of the Territory was about 90,000 people the total percentage of troops per capita was five percent. Since the highest percentage of troops per capita for the entire war in the eastern Union states was ten percent (claimed by two states), this is a very large percentage for the first year of the war, possibly one of the highest percentages in the Union. These figures agree with Canby's Field Abstract because he stated that he had about 1,200 Regulars (apparently he had picked up a couple hundred more from outlying locations), leaving him about 3,500 volunteers. These figures are also consistent with the 'Soldiers and Sailors' database online, which are slightly higher than this, but accounting for duplications for numerous name misspellings the database seems to agree with these figures. Later, the 2nd Militia Division waiting to be activated would add another 500 men to the above figures, making the Nation Guard units in excess of 1,500 men, and bringing the total of New Mexicans to 5,000.

That same day, on the 31st of December Col. Carson sent a warning to Major Luis Baca of the 3rd Regiment to keep a vigilant watch in his sector as a Texan force was expected in that area at any time. This probably refers to the rumor that 2,000 Texans were marching toward Fort Stanton. Major Baca was commander of the advance guard in the Manzano/Abo Pass area at this time.³⁵¹ Carson was making preparations for a Texan incursion from the east. If they were coming from Fort Stanton there were only two mountain passes they could use, Tijeras Canyon east of Albuquerque (it was known as Carnue or Carnuel Canyon at this time), or Abo Pass east of Socorro. Col. Carson informed Nicodemus, the acting adjutant at Fort Craig, of his plans. If the Texans approached, he would proceed to the mountain range to the east for at least two or three days. He would "make them fight their way through every mountain pass, and over every inch of ground that I can make tenable for a moment, and the country is well adapted for this kind of fighting." He hoped to be reinforced by the rest of his regiment still posted at Fort Union. He would arm every man that he could in the vicinity of Albuquerque but he noted that his stores were "sadly deficient in ammunition" if a drawn out battle should occur. Even with the men he already commanded "I have no fear for the result," since he believed he could raise another thousand men from nearby. On another topic he noted that a corporal of Captain Deus' Company was wounded in the neck while returning as an escort from Cubero and also that Captain Pino had arrived from that place with 146 men of Companies A & C of the 2nd Regiment Volunteers.³⁵²

³⁴⁸ Official Records, Canby to Washington 12/28/61.

³⁴⁹ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁵⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Lord 12/30/61, 142.

³⁵¹ Official Records, Carson to Baca 12/31/61.

³⁵² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Nicodemus 12/31/61, 173.

The significance of this letter is that Kit Carson did not ask for Regulars to reinforce him, instead he asks only for ammunition and the remainder of his own regiment, Lt. Col. Chaves' Battalion at Fort Union, to join him at Albuquerque. If Carson had no faith in the Volunteers as suggested earlier by Captain Shoemaker's letter, surely he would have asked for Regulars instead; but he didn't. Carson's confidence in himself, the Volunteers, and the populace in general is in direct contrast with almost all of the Federal Regular officers. He didn't panic and retreat as Roberts had done at Stanton. He wasn't paralyzed as Lynde had been in the south or lethargic as Canby was now. He simply planned for defense and he would act on it. Most of the volunteer officers had the same attitude as Carson and they had the same confidence in themselves and their men. The wounded man mentioned above was Corporal Avita. He was in charge of a detachment from Company I that was sent to Fort Fauntleroy escorting a supply train. They were attacked by a Navajo party and he was wounded by an arrow in the throat. One of the natives was killed in the fight.³⁵³ The 2nd Regiment was being drawn in to garrison the river towns along the Rio Grande and the Militia Divisions were taking more of the responsibilities previously held by the volunteers. Fort Fauntleroy was still in the process of abandonment with the supplies being secured in storehouses at Cubero. Militia companies of the First and Third Divisions were sent activated to relieve them. The Union forces were slowly shifting south. Unfortunately the withdrawal of troops from Fauntleroy encouraged the Navajos to believe they had forced the army to retreat, and they responded with a wave of Navajo attacks on homes and ranches.³⁵⁴

January 1862

In another spurt of excitement, on the 1st of January, Col. Canby sent a correspondence to Governor Connelly requesting that he activate the remaining State Militia. "There appears to be but little doubt that a considerable force (estimated at 1,200 men, with seven pieces of artillery) is now on the march to this place," he wrote, adding that the rumor of Texans on the Pecos was probably not valid. He wanted all the militia ready to go "when called upon," and that all citizens should "watch the roads" to prevent scouts or raiders from slipping by unnoticed. He advised Connelly that sections of the Militia should be ready to defend Albuquerque or Santa Fe and caches of arms that should also be held in readiness. Local merchants would be refunded by the Army if their stores should be required.³⁵⁵

Then Canby quickly wrote another letter, again asking Governor Gilpin of Colorado to send Colorado troops to garrison forts Garland and Wise so he could draw those troops into New Mexico.³⁵⁶ In response to the rumor mill Colonel Carson called in the last Volunteer company still posted at Fort Fauntleroy, Ricardo Branch's Company B, Third Regiment, and warned the pickets at Abo Pass to be vigilant. Major Luis Baca, also of the 3rd Volunteer Regiment, commanding those pickets had just reported that Agent Labadi with seventy men was scouting the Rio Bonito area and Captain Juan Sarracino, Company G, 3rd Volunteers, was scouting the Pecos River. Baca assured Carson that, "it will be impossible for a force to approach that country without being discovered."³⁵⁷ Canby approved of Carson's actions.

At this time the Federals believed that Confederate demonstrations south of Fort Craig were diversions meant to take attention away from the Fort Stanton area.³⁵⁸ Canby let all commands know that he was prepared to move east from Fort Craig if necessary. He now suspected three routes on which the Texans could approach: up the Rio Grande from Mesilla, up the Pecos from Fort Stanton, and up the Canadian River from Texas (pretty much the same routes

³⁵³ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

³⁵⁴ El Malpais: In the land of Frozen Fires (Chapter 5), <http://nps.gov/archive/elma/hist/hist5.htm>

³⁵⁵ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 1/1/62.

³⁵⁶ Official Records, Canby to Gilpin 1/1/62.

³⁵⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Nicodemus 1/2/62, 204.

³⁵⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Nicodemus to Carson 1/3/62, 205.

he had always suspected). Suddenly, on the 2nd of January, a large group of Texans made a move on the Union advanced camp at Cañada Alamosa, but it was fruitless and they withdrew. From Fort Craig Canby reported to Donaldson in Santa Fe that, “The object appears to have been the surprise of the outposts at that point.” From spies in Mesilla the Union pickets knew they were coming and were able to fall back, out of harm’s reach. Then he outlined his planned response. But, confusingly, he shifted his focus from the raid on Cañada Alamosa to the reputed Texans on the Pecos, then he shifted back again to the Rio Grande, illustrating he still wasn’t sure of anything. He correctly guessed that the Texans had not mustered as many men as they had originally hoped and the movement up the Pecos was now unfeasible. He finally concluded that he needed a reserve force higher up the Rio Grande at Las Lunas or Peralta which could reinforce either direction.³⁵⁹

Of course the Texan force advancing in the southeast was just another rumor, but the news of Texans at Alamosa was not. Canby was right to hesitate before moving east. He now suspected they might come from the south. A few days later Col. Roberts wrote to Canby, who had left Fort Craig for points north, that, Major Baca of 3rd Regiment had sent a message that there were no Rebels in the Fort Stanton area.³⁶⁰ There was no attack from the east. On the 7th Canby wrote a letter to Col. Paul at Fort Union, detailing his current strategy. He now situated his Headquarters at Camp Connelly which was located at Polvadera, New Mexico. The Volunteer and Regular companies were spread out among the river towns so that guarding the supply trains and watching for marauding Indians would be facilitated. Canby intended to collect a cadre of 500 Regulars to reinforce any point which might be threatened. It is not mentioned very much in the Official Records but work was still continuing on fortifying Fort Craig. Most of this work was being done by companies of the 2nd Regiment and possibly some militia units. Canby wrote, “The garrison at Fort Craig consists of seventeen companies, of which six are regulars and nine volunteers, having a reasonable degree of instruction and discipline; a sufficient force in my judgment to hold the post against any force that can be brought against it.” The last two companies probably were independent or militia companies. Canby now felt that the Confederates could not muster more than 2,000 men and he could easily assemble his own men in time to meet them. He directed all units to be ready to move on a moments notice. He stated he had asked Governor Connelly to have the militia ready for any emergency.³⁶¹ On the same day Canby sent word to Major Donaldson at Santa Fe that he had told Governor Connelly it was not necessary to activate the militia at this time.³⁶² Meanwhile, Captain Lord of the 1st US Cavalry made a scout in force to the Canada Alamosa and reported no Texans there.³⁶³

A few days later, Canby reported to Washington. As of the 6th of January he had relocated his Headquarters to Belen with a reserve force of three companies of Regular cavalry and three of infantry. He felt that Belen was a better location from which to respond to any of the three possible events. He could assemble about 1,500 men in twenty-four hours. All of the various mountain passes and roads were being watched and he would have advanced notice of any incursion. Fort Craig still contained six companies of Regulars, ten of Volunteers, two of Militia, and one of spies and guides, approximately 1,400 men. In addition, six more Volunteer companies could reach Fort Craig in twenty-four hours. Spies in Mesilla were reporting the enemy’s strength there at 2,100 men excluding two more regiments that were not present at Mesilla, thus he again believed the invasion would come by way of the Pecos.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁹ Official Records, Canby to Donaldson 1/3/62.

³⁶⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/6/62, 174.

³⁶¹ Official Records, Canby to Paul 1/7/62.

³⁶² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/7/62, 207.

³⁶³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/7/62, 208.

³⁶⁴ Official Records, Canby to Washington DC 1/11/62.

Canby was quite nervous, moving his troops and his headquarters this way and that, responding to every rumor as if the Texans could suddenly appear in his backyard without advanced notice – as if they didn't have vast terrain to cross first, and numerous pickets to spot them. The rumor of two more regiments had him believing that the Texans had as many men as he had. This made him incapable of implementing his 'invasion' plan. Also on the 11th, Captain Dodd and his Company B of Colorado Volunteers reached a town in northern New Mexico and one of his men, Private Alonzo Ickis, wrote in his diary on the state of affairs there. They had camped at "hozarqui" [Abiquiu?]. He noticed that the village, which was under martial law did not contain any men. "They are skulking over the mountains to keep out of sight of the Territorial pressman," he mused.³⁶⁵ Perhaps the men of the village were hiding. It's possible that this village had already given many men to the Union ranks. Consider the fact that if all the men were enlisted into the Army no one would be left to protect the village from Indians. The Militia Divisions had been originally created for that purpose but now they were being directed against another threat – a threat that was not constantly at their doors - and the men were being forcibly rounded up and sent away to... where were these Texans anyway? They weren't near this village. Forced conscription must have appeared to have been a hostile act, detrimental to the community, not one that would save the Territory. The 1st Militia Division or elements of it were already on duty at Fort Union and the 3rd Division was also active. Only the 2nd Division and perhaps some independent companies had not been called out yet.

Meanwhile, Canby's forces attempted to remove any possible forage from the Confederates if they advanced. Col. Paul at Fort Union was ordered to destroy forage at Giddings Ranch in the east where Captain Pablo Martínez, Company H of the 3rd Volunteer Regiment, was currently stationed.³⁶⁶ Then Colonel Kit Carson received similar orders for the Fort Stanton area.³⁶⁷ But even with a Texan Army on the horizon internal problems would soon beset Canby and Kit Carson was the harbinger. On the next day, January 14th, he warned Canby about imminent trouble, not that Canby could do much about it. Carson had seen letters from the "States" for a Mr. S. Beuthner, stating that several bridges had been destroyed in Missouri, "and that the mails have in consequence been stopped," meaning that the expected payroll was not on the way, and furthermore, would not be arriving until next spring. Carson was worried. "If these reports as to the money are true, it will cause a great deal of dissatisfaction among our Volunteer troops, and I am afraid will produce serious trouble," he wrote.³⁶⁸

Canby immediately wrote to Washington in a desperate attempt to stem disaster.

SIR: The last mail from the East brought information from private sources that the paymaster who was understood to be on his way to this country with funds for the payment of the troops has been detained at Fort Leavenworth, and that no funds would be sent out until spring. Whether this report be true or not, the effect of this circulation through the country at this time will be exceedingly unfortunate, and it is greatly to be apprehended that the volunteer forces already organized will melt away by desertion, and the people of New Mexico will be rendered still more apathetic than they now are, even if the disaffected of both classes are not stimulated into active opposition to the Government.

The Mexican people have no affection for the institutions of the United States; they have a strong, but hitherto restrained, hatred for the Americans as a race, and there are not wanting persons who, from the commencement of their troubles, have

³⁶⁵ Nolie Mumey, Bloody Trails Along the Rio Grande (Old West Publishing Company, Denver, 1958), 1/11/62, 60.

³⁶⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Donaldson to Canby 1/12/62, 209.

³⁶⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/13/62, 210.

³⁶⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Canby 1/14/62, 211.

secretly but industriously endeavored to keep alive all the elements of discontent and fan them into flames. The long-deferred payment of the volunteers has given so much plausibility and coloring to their representation as to have produced a marked and pernicious influence upon these ignorant and impulsive people.

*Without crediting these reports, I think it proper to state that, unless measures are taken at an early period to remove these causes of dissatisfaction, the consequences will be in the highest degree injurious to the interests of the Government.*³⁶⁹

But Canby's efforts would do no good. The word was out and in a few days it would spread to every military post in the Territory. If the US Army had only missed a couple of payrolls things would have been all right, but the word that was going out now was that the Government never intended to pay them. At this point it was a very difficult rumor to counter. If the Government had been paying New Mexican volunteers throughout the 1850s it would have been easy for them to believe that the mails had been stopped by circumstance not intention (in fact, the 1855 volunteers had not been paid until 1859). This felt like a betrayal. As the man said, "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." They had sworn service to a government whose agents denigrated them, did not equip or clothe them properly, did not feed their horses, and allowed hostiles to attack their villages with impunity. The duty was harsh and unusual (the digging of forts); and the language of their superiors was foreign and their customs were strange. At this point enlistment must have looked more like slavery than freedom – and men who had not properly volunteered did not need much convincing of that. It had become a matter of trust.

The next day Col. Paul's scouts out on the eastern plains still reported no sign of Texans.³⁷⁰ In other locations, at points west and south, the Navajos were still on the warpath, especially in the southern part of the Territory. Nicodemus, the Adjutant-General in Santa Fe wrote to the Navajo Agent, John Ward at Cebolleta near Fort Fauntleroy asking him to gain as much information as he could about the war parties.³⁷¹ He wanted information, not a response. Then the thing Canby feared the most occurred – a mutiny. From Camp Connelly at Polvadera Captain Samuel Archer of the 5th US Infantry sent a report of "a serious occurrence" to Nicodemus at Canby's HQ at Belen. Thirty men of two companies of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment that were returning to their base at Socorro had mutinied. Major Manuel D. Pino, also of the 2nd Regiment had ordered them to return to Fort Craig, an order which they had refused, "stating they had not been paid or clad as they had been promised." Instead the thirty men had absconded towards the mountains. Colonel Miguel E. Pino, commanding the 2nd Regiment, was on his way to Socorro.³⁷²

On the same day, there was another near mutiny staged at Fort Union in one of the militia companies. But it was quickly subdued by Col. Paul. He thought the officers were to blame though he could not get proof, so he discharged them, reduced the NCOs, and put the enlisted men on hard labor until evening. Then he distributed "all the enlisted men among the other companies of Militia at the post."³⁷³ The unit is not identified in the correspondence but this could have been Company C of the 1st Militia Division, since that company appears to have been disbanded with the men going to other companies. The militia men had never been promised to be "paid or clad" at all, but perhaps their feelings were similar to the other mutineers. Again, it was a matter of trust.

³⁶⁹ Official Records, Canby to Washington 1/13/62.

³⁷⁰ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Paul to Donaldson 1/14/62, 211.

³⁷¹ Official Records, Nicodemus to Ward 1/15/62.

³⁷² Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Archer to Nicodemus 1/16/62, 212.

³⁷³ NPS, *Fort Union: Chapter Five*.

For some reason both transfers of Lt. Col. Benjamin Roberts and Lt. Col. Gabriel Paul from the Regulars to the Volunteers were still not official in Canby's mind. Perhaps he needed confirmation from Headquarters in Saint Louis. But most likely it was because he was desperately short of Regular officers. He turned them down, also citing, "Besides this, the prejudice of the Mexican population towards the Americans is so great that if the field officers are taken altogether from the latter class it is to be apprehended that it will delay, if it does not defeat, the organization of these regiments. This is not, perhaps, a good military reason, but it is a necessity, from the character of the people we have to deal with." Canby added, "I have also instructed two or three of the most efficient volunteer officers now in the service that, if they would induce the men of their regiments to enter the service for three years, I would recommend them for commissions as field officers. Colonel Gallegos and Lieutenant-Colonel Valdez are among them, and until I can learn what these men are going to do, I could give no definite answer to your question, even if there were no other obstacles to a favorable answer."³⁷⁴

It appears that to gain some loyalty from the natives, Canby was offering commissions as Regular Army officers to Col. Gallegos and Lt. Col. Valdez of the 3rd Regiment if they would convince their men to extend their enlistments. Since Gallegos and Valdez were already field officers of Volunteers, this must be what he means. If this is true, it is unprecedented. The US Army had never considered American 'Mexicans' as anything but support personnel, guides, and auxiliaries before this time. There had never been an official policy against Hispanics joining the Regular Army but it was effectively discouraged on a local level.³⁷⁵ Even Col. Loring had offered commissions to the Hispanos before Canby did. As it would turn out, both Paul and Roberts would retain their new commissions, Paul as Colonel of the Fourth Volunteer Regiment and Roberts as Colonel of the Fifth. But this brings up another mystery. Why would Canby start a fifth volunteer regiment when the fourth had not filled up yet? It only had six companies and Roberts' two companies of the Fifth should have been included in the Fourth. There is one possible reason to start a new regiment – so that Canby could make his friend Roberts a full Colonel – but this cannot be known for sure. One of the most striking things about the Union forces in New Mexico was the hodge-podge collection of mounted and foot volunteers, militia, and myriad independent companies. It must have been an organizational and logistical nightmare to control. To be sure, the Regulars were used to having their companies dispersed, and perhaps they continued it by habit, but during the present crisis it must have been a difficulty.

On the 15th of January Confederate General Henry Hopkins Sibley arrived in Mesilla to take command of the Army of New Mexico, as the Texan force would be called. On the 16th Dodd's Colorado Company reached Santa Fe where they were issued new clothing. Private Ickis wrote: "In Santa Fe NM...Have received our uniforms...Blue frock coat, good...Blue pants, poor...Overcoat blue, good...Forage cap... Hat and plume...Draw blankets, shoes, and blouse and shirt...Our company looks better since we got the regs on [regulation clothing]."³⁷⁶ If there was a shortage of clothing for the 2nd NM Volunteers, there certainly was none for the Coloradans, and since there was no mention of poor quality, it must have come from Federal store. Meanwhile Canby had to deal with the mutineers who said "they had not been paid or clad as they had been promised." On the next day, the 17th, he wrote to Donaldson, his Chief Quartermaster in Santa Fe regarding the "mutiny" in the 2nd Regiment and the militia's refusal to do guard duty at Fort Union. "The men allege that they have not been paid and clothed as they were promised!!" he continued.³⁷⁷

What Canby means by his remark about the men's allegations is puzzling. No one had been paid as of yet so that part was true. But had the men of these two companies been clothed as

³⁷⁴ Official Records, Canby to Paul 1/15-16/62.

³⁷⁵ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

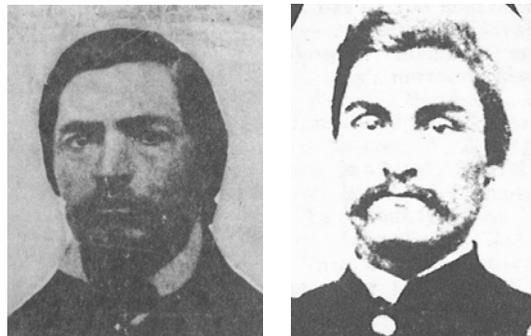
³⁷⁶ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 1/16/62, 15-16.

³⁷⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/17/62, 213.

promised - or not? Canby had mentioned earlier that their clothing was “inferior in quality” and they were “imperfectly equipped.” What is clear, however, is that the 2nd Regiment was not helping its image in the minds of the Federals. It was one more strike against them; proof to the Regulars that they would not fight well and taking their cue from Canby, the Regulars desperately wanted to believe it. New Mexico is quite cold in the winter, especially if one must sleep on the ground. It has already been established that the newer companies did not have proper camp equipage, tents, cooking pots, etc. Neither were blankets ever mentioned. Canteens are described as being scarce. And no one has mentioned shoes. So the highest probability is that the volunteers were correct that they had not been clothed as promised – especially in the unpopular 2nd Regiment.

In addition, those companies that had already received uniforms that would not “withstand long wearing” back in September must have been almost in tatters by now. Unless the men received new clothing they would have had to rely on patchwork repairs or civilian replacement clothing. It’s not likely that they ever did receive additional clothing because at this time First Regiment captains were reporting, “Every man on the roll owes for one complete set of clothing...”³⁷⁸ Back East when the Volunteer clothing wore out they always got new ones (eventually). Responding to the crisis Canby quickly sent orders to Col. Pino at the 2nd Regimental Headquarters at Polvadera, reiterating the alleged complaint that “that they have not been paid and clothed as they were promised.” Then he added, “Without stopping to inquire into the correctness of these complaints,” he demanded immediate suppression of the “serious revolt.” Use of excessive force was approved. Mysteriously, Canby added, “Until this is accomplished, no concession or compromise can for a moment be entertained.” Canby also urged Pino to perform an investigation to discover who were the “ringleaders of the revolt.” He also offered additional support if required.³⁷⁹

On the same day, along with companies A (Gonzales’) & D (Espinosa’s) of the First Volunteer Regiment, J. Francisco Chaves arrived at Los Lunas as commander of that section of river towns and he promptly received orders to pursue the mutineers. He responded quickly, “I will immediately send out a company of men under the command of Capt. Espinosa [Co. D] & Lt. D. Montoya [Co. I], both of the 1st R.N.M. Vols., and the instruction which I received in your communication will be obeyed to the letter.”³⁸⁰ Apparently, a section of Company I (Deus’ Company) was already there, possibly on escort duty.



L-R: Captain Julian Espinosa Co. D, 2nd Lt. Donaciano Montoya Co. I, 1st Regiment

Col Roberts at Fort Craig thought it was time to begin the evacuation of families in the no man’s land between Fort Craig and Mesilla (again). There were no large populations there at this

³⁷⁸ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23 & 25.

³⁷⁹ Official Records, Nicodemus to Pino 1/17/62.

³⁸⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, J. F. Chaves to Nicodemus 1/17/62, 214.

time and they could be accommodated further north above Fort Craig³⁸¹ On the 19th, Canby wrote to Donaldson in Santa Fe that the mutineers were still at large. An officer of the 2nd Regiment had failed to capture them and the two companies sent by Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves were hunting them. He stated that he had sent two cavalry companies of Regulars out also and that they would be caught if the mutineers stayed in a bunch.³⁸² That same day a New Mexican named Juan C. Armijo, a private citizen throwing a little more fuel on the fire, wrote to Canby, “There is a great sensation among the people, caused by the delay of funds from the States to pay the expenses of the government, especially the volunteers.”³⁸³

Also on the 20th Captain Santiago Hubbell wrote a letter similar to Rafael Chacón’s in which he described the problems that the mounted Volunteers in general were experiencing. “The volunteers do all the escorting with these horses untill [sic] by escorting and having no forage they have lost allmost [sic] all or have disabled them and it is a general expressed opinion [sic] that a volunteers horse dos [sic] not want more than half-feed to do all the work.”³⁸⁴

But Col. Canby was worried about more than just horses. At this point he and other Regular officers were very much afraid that the revolt would spread throughout the entire Volunteer command and might even spread among the civilian population. Things may have looked as if Confederate Col. Baylor might get his wish and the New Mexicans would desert the Union altogether. Canby wrote to Donaldson in Santa Fe, “There is a good deal of excitement in the reputable Mexican population of this part of the country, growing out of the hearing of a pronunciamiento [proclamation] on the part of the militia and volunteers.” But Canby, attempting to spread calm among his officers, indicated that as long as the Regulars were close by they would not openly revolt and he wrote that he had peppered the volunteers with Anglos which would also help against outright mutiny.³⁸⁵ If the Hispanos had truly decided to revolt Canby would need a lot more ‘pepper’ than that and he seems to have forgotten that horses also were part of the problem. No doubt remembering that the Militia had defied him before, yet keeping a cool head, Canby described the situation to Headquarters in Washington D.C. giving them an ‘I told you so’ regarding the postponement of the payroll. “The news by that mail was communicated to the Mexican population and volunteers with almost telegraphic rapidity,” he wrote, “and the first result was a revolt in one of the companies of volunteers (militia) at Fort Union, and in two companies of the Second Regiment Volunteers at Camp Connelly...” He was now calling the “mutiny” a “revolt.” Colonel Paul had put a stop to it, he reported. But the second instance, “was not so easily managed.”³⁸⁶

Captain Aragon of the 3rd Militia Division, now in command at Cubero, reported that Captain Espinosa and Lt. Montoya of the First Volunteer Regiment had passed through the town on the trail of the mutineers on the 20th of January. They had left the same night for “Savolleta” (Cebolleta) along with Lieutenant José María Sanchez and twenty men of Company B, 2nd Regiment, “and one piece of artillery...”³⁸⁷ Aragon had taken over command of the Post from Captain A. W. Evans of the 6th US Cavalry on the previous 17th. Evans had been assigned to transfer supplies from Fort Lyon (Fauntleroy) to storage at the depot in Cubero and now the work was done. Still on the 20th Col. Canby received an urgent request from Governor Connelly asking again for protection for civilians against the ferocious Indian attacks. Canby wrote back, noting that several regiments of Texans were on the march to the north. Then he stated that the Indian attacks were less critical since they only attacked in small groups while the Texan force

³⁸¹ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, 213.

³⁸² Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Canby to Donaldson 1/19/62, 214.

³⁸³ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Armijo 1/20/62, 214.

³⁸⁴ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 139.

³⁸⁵ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Canby to Donaldson 1/20/62, 215.

³⁸⁶ *Official Records*, Canby to Washington DC 1/20/62.

³⁸⁷ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Aragon 2/1/62, 221.

was very large, approximately 4,000 men. It would be unwise to spread out the Union troops to guard against the marauding savages. Then he said, sarcastically, that he would do something for the citizens as soon as Connelly raised a force of his own for that purpose. Canby would not be able to arm or clothe that force (neither could Connelly and Canby knew that). But he could give some ammunition and rations, “and it must be distinctly understood by all who engage in this service” that the Militia force would not be allowed to capture “plunder or captives.”³⁸⁸ The incident with Manuel Chaves and his brother Román Baca was still very much in his mind. Incidentally, as an example of a personal consequences of the incessant Indian raids, when Manuel returned home from the war he found that Navajos had stolen all his livestock, leaving him impoverished.³⁸⁹ Meanwhile Col. Roberts at Fort Craig sent Canby an express to inform him that two companies of Texans were seen by the Alcalde (mayor) at Canada Alamosa and he believed them to be the advanced guard for the Texan Army. Apparently not all of the citizens had evacuated yet. The Alcalde also reported that the Texans all wore white scarves on their left arms indicating they intended to fight at night. Then Roberts requested that all of the Regulars be sent to Fort Craig immediately because “I have lost confidence in the volunteers since you were here.”³⁹⁰

Meanwhile, Kit Carson and other Volunteer officers were anxious that with problems in the ranks, Indian attacks, and approaching Texans, they needed all the leadership they could get. A request signed by many officers as well as Kit Carson himself was sent to Colonel Canby asking him to release Lt. Colonel Chaves from house arrest, for which charges had still not been preferred.

*The undersigned officers of the Volunteers and Militia of New Mexico would respectfully call your attention to the case of Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves, 2nd Regt. N. M. Vols., who has for two months been under arrest on unknown charges. For years past Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves has been well-known as a loyal citizen, an honorable man, and he has repeatedly proved himself a brave and efficient officer. In our opinion the cause in which we are all so deeply interested is every day losing the services of a man who is one of its strongest and ablest supporters.*³⁹¹

No one could have known at this time that it would be Chaves who would direct the final blow at the Battle of Glorieta Pass that would destroy the Confederate hopes in New Mexico; however, they sensed they were missing the vital services of a very capable New Mexican. Because of this request, Canby wrote a special order on the 21st of January releasing Chaves to serve with his regiment. Things were hot. The Volunteers were bristling with dissatisfaction and rumors of dissatisfaction, the citizens were very angry, and the Territorial Council was fuming. They passed a resolution to muster more men including Pueblo Indians to campaign against the hostile natives. Canby wrote to Donaldson, “I have learned by this evening’s mail that the Legislature is greatly exercised at the Indians depredations & is talking loudly about the sacrifices the people of New Mexico are making to sustain the government of the United States and fight an “imaginary evil when the real evil is at their doors &c &c.” Despite Canby’s ranting the Council did have a point. For seven months now, the Texan threat had seemed dormant. And even if they were massing troops to invade northern New Mexico, the hostile Native Americans had been raiding constantly with very little interference from the Army. To Canby, the Indian attacks were

³⁸⁸ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 1/21/62.

³⁸⁹ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Military Occupation of New Mexico (Arno Press, New York, 1976), 306-307.

³⁹⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/21/61, 217.

³⁹¹ Marc Simmons, The Little Lion of the Southwest (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 173.

of lesser importance but to the citizens a whole lot of little attacks added up to a very big one. To them Canby was concentrating on Texans that had not arrived yet while the Indians were definitely there. Continuing his letter, Canby also noted that, "Roberts is a good deal concerned about some apprehended trouble with his volunteers, but I do not think it will amount to anything."³⁹² He still had confidence in the Regulars. But the Regular Army officers were on edge everywhere, so were the Volunteers and the populace as well. The best thing that could happen to get everyone's mind off their other problems would have been a Texan invasion, but that wouldn't occur for almost another month.

Meanwhile, Captain Juan Barrientos, Company A, 5th Volunteer Regiment, asked Col. Canby for lances for his company. This must have been a refreshing change from the topic of the day. Lances had been the traditional main weapon for mounted troops in New Mexico since the earliest days and the older Volunteers would have been familiar with their use. Canby had seen Mexican lancers during the Mexican War and he thought it was a good idea.³⁹³ Soon, lances would be in action but oddly enough, they would be Texan lances. Finally, Canby had had enough griping about the Indian attacks. Perhaps admitting that he had indeed committed some negligence he immediately wrote another letter to Donaldson stating that, "As soon as the present emergency has passed, I will turn all the available force into the Navajo Country, and in the mean time will do all that I can without disseminating our force to a dangerous extent."³⁹⁴ It seems at this point that he really did want to address the Indian problem but he felt that he couldn't.

Amidst the general hysteria a humorous incident occurred in which Captain Rafael Chacón arrested his commanding officer, Colonel Kit Carson. Captain Chacón was Officer of the Day (OD) at the post in Albuquerque. The OD, Officer of the Day, was in charge of the post guard, and the guard music for a 24 hour period. Then another officer would take over as OD at the changing of the guard. At this time, the men on guard duty were particularly nervous and alert since the Texans, or even collaborators and spies, were expected anywhere at anytime. Chacón had received orders that day to arrest anyone out of their quarters after Tattoo. Tattoo is the evening signal for all soldiers to be in their quarters. Suddenly, one night, Chacón heard shots from the direction of Barelás which he refers to as the new plaza of Albuquerque. He formed his company and marched them towards the disturbance and found nothing except another crowd of soldiers who were also coming to investigate the shots. He arrested them all including Kit who was in the crowd. Kit protested that the commanding officer could not be arrested, but the Regular officers agreed that as OD Chacón had the authority. Chacón told them they were all under arrest but could remain in their quarters. He wrote in his memoirs, "Very early in the morning, Colonel Carson ordered his adjutant [Lt. Eben Everett] to call me in order to know if I was going to file charges. I went and told him, 'no' owing to the extraordinary circumstances of expecting the enemy at any moment. I later sent word to the lieutenant of the guard that the other officers were free, along with their men."³⁹⁵ Imagine, Kit was saved by the Texans.

Finally, Col. Canby was sure the Texan force would come from the south. He had received intelligence on the disposition of the Texans massing for the invasion and on the 25th of January he sent to Washington a detailed description which he had obtained from spies. General Sibley was already with the army. Two Texan regiments, the 1st and 2nd were just north of la Mesilla. They had six pieces of artillery with them. They were in bad shape, subsistence-wise, and had had about 200 horses lost to raiders. According to the spy they carried lists of prominent capitalists of northern New Mexico that they could plunder.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/21/62, 217.

³⁹³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/22/62, 217.

³⁹⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/22/62, 218.

³⁹⁵ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 140.

³⁹⁶ Official Records, Canby to Washington 1/25/62.

In response to this information Canby issued orders to collect as many Regulars, and Volunteers at Fort Craig as possible without leaving the rest of the Territory entirely defenseless. Elements of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Volunteer Regiments marched south in five columns. In addition, part of the First and all of the Second Militia Divisions would be sent there also. On the 23rd of January, Col. Carson, heading the Third Column, started for the assembly point with four companies of the 1st Regiment; B, C, I, & K. At Las Lunas they were joined by Lt. Col. Chaves with Companies A & D. On the 24th the Column arrived at Belen.³⁹⁷ The remaining companies of the Regiment, companies E, F, G, and H under Major Morrison, were ordered to leave their post at Fort Union and also march to Fort Craig. Carson and his men rested at Belen for two days. While there, it was discovered that Navajos had killed a group of Penitentes (a religious group). Three companies of the First including Chacón's were ordered to hunt them down. They brought along a couple of guns which were used quite effectively. The natives were caught on the aptly named Ladrone's Hill. A short battle ensued, a few natives were killed and the rest fled with the New Mexicans in pursuit. During the chase, the artillery set up on the hill and fired shots over Chacón's head, killing more natives at long range.³⁹⁸ Apparently the artillery instruction they received at Fort Union had rendered them good service.

Meanwhile, Espinosa and Montoya were still hunting for the mutineers. Captain Francisco Aragon at Cubero reported that they had caught three of the deserters and passed through Fort Fauntleroy on the 25th of the month and were headed for Albuquerque. From there they would turn south to follow their Regiment to Fort Craig. Captain José D. Sena with his Company B of the 2nd Regiment also left Cubero that same day on his way to Fort Craig.³⁹⁹ It's likely that Espinosa, Montoya, and Sena caught up with the Third Column sometime during the march.

Late in January Col. Canby wrote a reply to a request that urged him to move upon the Texan threat to the south. Even though troops already were on the move he wrote back a little peevishly, "...I wish it to be said distinctly that I will move when I get ready to move; and that will be when I know that the country behind me is secured from a revolutionary movement."⁴⁰⁰ Contrary to his coolness otherwise, this letter indicates that he actually was in apprehension of an outright revolt. In his mind he feared that the Volunteers, Militia, and the general populace of New Mexico would rise up and rebel. Mentally, this put him in a very precarious state.

The Second Militia Division was finally activated on the 25th of January by order of Militia Major General O. P. Hovey. Canby had requested the activation of the remaining Militia units and Connelly responded by putting Hovey into action. In his diary Major Charles Wesche reports that he was to act as commander of the 2nd Division in place of Col. Nicolás Pino for the time being. Wesche ordered the Captains to collect their companies and march to the capital city. Meanwhile, the first columns marching south reached Fort Craig about the last week of the month and set up a tent encampment for Volunteers and Militia east of the fort near the river. It was called Camp Carson, presumably because Kit would be its commander. Col. Carson and the Third Column left Belen on the 26th, resuming their march south.

Still in Santa Fe on the 29th, Major Wesche began a collection of arms, horses, mules, and horse furniture. He also made requisitions for clothing and commissary supplies. However, they were denied clothing and almost everything else. The Territory still had no money and Governor Connelly had to order the Militia officers to purchase what they needed at their own expense "Forage, Fuel, Clothing, Camp and Garrison Equipage."⁴⁰¹ It was already understood

³⁹⁷ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

³⁹⁸ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 141.

³⁹⁹ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Aragon 2/1/62, 221.

⁴⁰⁰ *Official Records*, Canby to Donaldson, 1/25(?) /62.

⁴⁰¹ Ed. Jerry D. Thompson, "The Civil War Diary of Major Charles Emil Wesche," *Password* Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1994, 43.

that the militiamen would provide their own clothing, horses, mules and wagons but even this was a great hardship for many. Major Wesche incurred considerable personal expense by equipping his own Division, for which he was never recompensed. The 2nd Division mustered ten small companies but one was eventually incorporated into two others. Records are sketchy but the Division seems to have had about 300 men and about 130 of them (in two companies) were infantry. Dodd's Company of Colorado Volunteers reached Fort Craig on the 31st of January. Private Alonzo Ickis wrote in his diary that they had arrived at Camp Carson. He noted that it was "a pretty camp" and that "Kit is here with his regiment of greasers," and in addition, "two companies of Pino's regiment of cerahoes [sic - carajos]."⁴⁰² Even though the Coloradans had just arrived in the Territory, it seems that the reputation of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment had already been engrained in their minds. This indicates that most of the Regulars had already pegged the 2nd NM Regiment for failure and the Coloradans had heard about it from them. Col. Canby's propaganda had worked. Speaking of the Colonel, he also arrived at the fort on the 31st.

Meanwhile, in California, Colonel James H. Carleton received orders from his superior, Brigadier General Wright, commander of the California Military District, to begin preparations to march to the relief of New Mexico.⁴⁰³ James Carleton was a native of Eastport, Maine. He joined the Army as a young man and was made a 2nd Lt. of the 1st Dragoons in 1839. Just before the Mexican War he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. Then he was promoted to Captain during the War and quickly brevetted to Major for meritorious conduct at the Battle of Buena Vista. Carleton became a full Major early in 1861 and then became a Colonel of the 1st California Volunteers on August 7th. His command was preparing to march to New Mexico.

February 1862

Col. Carson and the Third Column arrived at Fort Craig on the 1st day of February and settled in at Camp Carson.⁴⁰⁴ While Carson's battalion was on its march south the company commanders had heard a rumor that the Army intended to remove the unfit horses of the Regiment without supplying replacements and without paying for the use of the horses as promised. This was a matter of deep concern to the Captains whose companies were mounted: Gonzales (A), Espinosa (D), Deus (I), and Chacón (K). On the 5th of February these four Captains wrote a letter to the Regimental Adjutant, Lt. Eben Everett, stating that it was Canby's intention at the time of their enlistment to keep the best horses in service at the agreed upon evaluation. Unfortunately for most of the men, that evaluation was only about half of what they had actually paid for their mounts. In addition, the unsuitable horses would be given no more forage for subsistence; nor would any compensation be given for their use - and half the horses had already been rejected by this time. Upon enlistment the men had been promised \$12 per month for the use of their horses plus forage and most of the men expected to pay their debts from that stipend. The letter also noted that the volunteers had constantly been refused forage for their mounts even when it was amply available, as noted earlier by Captains Chacón and Hubbell. They wrote, "We would ask, is it just that our men should lose their horses when the fault has been a want of forage when there has been plenty in the country, and no fault of their own?"⁴⁰⁵ This action meant that captains who had financed horses for many of their men would become financially destitute.

On another level, one has to understand how New Mexicans felt about their horses in order to comprehend the magnitude of the situation. Unable to dispose of them, were they supposed to shoot the ones that had served them for long hard months? Fearing desertions and

⁴⁰² Mumey, *Bloody Trails*, 1/31/62, 68. The author was not sure of the meaning of the word carajos and thought it might have meant 'stupid ones.' It actually is a dirty word meaning 'pricks.'

⁴⁰³ *Official Records*, Wright to Carleton 1/31/62.

⁴⁰⁴ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁴⁰⁵ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 142.

great dissatisfaction in the ranks, the Captains pleaded for assistance. Col. Carson wrote a letter seconding their plight, but he was a little more direct. “This course will bring much dissatisfaction and I fear will result badly and I would respectfully but urgently ask the Department Commander that he will, if consistent with the interest of the service, change his present intention in this matter”⁴⁰⁶

On the same day Captain Aragon of the 3rd Militia Division, still at Cubero, sent a letter which demonstrates the plight of the Militia. They were running out of clothing and equipment and had no means at all to re-supply, while a nearby Sutler, the avaricious Dr. Kavanaugh, sat on his wares and demanded payment. Almost all of his men were barefoot and lacked clothing and “other necessary articles for life.” At this point Aragon thought he and his men were to be paid for their service and that clothing could be drawn against that. He did not know they wouldn’t be paid but apparently Kavanaugh knew it.⁴⁰⁷ Apparently, they had been lied to.

This was the same Francisco Aragon who had set the constables out to round up his company last summer. To be sure, morale could not have been good in his unit. Not only had some of them been pressed into service without even a promise of pay or an issue of clothing, but here they were in a frontier outpost in January without shoes or other much-needed items. It’s possible that some of the Volunteer companies were in similar straits, and especially the ones that mutinied. Given the attitude of the Federal Regulars towards them it’s conceivable that the Second Regiment did not receive all the supplies it needed. Perhaps Col. Carson’s reputation benefited the First Regiment in that regard and Canby also seemed to appreciate the Third Regiment to a degree; yet even aggressive mounted companies (notably Chacón’s and Hubbell’s) were being denied the forage they needed.

Two days later, on February 3rd, Major Wesche left Santa Fe with three companies of the 2nd Militia: Company A, foot, with Captain Antonio Sena, Company B, foot, commanded by Captain José E. Duran, and Company C, mounted, under Captain Ramon Sena y Rivera. Wesche was joined on the way by two more companies, Company D, commanded by Captain Velasquez, and Company E, led by José Merced Sánchez.⁴⁰⁸ Ahead of them, Governor Connelly, with other Militia troops, probably of the First Division, arrived at Fort Craig on the 4th. On February 5th Major Morrison’s battalion of the First Volunteer Regiment also arrived at the fort.⁴⁰⁹ The First Regiment was now completely assembled. On February 7th the Confederate forces finally began to move north with Col. Green’s Fifth Regiment and Teal’s artillery in the vanguard. That same day the rejected horses of the First Regiment were removed from the men and the acceptable mounts were allocated among two companies leaving the two other companies dismounted. Deus’ and Chacón’s companies were to remain mounted and Gonzales’ and Espinosa’s became foot companies. Eleven of Espinosa’s men deserted and, “Many years later Captain Espinosa’s grandson still spoke of the terrible financial drubbing his grandfather had experienced as a reward for his patriotism to his new government.”⁴¹⁰

As the remaining mounted companies, Chacón and Deus found themselves to be constantly on patrol, and with the Texans known to be advancing, nerves were very jittery. A humorous incident occurred that night when Chacón camped in the small abandoned village of Paraje, seven miles below Fort Craig on the east bank. Cats left behind by the inhabitants scared his guards and they instinctively fired into the wailing, promptly ending a supposed surprise attack.⁴¹¹ The next day, on the 8th, Carson’s First Regiment passed in review at Fort Craig and Alonzo Ickis noted as much in his diary. The maneuvers of the New Mexicans must have met a

⁴⁰⁶ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 143.

⁴⁰⁷ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Aragon 2/1/62, 222.

⁴⁰⁸ Thompson, *Civil War Diary*, 41.

⁴⁰⁹ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁴¹⁰ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 143.

⁴¹¹ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 144.

measure of approval because he grudgingly wrote, "If these greasers will only fight we are all OK."⁴¹²

Paddy's Graydon's first company had already mustered out in early February and immediately he began recruiting a new one and by the 9th had assembled about 85 men, most of whom may have also been from the Lemitar area. On the 12th, Chacón and Deus were sent on patrol again; Chacón on the west side of the river and Deus on the east. Chacón went as far as the small village of Padercillas which was a mile or so below Paraje, Deus' destination. Deus, who was first to return to the fort, reported that Chacón and his company had been captured, which of course was not true. Chacón had divided his company into two platoons and was reuniting them, not meeting up with Texans, as Deus thought he had seen in the moonlight.⁴¹³ No one knew it at the time but the Texan advance group was only about twenty miles south of the fort. Canby had not sent his scouts far enough and now he was blind. The Texans were advancing in small units and could have been easily ambushed piecemeal, but Canby never thought of it. Throughout this period the weather was reported as unseasonably cold with sporadic snow and hail and one can only imagine the suffering of both Texan and Union men alike due to the elements.

The next day, on the 13th, a patrol led by Major Wingate, including a company of the 5th US and Captain Dodd's Coloradans, met with a Texan probe a few hours south of the fort.⁴¹⁴ At last, Col. Canby knew for sure that Sibley's force was in the area and advancing, and he had a very good appraisal as to their total strength of about 2,600 men. He reiterated that he still had "no confidence in the militia and but little in the volunteers."⁴¹⁵ Nevertheless, he mustered his men, ineffectual as he thought some of them were, and marched out to meet the threat. But nothing came of it. It was just a patrol and the Confederate body of troops wasn't there. Due to his lack of scouts Canby didn't know exactly where they were. His lack of confidence made him hesitant and indecisive and he gave the enemy ample time to consolidate their forces. Captain Deus was completely convinced by now that Canby was a coward and a traitor.⁴¹⁶ In contrast to Canby's pessimism Governor Connelly wrote to William Seward the US Secretary of State, "I have no fears as to the results here." His sentiments echoed those of Col. Carson earlier. "We will conquer the Texan forces, if not in the first battle, it will be done in the second or subsequent battles. We will overcome them."⁴¹⁷ Like Carson it appears he had no qualms regarding the capabilities of the New Mexicans "to second us in this matter."

Despite Canby's feelings about the New Mexicans, it was a fact that two thirds of his men at Fort Craig and more than three quarters of his overall force was New Mexican; and except for a few small contingents of Regulars, New Mexicans were now the only ones watching the rest of the Territory. Outlying patrols from the remaining portion of the Third Volunteer Regiment were still maintained at Fort Union, stations on the northeastern plains, and at Abo Pass. The bulk of the Fourth Volunteer Regiment and portions of the First Militia Division and all of the Third Militia were also providing garrisons at the various forts and depots as well as patrols and escorts in the central and northern parts of the Territory. If Col. Canby had not had the support of the New Mexicans all of this would not have been possible. The mutiny of the 30 men and the recalcitrant company in the 1st Militia did not speak for the bulk of the Volunteers and although many took it as proof of their general unreliability, it was not true. There is a difference between being unhappy and being disloyal. Some Americans had rebelled for less. To name a few, there

⁴¹² Mumey, *Bloody Trails*, 2/8/62, 72.

⁴¹³ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 144.

⁴¹⁴ John Taylor, *Bloody Valverde: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande February 21, 1862* (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 22.

⁴¹⁵ *Official Records*, Canby 3/1/62.

⁴¹⁶ Daniel B. Castello, *Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier* (self-published, NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 28. Written at Deus' dictation - a manuscript memoir located by Tim Kimball.

⁴¹⁷ *Official Records*, Connelly to Seward 2/6/62.

was a mutiny in the 69th NY Militia which was only a thirty-day unit. Two companies rebelled because they hadn't been paid before their 30 days were up. Another early war mutiny developed in the 13th, 21st, and 79th NY Regiments because they didn't like their conditions. At least they had clothes, not to mention the fact that they had been paid as well. When seen in this light, the New Mexicans were amazing. Their endurance under hardship and their ability to continue their duties under that hardship was remarkable. In addition to Carson and Connelly there were other American born people in New Mexico who did not feel at all the way Canby and many of the Regulars did. On February 12th James L. Collins the editor of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* wrote a letter to William Dole, the US Commissioner of Indian Affairs saying, "The Mexicans have turned out with a spirit that is truly commendable, the best and most influential Mexicans [in] the territory are here and will take part in the battle."⁴¹⁸

Meanwhile, Captain Santiago Valdez of Company H, First Volunteer Regiment, had been having health problems and had tendered his resignation earlier in the month. He could not aptly perform his duties and he had decided to resign. His resignation was confirmed on the 15th.⁴¹⁹ He was replaced by Edward Bergman who was the 1st Lt. of that company. Also by the 15th, Major Wesche had four companies of the 2nd Militia Division at Fort Craig, companies A, B, C, & E. Company D had been incorporated into C & E by Governor Connelly the day before. The 2nd Division infantry companies were ordered to camp in the post corral while the mounted companies were placed at Camp Carson.⁴²⁰ There must have been some reason for this, since one would think the horses should be in the corral and the infantry in the camp. Canby's force had nearly reached full strength although a few more Militia companies would continue to trickle in.



Edward Bergman, Captain Co. H, 1st NMVI

On the 16th of February a Confederate garrison of 12,000 men at Fort Donelson in Tennessee, fell to General U. S. Grant's forces. It was an unconditional surrender. He had already taken Fort Henry on the 6th and was moving into the heart of the South, using a combination of land troops supported by ironclad river gunboats. Donelson was a spectacular victory that threw Gen. Grant into the limelight and gave some hope to the North. Further east things had not gone that well. But although Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee would dispute the fact for some time, Gen. Grant had proven that the Confederates were not invincible.

That same day in New Mexico Gen. Sibley's force, completely assembled now, was spotted crossing the river to the west bank south of Fort Craig. At about one o'clock in the afternoon the Confederates drew up in line of battle still south of the fort, hoping to draw the Federals out of the formidable looking fortifications. Col. Canby aligned his force in front of the fort to meet them but stayed well under cover of the fort's cannons. The Rebels did not advance, except for two companies who were seen to be moving to occupy a hill west of the fort, but

⁴¹⁸ Taylor, *Bloody Valverde*, 14 & 148, note 14.

⁴¹⁹ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 25.

⁴²⁰ Thompson, *Civil War Diary*, 42.

Chacón and Graydon got there first. Other than that, Canby didn't move either. Instead, he ordered Chacón, Grayden, and Deus to ride along the enemy line in an attempt to provoke a battle, but except for firing a few shots, the Rebels did not take the bait. They did not want to advance into the range of the fort's cannon, some of which were actually 'quakers' (fakes – logs painted black). Confederate General Sibley reported that they were attacked by some "very well mounted" companies.⁴²¹ Captain Chacón states that his men fired three shots each and a man was killed and another wounded from Deus' company. He believed these were the first shots fired in the Valverde Campaign. Captain Deus remembered that there was, "Considerable firing on both sides" and that one man, "the baker of Deus's company, was killed."⁴²² After the rebels withdrew Chacón found fresh graves at that site indicating they had killed six Texans.⁴²³

The Union men chafed under Canby's restraint as they watched the Texans withdraw. Using the Volunteers as an excuse for inaction, Canby reported that he spent the next several days operating so the Volunteers would not be required to "maneuver in the presence of or under the fire of the enemy."⁴²⁴ He was already using them as a crutch to explain failure. In reality, for the next two days, both sides were paralyzed by a severe sandstorm, not inept volunteers. On the 19th the storm cleared and Gen. Sibley moved his army back to the east side of the river. Many of Canby's men could not understand why he did nothing and let them cross "in full view of every Union soldier at the fort who cared about witnessing the crossing, and no one attempted to prevent them. Why this was so, no one, either a regular or a volunteer, could discover."⁴²⁵ Several more mounted companies of the 2nd Militia Division arrived on the 19th and the last one on the 20th. Col. Canby ordered Col. Nicolás Pino to command the infantry portion of the Division and Lt. Col. Jesús María Baca y Salazar was appointed to take charge of the mounted portion.⁴²⁶ This seems to indicate that Wesche was not actually in charge of the mounted battalion, although his reports appear to be written that way. On that day Gen. Sibley, still remaining on the east side of the river, moved his column north opposite Fort Craig. This area was composed of a series of basaltic ravines oriented north/south which provided cover for his column. Col. Canby reported that on the 20th the enemy had moved northward behind a ravine. Infantry could reach them though cavalry and artillery movement would be very difficult. By 4pm it was possible to attack them. Most of the union troops were already across the river and advancing on the Confederates. Preparations were made and skirmishers "thrown forward" for the purpose of drawing enemy fire. But Pino's 2nd Regiment had ruined his plans because they were "thrown into such utter confusion by a few harmless cannon-shots" and they could not be put back into line. "This and the near approach of night rendered it inexpedient to continue the attack." To distract the enemy and cover the retreat Colonel Roberts made a "demonstration" with all the cavalry. Actually they rode to the top of a distant hill without actually threatening anyone. Canby then then reported he had positioned his troops so the Texans could not cross at the fords and move toward the fort during the night. All the other troops were withdrawn back to the fort.⁴²⁷

What we have here is an explanation by Col. Canby that he would have attacked the Confederates in the ravine but the inadequacy of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment prevented him from executing his plan. Clearly, Col. Miguel Pino's Regiment was already his scapegoat. Not

⁴²¹ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 194.

⁴²² Daniel B. Castello, Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier (self-published, NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 28. Written in the third person at Deus' dictation - a manuscript located by Tim Kimball.

⁴²³ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 163.

⁴²⁴ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

⁴²⁵ Hon. J. Frank Chaves [Lt. Col. Jose Francisco Chaves of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry], "Historic Valverde" Albuquerque Daily Citizen, June 21st, 1890.

⁴²⁶ Thompson, Civil War Diary, 42.

⁴²⁷ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

everyone agreed with Canby's assessments regarding the confusion of the Volunteers. Captain Rafael Chacón reported that his company in a force of about 600 Union cavalry (Col. Roberts' "demonstration") took possession of the some heights in order to keep the Confederates from setting their cannons there. It was believed that they might have been able to shell Fort Craig from that location. The Texans fired artillery at their position but only a few men were wounded by flying rocks. Chacón does not mention any Volunteer confusion.⁴²⁸ Major Wesche who was with the same group stated, "The rebels fired some seventy-odd cannon shots, most of them went over our heads, none did harm us."⁴²⁹ He doesn't mention any confusion either, and presumably they could see a lot from that hill. Lt. Colonel J. Francisco Chaves of the 1st Volunteer Regiment states unequivocally that the "utter confusion" of the 2nd Regiment never occurred at all.

*When our troops were within range of the enemy's guns they began firing upon us, and there was no confusion among the New Mexico Volunteers to amount to anything. One private of the 3d United States Cavalry had his jaw broken by the gravel thrown up by the ricochet of a six pounder shot and Gen. Canby's horse was wounded in the hock of one of the hind legs. The union troops were constantly advancing, except when ordered to halt, and they never fired a single shot at the enemy. For some inexplicable cause all the regulars were withdrawn from the field that evening, and ordered to Fort Craig, and the 1st and 2nd New Mexico Volunteers were ordered back to the edge of the mesa, near the river, where they passed the night.*⁴³⁰

It would seem that Col. Canby's judgment was not just biased or prejudiced, but rather completely skewed. He appears to have been more interested in watching the 2nd NM fail than in actually attacking the Confederates. Captain Charles Deus (I/1st NM) related that he "was particularly disgusted with the outrageous action of the retreat made by Canby."⁴³¹ He was right. A man like Kit Carson would have watched the Rebel approach very carefully and executed a few ambushes on their columns as well as raids on their wagon train and livestock to weaken them. Then he would have been at the basaltic ridge before they were. A man like Paddy Graydon would have simply shot any skeddaddlers and slammed right into the enemy's flank or rear. With almost anyone else in charge the Confederates would not have gone this far unmolested.

Speaking of Graydon, it was on this night that he is said to have made his famous 'mule bomb' attack. He supposedly tied dynamite to two mules, lit the fuses and sent them off towards the Confederate camp. As the story goes, however, the mules turned around and Graydon was forced to run for his life. The resulting explosion caused the Texan mule and cattle herd to stampede and the New Mexicans rounded them up. This hilarious story is very much in keeping with Paddy's reputation but Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves reports that there was no such explosion that night. The livestock had strayed toward the river and "were not stampeded at all by any of our men, but they came to the river of their own accord, and our outlying pickets drove them into the fort."⁴³²

Sources for the mule bomb story are sketchy so we'll probably never know for sure if two US mules sacrificed their lives for their country on that night. What is sure is that a number of livestock defected to the Union Cause (in reality, they were just thirsty). And if Graydon actually did try the attack, well, good for him. At least someone was doing something.

⁴²⁸ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 166).

⁴²⁹ Thompson, *With the New Mexico Militia*.

⁴³⁰ Chaves, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*.

⁴³¹ Castello, *Captain Charles Deus*, 28.

⁴³² Chaves, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*.

Chapter Six

The Battle of Valverde

February 21, 1862

In the predawn darkness, five companies of mounted New Mexico Volunteers under the command of Lt. Colonel José María Valdez arrive at the Fords of Valverde. Without hesitation Valdez sends a detachment across the frigid fords to scout the east bank for Texans. Rafael Chacón (K/1st NM) is the first to cross. He recalls in his memoir, “At the moment we crossed the river we were able to see the sun behind the hills....which many of us would not live to see set.”⁴³³ Behind him follows Captain Deus (I,/1st NM). As they splash across the water, Valdez turns to his own three companies of the 3rd Mounted New Mexico Volunteers: Company B, led by Captain Ricardo Branch, Company C, under Captain Pedro Sánchez, and Company G with Captain Juan Sarracino. One of his four companies of the Third, Company A with Captain William Mortimore is guarding the artillery train far behind them. He posts himself and two companies, B & G, to cover the west bank of the fords and sends Company C to follow Chacón and Deus. Chacón’s detachment soon dismounts and advances towards a line of trees in a hollow.



L-R: Captain Rafael Chacon, Company K, Captain Charles Deus, Company I, 1stNMVI, Captain Pedro Sanchez, Company C, 3rd NMMV

The battle had been set in motion during the night when 1st Militia foot troops reported from their station on top of the 300 foot Mesa del Contadero that a section of the Confederate Army was moving north towards the Fords of Valverde on the Río Grande. They were traveling up the east side of the Mesa. Confederate General Sibley had sent Major Pyron of the Texas 7th Mounted Regiment north around the mesa to scout the fords. The Militia watched them round the northern side and head for the fords to the west. At this point the Confederate move could have been a feint, but Canby responds accordingly. At daybreak he sent a strong force under the command of Lt. Col. Benjamin Roberts of the 5th NM Mounted Volunteers to the fords to reconnoiter. Canby is still holding the 1st and 2nd NM Infantry Regiments as well as the mounted section of the 1st and all of the 2nd Militia Divisions, about 500 militia cavalry, to guard the approach to the fort from the east in case the Texans intend to double back. Behind the Volunteers, on the west side of the river, are posted the Federal Infantry, portions of the 5th, 7th, and 10th Regiments under Captain Seldon. Various miscellaneous companies garrison the fort itself.

Now Major Duncan at the head of four companies of US Cavalry arrives on the west side of the river where Valdez and his two companies are posted. He orders Lieutenant Claflin and his Company (G/1st US Cav) to move up the riverbank on the west side. It is only a few minutes

⁴³³ Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 166-167.

before Claflin returns and reports that 1,000 of the enemy had watered their horses at the east riverbank and are now traveling south to a point opposite Thomas' position. The report that the enemy force was larger than his and had good cover, not to mention artillery, convinces Duncan "that it would be folly to move forward and attack him."⁴³⁴ He doesn't mention the New Mexicans that are already across the river, nor that they are not deterred by the Texans.

Chacón's detachment continues to carefully move forward through the Bosque, searching for the enemy. Each of the three companies had sent out two men ahead of their lines as scouts. Suddenly, one of Deus' scouts calls out in Spanish "There are the Texans. Look out!" The Texans are in the woods directly ahead of them. A volley rings out, but the New Mexicans are already on their guard. They crest the ridge of the hollow and return fire.⁴³⁵ At about the same time Pedro Sánchez' company piles in beside them and joins the fight. After battle, Lt. Col. Valdez of the 3rd Mounted Volunteers reported that in his battalion, Company C under Capt. Pedro Sánchez, "...did commence the attack against the enemy."⁴³⁶

Soon, Colonel Roberts arrives at the fords with the rest of his troops including two artillery batteries guarded by five companies, three Regular, and two Volunteer. Roberts takes in the situation and orders Duncan's and Valdez's remaining men to cross to the east side of the river, not mentioning that he could already hear firing from that quarter. He states that, Duncan promptly crossed and dismounted his men. Duncan reported, "I therefore dismounted my command, had the horses and horse-holders concealed as well as possible behind a low sand ridge, about 80 yards from and parallel to the river, and deployed the remainder of the men behind some small sand hills, logs, and a few scattering trees, about 100 yards in advance of the horses..."⁴³⁷ He still doesn't mention any firing.



Colonel Benjamin Roberts and Major Thomas Duncan

The Union artillery unlimbers and begins to set up their guns on the west side of the fords aiming their muzzles towards the Texans on the east side. The batteries consist of two sections (four light guns), a mix of 6# and 12# cannons and howitzers under Captain Alexander McRae, and one section of two 24# howitzers comprising Hall's Battery. One section of McRae's guns remains at the fort. His battery is manned by cavalrymen of two combined companies, G & I, of the 2nd and 3rd US Cavalry Regiments respectively, and Hall's is staffed by men from Company F of the 10th US Infantry. The artillerymen are supported by two companies: Captain Hubbell's Company (B/5th NM), and Captain Mortimore's (A/3rd NM) Volunteer Regiments.⁴³⁸ Roberts

⁴³⁴ Official Records, Duncan 2/23/62.

⁴³⁵ Daniel B. Castello, Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier (self-published, NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 28. Written at Deus' dictation - a manuscript memoir located by Tim Kimball.

⁴³⁶ Official Records, Valdez 2/26/62.

⁴³⁷ Official Records, Duncan 2/23/62.

⁴³⁸ The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Roberts 2/23/62.

describes the ensuing fight across the river as "...a spirited and sharp skirmish..." The two Federal infantry companies, Captain Brotherton (K/5th US), Captain Ingraham (H/7th US) Infantry, are also sent across the Rio Grande.⁴³⁹

The deep-throated booming of the canons on both sides cuts through the intense small arms fire and shot slashes through the Bosque, rending anything in its path. Pyron, who is easily outnumbered two to one, is just trying to hold on until reinforcements come up. Around 8:00am Confederate Col. Scurry arrives with his 4th Texas Regiment and part of Teel's and all of Reilly's Artillery Batteries. Immediately the 4th Texas charges while the Confederate batteries set up and also commence firing at the Union artillery. A very intense artillery duel is soon in progress. Capt. Pedro Sánchez (C/3rd NM) reported that at this time, "Corp. Antonio Chawn, Privates Jesús Archuleta and Pastor Archuleta did act on that occasion with such encouragement and valor that they killed some men of the enemy's battery."⁴⁴⁰ Col. Roberts observed that one Confederate gun and one caisson were destroyed.⁴⁴¹ The Rebels make three charges on the Union line, but to no avail. They are driven back with some loss. Col. Roberts also noted that three times the Confederates tried to retake the Union position in the bosque and they were repulsed each time. The Texans are successfully stalled. During the engagement Col. Roberts sent orders via William Mills to Captain Brotherton (K/5th US & H/7th US) to charge the enemy guns with his two companies of Regulars, but Major Duncan refused to allow it.⁴⁴²



William W. Mills

The Union artillery renews its barrage at 10:00am while long distance small arms fire continues all over the field. By comparison, the Texan return fire is weak. The long range musketry of the New Mexicans who are equipped as mounted rifles (with Harper's Ferry and Mississippi rifles), backed by the superior battery begins to tell on them and by 11:00am Scurry and Pyron are forced to retreat completely out of the bosque. They take cover behind the sand dunes that form the old riverbed before the river had changed course, as it periodically did. The retreat is made with some disorder and the Texans leave behind a cannon that was disabled by the destruction of its horses. Realizing their mistake some men return and haul it off by hand, which must have been very difficult, under fire, and moving through sand.

Meanwhile, also about 10:00am, opposite Fort Craig, the Federal infantry battalions under the command of Captain Henry Selden are ordered to leave their position east of the fort and proceed to the battle site. Shortly after, Kit Carson's 1st NM Volunteer Regiment also receives an order to move to Valverde. The remaining forces, Col. Miguel Pino with his 2nd NM Volunteer Infantry Regiment, his brother, Col. Nicolás Pino with the 2nd Militia Division, and a battalion of cavalry of the 1st Militia under Col. Stapleton, remain on watch in case any

⁴³⁹ Official Records, Roberts 2/23/62.

⁴⁴⁰ Official Records, Valdez 2/26/62.

⁴⁴¹ Official Records, Roberts 2/23/61.

⁴⁴² William Wallace Mills, Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898, W. W. Mills, 1901, 56.

Confederates might still try to approach the fort from that direction. Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves, second in command of the 1st Regiment, wrote,

*...our regiment, the 1st New Mexico volunteers, was ordered to proceed from the mesa east of Fort Craig, where they had slept upon their arms the night previous, to cross the Río Grande and proceed forthwith to the battle ground. This we did, and we went on the battle ground without having taken any supper the night previous nor breakfast that morning, but our regiment went cheerfully, anxious to meet the enemy.*⁴⁴³



L-R: Col. Christopher Carson, Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves, Major Arthur Morrison
Commanders of the First NM Regiment

As the fighting continues on the west side of the mesa, the 2nd Militia Division, stationed on the south side also runs into opposition. Lt. Col. Jesús María Baca's pickets see Confederates probing southwest along a trail that runs along the Mesa's edge. Baca moves his battalion forward to meet them and as they begin to skirmish Col. Nicolás Pino soon arrives with the infantry.⁴⁴⁴ In his unassuming style, Major Wesche reported, "We took our positions at the foot of La Mesa (Mesa Contadero). We had a little skirmish with the rearguard of the Rebels; they soon turning their backs on us and joining their main body."⁴⁴⁵



Colonel Nicholas Pino, Major Charles Wesche

In contrast, the Texans who run from them report to their comrades that they had "repulsed Kit Carson and 1,000 Mexicans, who had gone round to cut off the train, by a

⁴⁴³ Hon. J. Frank Chaves [Lt. Col. Jose Francisco Chaves of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry], "Historic Valverde" Albuquerque Daily Citizen, June 21st, 1890.

⁴⁴⁴ John Taylor, Bloody Valverde: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 21, 1862 (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 58.

⁴⁴⁵ Ed. Jerry D. Thompson, "The Civil War Diary of Major Charles Emil Wesche," Password Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1994, 43.

charge...⁴⁴⁶ Second Militia Captains Sena y Rivera, Co. C, and José Merced Sánchez, Co. E, and their men run to retrieve their mounts to pursue them, however, Col. Nicolás Pino soon receives orders to find the Texan supply train instead, which they proceed to do.⁴⁴⁷ Meanwhile, on top of the mesa, elements of the 1st Militia Division are still watching the Confederates at the battle site as well as others who are moving to reinforce them. They begin to fire down upon them causing serious consternation. Both men and horses suffer from this galling fire from which there is no cover. Unable to take it any longer, three Texan companies headed by Lt. Col. Henry McNeil of the 5th Texas, who are just arriving at the Battle site, pull out of line and ride their mounts to the top to stop the snipers. Fifty of Pyron's men who are armed with minie-rifles follow them up the slope so they can start their own sniping. The NM militia men fall back as the Texans reach the crest. However, the Texans have now become perfect targets for the Union rifles and artillery in the valley below. One Confederate wrote, "They turned every gun on us...How they did hustle us out of there."⁴⁴⁸ The Texans can only hold the position for a few minutes before they scatter back down the slope. At this point, as the battle begins to wind down a light snow begins to fall. It is cold.

Just before noon the battalion of US Regular Infantry under Captain Henry Selden arrives as reinforcements. Selden's force includes Major Wingate's remaining four companies of the 5th US, two companies of the 7th US, and two companies of the 10th US under Captain Plympton, as well as Dodd's Company of Colorado Volunteers. Roberts immediately sends them across with orders to drive the Rebels further from the river. William Mills wrote, "The men received the order with a shout and plunged into the river, which was cold and reached up to their armpits."⁴⁴⁹



Captain Henry Selden, 7thUS Infantry

Following them, the foot portion of Col. Carson's 1st NM Volunteer Infantry also arrives and reports to Roberts, who orders them to guard the northern approach to the fords on the west side of the river in case rebels should cross at the higher ford. Col. Canby states that Carson requested that his men not enter the battle immediately, however Roberts reported, "Having received information that 500 Confederate cavalry had crossed the river above and threatened my rear, I placed Colonel Carson's regiment in a bosque higher up, near the main road to Valverde, to observe that direction, and to prevent any attempts on my left and rear."⁴⁵⁰ Lt. Col. Chaves noted that the Union troops "had several conflicts with the confederate troops in which our troops

⁴⁴⁶ Don E. Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande (Merit Press, Albuquerque, NM, 1993), 45.

⁴⁴⁷ Official Records, Wesche.

⁴⁴⁸ Donald S. Frazier, Blood and Treasure: Confederate Empire in the Southwest (Texas A&M University Military History Series, No 41, Texas A&M University Press, 1997). 169.

⁴⁴⁹ Mills, Forty Years, 56.

⁴⁵⁰ Official Records, Roberts 2/23/62.

had come off victorious.” He confirmed that “The 1st New Mexico Volunteers were stationed about fifty yards from the west bank of the river and parallel thereto in line of battle...”⁴⁵¹

Seldon’s men soon find that the crossing is necessarily slow. They are forced to advance “step by step their foothold among quicksands and against the strong current of the Río Grande up to their arms in its water.”⁴⁵² The water is very cold and chest deep. To ford the river they must take off their leather gear hold it and their muskets up over their heads and step into the icy water, and fumble their way across. Part of the problem is the shoes. The leather soles of their Jefferson Brogans (Army issue ankle length boots) are slippery on wet surfaces and also tend to get sucked into the muck and remain there when the foot is lifted. Knowing this, many men would have removed their shoes, tied the laces together, and carried them above the water. But even barefoot the crossing must have been very difficult. Once on the other side they are required to put their gear back on and form ranks. Eventually all the companies are across. They reform and shivering, step into line to the left of the cavalry. This process takes at least a half hour. The Confederates in turn are forced to extend the right of their line to meet them. Being outnumbered, they are stretched quite thin at this time. Now Col. Roberts decides to send the artillery across the river. Col. Chaves wrote that men of the 1st NM are detailed by Roberts to help McRae’s Battery cross.

*I called for volunteers for that purpose to step three paces to the front, and when the command was given the whole regiment marched to the front with a cheer. I then detailed about 100 men, being about ten men from each company respectively, which immediately took hold of ropes and aided in crossing the battery to its station of the east bank.*⁴⁵³

Once across the river Col. Roberts reported his repositioning of the battery as “having posted them on Captain Selden’s right, with the support of Captain Brotherton’s (K/5th US Inf.) and Captain Ingraham’s (H/7th US Inf.) companies of Regular infantry and Captains Hubbell’s (B/5th NM Vol.) and Mortimore’s (A/3rd NM Vol.) companies of Volunteers.”⁴⁵⁴ Once in position a new duel breaks out between the opposing artillery units. During the artillery barrage Selden’s battalion (about 630 men) prepares for a charge. At approximately 12:30pm Selden is ordered forward. Confederate Sergeant Petticolas (4th TX) wrote, “We could see the enemy in strength just before us about 600 yards and advancing rapidly as if to force our line in.”⁴⁵⁵ The Union fire begins to decimate the horses and mules behind the 4th Texas Regiment. By all accounts, the Union line came on without wavering. Petticolas noted, “About this time the Ab’s [period slang for Abolitionists] had gotten in 300 yards of us...”⁴⁵⁶

Rafael Chacón describes the final onslaught, “All our troops then east of the river – the mounted forces with drawn sabers and the foot soldiers with fixed bayonets – delivered a telling blow on the enemy.”⁴⁵⁷ The rebels weren’t prepared for such a spirited assault, but soon they rally and are reinforced. William Mills, of Robert’s staff, describes what happened, “Right gallantly did they obey the order, but they encountered double their number, strongly posted, and were compelled to retire, which they did in good order.”⁴⁵⁸ Referring to the Texan short-ranged

⁴⁵¹ Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

⁴⁵² Official Records, Roberts 2/23/62.

⁴⁵³ Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

⁴⁵⁴ Official Records, Roberts 2/23/62.

⁴⁵⁵ Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande, 43.

⁴⁵⁶ Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande, 43.

⁴⁵⁷ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 167.

⁴⁵⁸ Mills, Forty Years, 56.

firearms, Sergeant Petticolas wrote, “They began to pay dearly for getting so close to us.”⁴⁵⁹ As Seldon’s men are stalled at close range Confederate reinforcements arrive in the form of five companies of the 5th Texas under Col. Green and the remaining section (two guns) of Teel’s battery. It is too much. Seldon’s battalion retreats back to the bosque. Pyron’s exhausted men of the 7th Texas are pulled out of line and placed in reserve as the 5th Texas takes their place.

Two of the companies that arrived with Col. Green are lancers of the 5th Texas regiment. One of the lancer Captains, Captain Lang (B/5th TX), asks Col. Scurry for permission to charge but he is denied. Undaunted, he asks again and receives approval. Lang then, “made them [his men] a short speech, brought them to attention, and gave the fearful order ‘charge.’”⁴⁶⁰ This was the only lancer charge of the entire war and the results were disastrous – especially so, since only one of the companies actually charged. The second lancer company under Captain McCown (G/5th TX) was not ready to assist them because Lang had not coordinated the attack with them. As Lang’s men stepped off some of them noticed this and broke off while the others charged “like an avalanche.”⁴⁶¹ The Coloradans prepared to meet them. “Instantly [the Coloradans] threw themselves in position to ‘resist cavalry,’ the front lines on their knees with braced muskets presented a wall of bayonets.”⁴⁶² From an opposing perspective Private Alonso Ickis of Colorado describes the carnage:

*The enemy knew by the dress and movements of our co [company] that we were not regulars and they thought us Mexicans. They then thought they had a soft snap. Three co’s of Mounted Lancier [sic] Rangers made a charge on our co which was but 71 strong in the field. The boys waited until they got within 40 yds of us when they took deliberate aim and it was fun to see the Texans fall. They wavered for a few minutes and then on they came and fierce looking fellows they were with their long lances raised. But when they got to us we were loaded again and we gave them “buck and ball.” After the second volley there were but few of them left and but one of them got away. The others shot, one bayoneted. G. Simpson ran his bayonet through one and then shot the top of his head off.*⁴⁶³



Captain Theodore Dodd (L), Private Alonzo Ickis (R)
Company B, 1st Colorado Volunteers

Even though the Coloradans had been issued new blue uniforms a month before, they had apparently elected not to wear them to the battle. Instead they donned their old grey uniforms that had been issued by the state of Colorado. “They were dressed in grey like our militia, and

⁴⁵⁹ Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande, 44.

⁴⁶⁰ Frazier, Blood and Treasure, 167.

⁴⁶¹ Frazier, Blood and Treasure, 167.

⁴⁶² Frazier, Blood and Treasure, 168.

⁴⁶³ Nolie Mumey, Bloody Trails Along the Rio Grande (Old West Publishing Company, Denver, 1958), 76.

the Texans, mistaking them for Mexicans, charged them recklessly.”⁴⁶⁴ The New Mexico Volunteers were wearing blue, as were a large number of the Confederates who did not mention who they charged and why. Since the Coloradans were on the extreme left flank it appears more likely that Lang had simply charged at the closest unit after coming onto the field. The Confederates relate that as the charge neared, the Federal companies which supported the Coloradans formed square to meet them though none say that the Coloradans themselves had done that. The Texans also reported that one man was bayoneted. Seeing the red-pennanted lances go down, McCown’s Company wanted to advance to support them but Col. Green stopped them. It was clear to him that the lancer experiment was a complete failure. One Confederate wrote, “This threw a gloom over our entire line.”⁴⁶⁵

About this time Colonel Canby departs from Fort Craig on his way to the battlefield with an ammunition train. He leaves a portion of the 1st Militia, two companies of the 3rd NM Volunteers, Captain Saturnino Barrientos’ Company A of the 5th NM Volunteers, and miscellaneous Regulars to guard Fort Craig. The commander of the 1st NM Militia, Col. Manuel Armijo, is furious at not being allowed to participate in the battle, as is Barrientos. Canby also sends word for the 2nd NM Volunteers to cross the river and to proceed to the Valverde fords. Only two companies of the 3rd NM Volunteers, Stapleton’s mounted battalion of the 1st NM Militia, and Nicolás Pino’s infantry of the 2nd NM Militia are left to guard the crossing.

Also at about 1:00pm Rafeal Chacón captures a rebel gun that had been firing on his location for some time. In his memoir he wrote that at approximately 1pm a Texan gun made its presence known by firing on his company and for some time, “seemed deliberately directed only at the spot where my company was positioned.” He had no recourse but to charge them. As he and his men closed in the Texan gunners retreated. Corporal Leyba and several others lasso the piece and hauled it back to the Union lines.⁴⁶⁶ Imagine the small horde of ‘Mexicans’ brandishing weapons and lassos, whooping and hollering as they haul the Texan gun back to their own lines. The Confederates laconically report that due to a lack of gunners, they had already decided to abandon the piece after reloading, hoping to use it later. But whether they left as ordered or ran because of the Volunteers, the result was the same. Also about this time, the militiamen of the 1st NM Division reappear at the crest of the mesa and begin firing at the hapless Confederates again.

About 2:00pm William Mills reports: “The New Mexican volunteers were keeping the enemy from the water and skirmishing briskly at times...”⁴⁶⁷ By 2:30 both armies are exhausted and take a break except for some sporadic sniping. Up to this time, the Union troops had fought successfully under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin S. Roberts. The anonymous veteran of the First wrote: “... the Confederate troops were driven up against the bluffs, and kept from reaching the water, and it was the opinion of everybody that it was only a question of a short time when the Confederates would be compelled to surrender, or that they would be vanquished.”⁴⁶⁸

William Mills also describes the morale of the Union soldiers as very optimistic. “We had kept them from the water, McRae had beaten their battery, and the Coloradans had gained an advantage. We were well posted and provided; their animals and men were weary and without water. They could not retreat; they must surrender or starve or fight quickly and

⁴⁶⁴ Mills, *Forty Years*, 57.

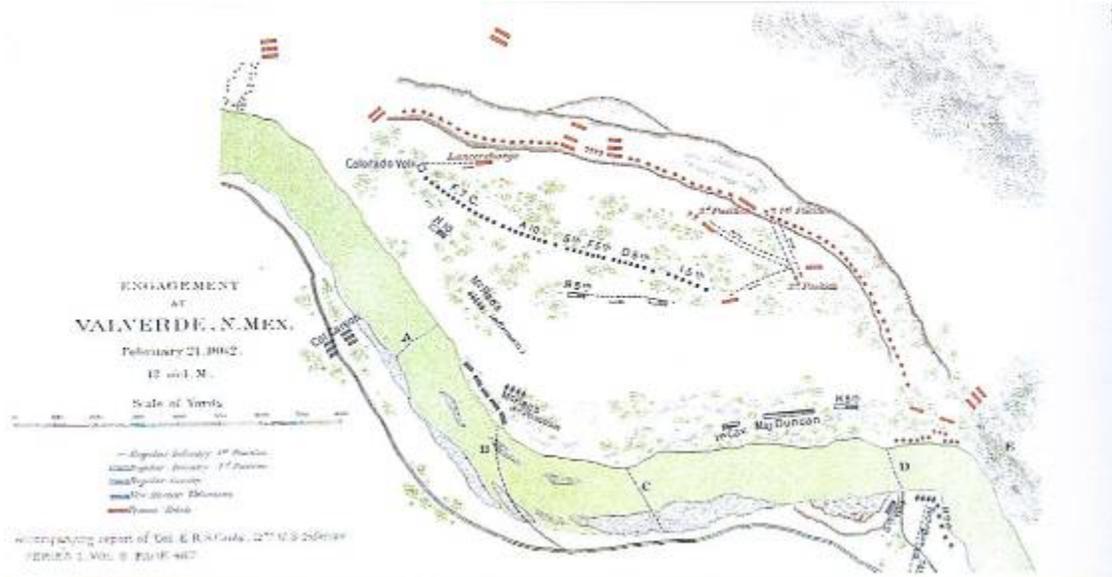
⁴⁶⁵ Frazier, *Blood and Treasure*, 168.

⁴⁶⁶ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 168.

⁴⁶⁷ Jacqueline and Charles Meketa, “Heroes or Cowards? A New Look at the Role of Native New Mexicans at the Battle of Valverde,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, (January, 1987), 38.

⁴⁶⁸ Anonymous Federal Volunteer, “Battles in New Mexico” *Albuquerque Evening Citizen*, June 17th, 1893. An article by an anonymous veteran of the 1st New Mexico Volunteer Infantry.

desperately...”⁴⁶⁹ With Gen. Sibley ill and unable to command his army, Col. Green assumes command and begins working on the ‘quick and desperate’ option. Using his own staff and Sibley’s as well he tries to take stock of the overall situation and bring the dispersed units into a cohesive command. He racks his brain as to what to do. From the other side of the field Col. Roberts reported that at 2:30pm he gave his men a break. His men were exhausted by five hours of continuous fighting and for some it had been closer to eight hours. He had been notified that Canby was on his way with reinforcements. The Union batteries, however, continued sporadic fire when targets presented themselves. Canby reached the field with an ammunition train at about 2:45pm.⁴⁷⁰



This is Colonel Canby’s Battle map representing the fighting that occurred in the morning. Except for Carson’s 1st NM Volunteers on the west bank and Dodd’s company, he shows only the Regular troops. The New Mexican companies are not represented.

The Second NM Volunteers arrive from the Fort, following Col. Canby and the ammunition train, and they are posted on the west bank of the middle ford. There is some discussion as to what time the Second New Mexico actually got there – some people believe they actually arrived later than reported. As cited above, Canby was already departing the fort when he sent orders to Pino across the river, so, unless he waited for them, they probably would not have arrived at the ford until sometime later than he did. They had to ford the river, march back to the fort, restock supplies or ammunition, and then take the road north to the Valverde fords. Other reports say they arrived with him, following the ammunition train. While the two companies of the 3rd NM Volunteers, Stapleton’s 1st Militia mounted battalion, and Nicolás Pino’s 2nd Militia infantry battalion are guarding the fords opposite the fort, Lt. Col. Jesús María Baca and his mounted 2nd Militia battalion is still following the Confederate rearguard north around the mesa, searching for the supply wagons as ordered.

Col. Canby Assumes Command

“At 3 o’clock that afternoon General [sic] Canby appeared on the field and was received with cheers by the troops.”⁴⁷¹ Col. Canby takes over command of the battle from Roberts and

⁴⁶⁹ Mills, *Forty Years*, 57.

⁴⁷⁰ *Official Records*, Roberts to Nicodemus 2/23/62.

⁴⁷¹ Mills, *Forty Years*, 57.

realigns the Union line. He orders Carson's regiment and Hall's battery to join Major Duncan on the right side of the battlefield. During the move, the 1st NM Volunteers help Hall's guns across the river. Lt. Col. Chaves writes:

*About 1 o'clock p.m. a battery consisting of two 24-pounder howitzers under the command of Lieut. R. M. Hall, came on to the field from Fort Craig, and the 1st New Mexico volunteers was ordered to take it across the river to its station, and was further ordered to its support. This was done. Subsequently the trail of one of the 24-pounders was broken, and the disabled gun was recrossed to the west bank of the river by men of my regiment.*⁴⁷²



Captain Alexander McRae and Lieutenant R. M. Hall
Union Artillery commanders

Actually the battery that just came up with Canby was the remaining section of McRae's battery. However, Chaves is correct that the 1st NM did help Hall's battery across. Col. Canby also realigns the left flank. William Mills wrote, "... after a brief consultation with Roberts he advanced our battery about five hundred yards, withdrew Seldon from its support, leaving only two companies [Mortimore's A/3rd NM Vol and Hubbell's B/5th NM Vol] to protect it."⁴⁷³ Canby places a battalion under Captain Plympton consisting of two companies, A & H, of the 10th US Infantry, along with Dodd's Coloradans, and two companies, F & H, of the 7th US Infantry in reserve back at the riverbank, about 500 yards or more behind the battery. Captain Bascom's company C of the 7th US is posted in skirmish formation to the right of the battery, a short distance to the right of the volunteers. The battalion of the 5th US Infantry under Captain Wingate is placed past the 'elbow' of the line, facing north. The right wing of the army is composed of Kit Carson's 1st NM Volunteers, Hall's Battery (now consisting of only one 24 pounder), Duncan's four companies of the 3rd US Cavalry, Valdez' four companies of the 3rd NM Volunteers, and Graydon's Independent Company. The cavalry to the right of the guns are dismounted in a skirmish line. Thus the army is aligned with a short left flank facing east, and a strong right flank facing north.

Suddenly another artillery duel breaks out. The cannonading is unusually fierce and the NM Volunteers at the battery and the men of company C/7th US Infantry lie prone to avoid fire while Plympton's men duck behind the riverbank. To provide additional support for McRae's artillery, Captains Lord (D) and Claflin (G), 1st US Cavalry, are ordered to unite their companies and provide a cavalry reserve for the advanced battery, 100 yards behind and to the right of the battery. Canby then sends orders for the 2nd NM Regiment to cross the river.

Raguet's Diversionary Assault on Hall's Battery

⁴⁷² Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

⁴⁷³ Mills, Forty Years, 57.

Desperately searching for a weakness in the Union line, Confederate Col. Green spots the nearly unsupported Union battery and decides that the key to the battle is to take it. He also notes that the firing on his left flank is getting too close for comfort. He orders Raguet with his battalion to charge the Union Left in order to give him time to assemble the remaining men for a charge. Raguet runs to mount his five companies of 300 men and form them up for the charge. Major Duncan, who is in command on the Federal right wing, has been ordered by Col. Canby to advance on the Rebel left flank, but he proceeds much too slowly. Canby's plan is to hold on his left flank while his right advances up the ravine that the Texans are using for cover. It's not a bad plan but the advance on the left needs to be executed vigorously. If Maj. Duncan had advanced properly on Raguet he would have rolled up the Rebel line and ruined Col. Green's preparations for a charge in the process.

Major Duncan reported that as they began their advance "a terrific cannonading and roar of small-arms was heard on our left flank."⁴⁷⁴ Col. Carson recalls that his men and the gun to their right had advanced about 400 yards when the Texans were suddenly seen "charging diagonally across our front, evidently with the intention of capturing the 24-pounder gun..." His entire regiment fired a volley into them and continued to fire causing their formation to scatter "in every direction." It was at that moment that a shell exploded in the midst of the Confederates "with fatal effect."⁴⁷⁵

William Mills observed: "Carson's Mexican regiment had been moved to our right and advanced, and with one company of Regulars (7th US) repulsed a charge of Texas cavalry with some loss." He watched Carson in action. "He walked up and down his line, quietly encouraging his men with such words as, 'Firme muchachos, firme' [Steady, boys, steady]."⁴⁷⁶ "According to another Regular officer, Capt. Edward W. Wynkoop, it was obvious that Carson 'knew how to lead men into battle and keep them there.'"⁴⁷⁷ Duncan, however, despite his success, is panicked by the boldness of the enemy and he sends a courier asking Canby for reinforcements. Canby's initial response is to send Company H of the 7th US Infantry over in that direction.

Rafael Chacón describes what happens next, "We received the order to advance and attack their flank, sabers in hand." The attack was executed "full of courage and almost in a frenzy...through blood and fire, we forced them to flee to the hills."⁴⁷⁸ Captain Louis Felsenthal, affirms that at this time, "... a man [Domingo Salazar] of my Company G 1st N. M. Vols. took from the hand of a Texan, a flag of the Confederate States."⁴⁷⁹ The anonymous veteran of the First stated, "...the charge was successfully repulsed by the First Regiment of New Mexico Volunteers. It was repeated twice, thereafter in succession by the Confederate cavalry, and as many times gallantly and successfully repulsed by the regiment, and the Confederates drive [sic] in confusion to the foot of the sand hills."⁴⁸⁰ Chacón also states that the Confederates made more than one charge against the First Volunteers. "...the same force of rebel cavalry, which we on the right had driven back, reformed and insisently returned again..."⁴⁸¹ Lt. Col. José Francisco Chaves also of the First states also that, "We proceeded in line of battle at the north foot of the Mesita del Contadero, and successfully repulsed ten distinct cavalry charges of the confederate left, which were to capture Capt. Hall's battery."⁴⁸² The possibility of multiple charges is backed by the fact that Maj. Duncan sends repeated requests for aide to Canby, who finally orders

⁴⁷⁴ Official Records, Duncan 2/23/62.

⁴⁷⁵ Official Records, Carson 2/26/62.

⁴⁷⁶ Mills, Forty Years, 57.

⁴⁷⁷ Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives, University of New Mexico Press, 2003, 116.

⁴⁷⁸ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169.

⁴⁷⁹ John P. Wilson, When the Texans Came (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 247.

⁴⁸⁰ Anonymous, Albuquerque Evening Citizen.

⁴⁸¹ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169.

⁴⁸² Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

Wingate's 5th US battalion to move to support the action on the left.⁴⁸³ During the battle Rafael Chacón noted that the regimental chaplain, Damasio Taladrid, "walked among the dead and injured, helping them and absolving them of their sins without fear of bullets."⁴⁸⁴

At last, Raguet's Texans break, and a portion of them veer sharply to their left, away from the 1st NM counter charge, heading towards the black mesa with the mounted 1st NM companies in hot pursuit. Chacón refers to this as, "The supreme moment of the day..."⁴⁸⁵ No doubt, they are soon joined by the mounted companies of the 3rd NM who had been posted as skirmishers on the extreme right of the line. Raguet and the other portion of the surviving Texans retreat back to their original point of attack behind Green's assembly point. The hapless rebels running east had only two choices, climb the mesa or surrender. They climb, and try to escape north along the slopes. It is assumed that the militia men on top continue to fire on them. Carson reforms his jubilant infantry battalion, realigning the unit with Duncan's slow crawl towards the enemy left flank. At this point, they have no idea another drama is taking place on the other side of the field. Raguet's diversion worked perfectly. It slowed Duncan's advance even more, and caused Canby to send six companies of Regulars from the center of the line to the right, just in time to be of no use to either the right or the left – in hindsight, a disastrous mistake.

Green's Assault on McRae's Battery

Even before the action died down on the left Confederate Col. Green put his plan into motion. His 750 men surged forward. The charge was in three waves, "200 men in the first, 250 men in the second, and a final group of 300."⁴⁸⁶ Although Col. Green mentions three waves of troops many Confederates report the confusion of the chargers, so the truth is probably somewhere in between. Sgt. Peticolas' drawing of the advance shows orderly but scattered independent companies and skirmishers. However, for the sake of clarity, the charge is described here in three waves. The Texan lines move forward at 30-40 yard intervals, heading straight for McRae's battery. If the Confederates had been previously fighting in a disordered and ambiguous manner, through the efforts of Col. Green, they are now galvanized into one intent.

The First Wave

As the first wave approaches, Mortimore's, Hubbell's, and Bascom's men provide defensive fire for the battery. "Confederate Lieutenant Colonel Scurry [4th TX] told of his men making a charge 'into a driving storm of grape and canister and musket balls sent hurling around [them].'"⁴⁸⁷ There is so much smoke on the field from the cannonade that it covers the Texan advance for a time. When Col. Canby finally sees the Texans coming he must have understood in an instant the tactical mistakes he had made. It's painfully obvious that McRae's battery has only weak support. The 5th US is on the other side of the field and Plympton's battalion is back by the riverbank. Perhaps realizing there may not be time to save the battery Canby quickly sends a courier to order Col. Pino's Volunteers to re-cross to the west bank, presumably to cover a retreat. There is no other reason to order them back.

Then Canby notes with horror that Plympton's battalion is not even aware of the Texan advance. "Perceiving that Plympton's command was entirely unsuspecting of the danger that threatened the battery, I hastened in person to point it out and make arrangements for its defense..."⁴⁸⁸ He rides to the riverbank and gets Sgt. Rockwell's F/7th US Infantry moving. Col. Roberts also sends a courier to Capt. Lord with orders to charge with his two companies, and he

⁴⁸³ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

⁴⁸⁴ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 129.

⁴⁸⁵ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169.

⁴⁸⁶ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 84.

⁴⁸⁷ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 39.

⁴⁸⁸ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

sends William Mills to the other side of the field to bring some of those forces to bear on the Texan charge. Mills sees the charging Rebels and describes them as chaotic. "On they came on foot, a mass of wild men, without order and apparently without command, with rifles, shotguns, pistols and all kinds of arms, and yelling like demons."⁴⁸⁹ Some of the Union companies responded accordingly. Hubbell, Rockwell, and Mortimore and their men run to support the battery just in time to meet and check the first wave. The Texans in the first wave halt at 20 yards and fire back. Canby reported that the Union battery support, "rushed into the battery and engaged in a gallant and desperate attempt to repel the enemy. The advance of the storming party was driven back..."⁴⁹⁰ Company C of the 7th US still remains prone some distance away. Meanwhile, Captain Mortimore and his men run to the undefended left side of the battery. This places them in front of the left half of Plympton's battalion. William Mills reaches Major Duncan and gives him Robertson's order to charge, but Duncan refuses. He then gives Captain Wingate of the 5th US the same order and he responds by rushing his men back to the other side of the field.⁴⁹¹

At midstream, the bewildered Col. Pino receives Canby's order not to cross. He arbitrarily breaks his line of march, halts the rear part of the column, and reverses those men back to the west bank. His men that are already past this cutoff point, Sena's company B and part of another continue forward. Col. Pino wrote, "while this movement was being executed [fording the river] we were ordered back to form on the western bank..."⁴⁹² From their vantage point by the riverbank the Coloradans can see the 2nd NM turn back to the other side of the river and assume that they are running from the fight. Pvt. Ickis notes as much in his diary, "At the sight of such a very large body of Texans Pinos men ran leaving us white men only 250 to hold the section..."⁴⁹³ Then Canby reaches the Coloradans and they begin to make their 500 yard dash. Next, Canby rides in succession to Company H, and then Company A - all of the 10th US Infantry, and they in turn also begin to move forward in echelon.

The Second Wave

The Union line now consists of McRae's battery in the center, Hubbell's Company to their right and Sergeant Rockwell's Company F (7th US) to Hubbell's right; and to the left, only Mortimore's men. Mortimore's left flank is without support, and is no doubt overlapped by the larger group of attackers who are fast approaching. The Texan second wave rolls over the survivors of the first and crashes into the Union line. A melee free-for-all ensues. We can now assume that the better part of 450 attackers had reached the battery versus 280 defenders, including McRae's men who are still firing their pieces. Therefore, at this time, the rebels have almost a 2-1 advantage. Although on a smaller scale, the fighting at this point becomes as intense as any of the hardest-fought battles in any theater of the Civil War. Such close combat seldom occurred during the war. It did occur, but it was unusual, exemplifying a high degree of courage and determination. West Texan-style melee was a special variety, involving shotguns and six-shooters at very close range. Except for the officers and perhaps the artillerymen, most of the Union men have single-shot muskets. The Texans had been described as having 'a brace of pistols' (2 pistols - 12 shots) each, or even 'two braces' (24 shots) meaning they could fire many rounds at close range without reloading while most of the Union men could fire only one. Confederate Sgt. Peticolas states that the Union companies supporting the guns were cut to pieces.⁴⁹⁴ The fact that the Union line was still there is one of the most remarkable feats of the

⁴⁸⁹ Mills, *Forty Years*, 58.

⁴⁹⁰ *Official Records*, Canby 3/1/62.

⁴⁹¹ Mills, *Forty Years*, 58.

⁴⁹² *Official Records*, Pino 2/26/62.

⁴⁹³ Mumey, *Bloody Trails*, 77.

⁴⁹⁴ Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande*, 51.

entire Civil War. At this point, nearby Company C of the 7th US Infantry finally decides to take action; they stand up and run away.⁴⁹⁵

Meanwhile the fighting at the guns is still very bitter. “Lockridge...is said to have placed his hand on one of the cannons and shouted, ‘This is mine!’ ...at that moment he was fatally wounded and uttered his last words, ‘Go on my boys, don’t stop here!’”⁴⁹⁶ McRae falls, mortally wounded, and his Lieutenant, “Lyman Mishler, is shot through the chest ‘while ramming the last charge into one of his pieces.’”⁴⁹⁷ Lewis Roe of Company F reported: “I heard no orders, no shouting, no yelling. Everyone was busy fighting.”⁴⁹⁸ Some of the men begin to give way but amazingly, the Union line still holds. The Coloradans reach the scene and Pvt. Ickis reports: “Canby was by us cheering the men. Our battery boys played the canister into the enemy and at every shot you could see their ranks open and pieces of men flying in the air, but on they came.”⁴⁹⁹

It was perhaps at this point that Capt. Mortimore’s exposed company is overwhelmed and begins to fall back. Mortimore is wounded three times, four of his men are killed, and almost half his men including his sergeant are captured or missing. Captain Lord’s squadron of the 1st US Cavalry, ordered by Roberts to counter-charge, fails to get there. Canby wrote, “Lord’s squadron coming up from the right...was ordered to charge, but on approaching the battery became exposed to the fire of our own men as well as that of the enemy, turned to the left, and for reasons that are not entirely satisfactory fell back without making the charge.”⁵⁰⁰ Back at the fords, Captain Sena’s Company B of the 2nd NM reaches the east side of the river. He reported that, “...while in midstream he found himself in a shower of bullets fired by both friend and foe.”⁵⁰¹ Obviously, this was a good enough reason for Lord’s men to retreat, but not for Pino’s. Sena forms up his men and heads for the fighting.

The Third Wave

When the third wave hits the Union line, the defenders are outnumbered three to one. Another 300 loaded shotguns and six-shooters arrive on the scene, and it is too much for them. William Mills saw the retreat:

*I returned to the battery. The small support was giving way; Canby whose horse had been shot, was on foot. He had taken a musket from a retreating soldier and was urging the men to reform and charge. It was too late.*⁵⁰²

After taking 50% casualties all the Federals begin to give way. Private Daniel Robinson of the Seventh US Infantry recalled: “Men were breaking to the rear and I thought of the low bank from which we had deployed... I broke for the bank and to my surprise found it was quite steep and I was up to my waist in the water... quite a number of men were under it, unsure whether they should cross [the river] or remain.”⁵⁰³ Coloradan Pvt. Ickis wrote: “...it was no go. There were too many of them and we could not retreat with our battery for the Rio but we did not leave it until the enemy was around and on it.”⁵⁰⁴ Just as all was sure to be lost, an artillery

⁴⁹⁵ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 162, footnote 9.

⁴⁹⁶ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 89.

⁴⁹⁷ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 91.

⁴⁹⁸ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 91.

⁴⁹⁹ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 77-78.

⁵⁰⁰ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

⁵⁰¹ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Esq., Leading Facts of New Mexican History, Volume 2 (“The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), 388, footnote 314.

⁵⁰² Mills, Forty Years, 58.

⁵⁰³ Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 92.

⁵⁰⁴ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 78.

caisson was purposely exploded by one of the Union artillerymen, either using lit fuses or pistol shots. It was a massive explosion and the nameless artilleryman was killed by it.

While still advancing, Captain Plympton witnesses the loss of the battery and the retreat. He wrote "...the enemy assembled in force and charged the battery, pistol in hand, after the gunners had all been killed or driven from their guns....At this time, a body of Volunteers (Mexican) were seized with a panic who broke from their positions immediately in front of a portion of my command and rushed precipitously into the river and, I regret to say, took with them a portion of the left of my battalion in spite of my individual efforts to stop that flight."⁵⁰⁵ Plympton reveals here that the battery had already been lost when half of his men retreated. Canby also concedes that he got to Plympton too late. "...but before this could be dully accomplished [preparations for Plympton's defense of the guns] the volunteers that formed a part of its support gave way, and in passing through Plympton's battalion communicated their panic, and carried with them a part of his men."⁵⁰⁶ While trying to avoid admitting their own failures, both Canby and Plympton attempt to place blame on the New Mexicans who were actually in the fighting.

Regardless, the aura of what had just occurred was stamped indelibly in the minds of the men who witnessed it. Plympton was moved to comment, "Here I must make mention of the gallant conduct of all connected with the battery, who manfully stood their ground..."⁵⁰⁷ Col. Roberts wrote:

*McRae's battery, though held with unexampled determination after the loss of every horse and more than half the gunners disabled and killed, was carried, and fell into the enemy's hands. Captain McRae, Third Cavalry, and Lieutenant Mishler, Fifth Infantry, were killed at their pieces, and illustrated a courage and conduct that will render the battle of Valverde memorable among the glories of American arms. It is due to the memories of the dead who served this battery and to the survivors, whose gallant and heroic service commends them to the praise of the country, to mention them as deserving honor and thanks.*⁵⁰⁸

The Texans had won the guns, capturing some of the Federal defenders in the process. Confederate Sgt. Peticolas' estimates that 30-40 men were taken prisoner,⁵⁰⁹ including some 'Mexicans' who "were released on oath not to fight against the Confederacy."⁵¹⁰ No doubt these were some of the men listed as missing from Mortimore's and Hubbell's companies. The four companies at the guns, Rockwell's, Hubbell's, Mortimore's and McRae's, had lost 57% casualties: 66 killed, 60 wounded, and 34 missing/captured out of 282 men; with Rockwell's F/7th US taking a whopping 71%. Dodd's Coloradans, having many more wounded than dead appear to have been in a close range fire fight rather than in actual melee. Now the companies of the 5th US Infantry begin to form up at their original spot in the center of the Union line and volley at the jubilant Confederates.

⁵⁰⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, 243.

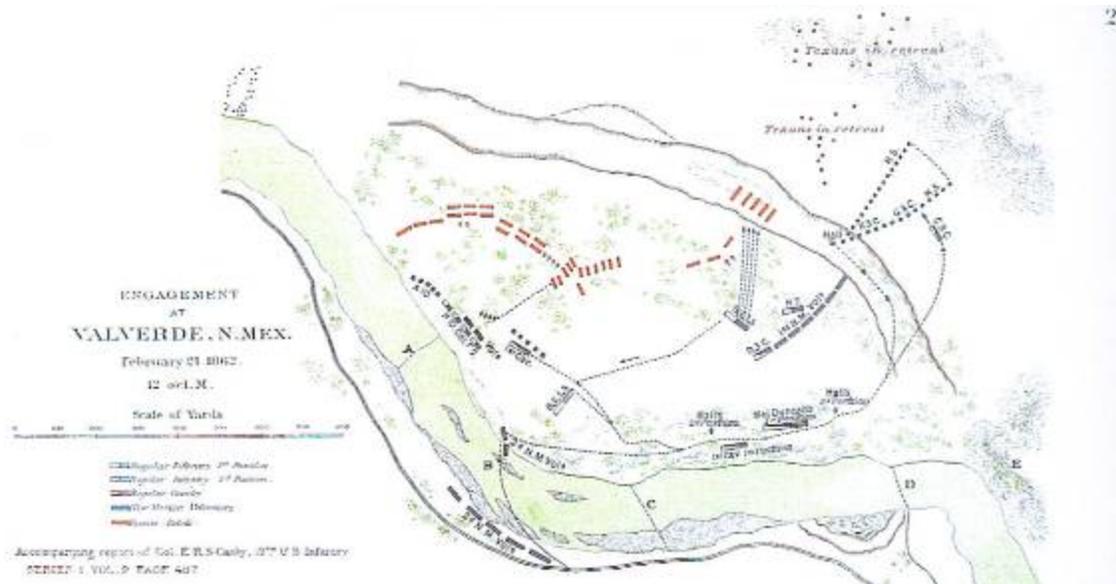
⁵⁰⁶ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

⁵⁰⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, 242.

⁵⁰⁸ Official Records, Roberts to Nicodemus 2/23/62.

⁵⁰⁹ Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande, 51.

⁵¹⁰ Alberts, Rebels on the Rio Grande, 49.



Canby's battle map representing the fighting in the afternoon. Note McRae's exposed position in the left center. To be accurate, Plympton's battalion should be shown closer to the river bank. Mortimer's and Hubbell's companies are correctly shown just behind McRae's battery. On the Union right it is misrepresented that the Regulars repelled Raguet's charge and not the 1st and 3rd NM Regiments and the 3rd US Cavalry. Canby did not witness the action on that side of the field. Pino's 2nd NM Volunteers are correctly shown in the center rear with two companies across the river and the remaining companies covering the fords exactly as ordered. Also note the proximity of the Confederates to McRae's battery and that the 5th US battalion is over on the right side of the field.

The Attempt to Retake the Guns

In the midst of all this Canby suddenly gives up. He decides to commence a general retreat. He sends couriers to order the remaining troops to retire, but some of the Regulars and Volunteers are now fired with a renewed vigor and try to retake the guns. He is defeated but his men are not. John W. Ellis, Company K, 5th US Infantry: "...Ben Wingate and Col. Selden with 5 companies of the 5th made repeated charges to retake it [the battery], though Canby had three or four times sent his aide-de-camp to tell him to retreat. But he returned the answer that he would never retreat until he again took those guns."⁵¹¹



Captain Benjamin Wingate, 5th US Infantry

"For a moment, it seemed as if the men of the Fifth Infantry might have saved the day. However Captain Wingate was badly wounded by an artillery round and the Confederates were

⁵¹¹ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 36.

quickly reinforced and came on again.”⁵¹² Sena’s men of the 2nd NM took part in this final charge. “Confederate reports verify that troops earlier stationed across from Fort Craig [the 2nd NM Volunteers] took an active part in the final charge of the day.”⁵¹³ Meanwhile, back on the west bank, Col. Miguel Pino forms the remainder of his men into line of battle to cover the ford. They can see many more men taking cover on their left at the riverbank, or struggling to get across the water. Others are streaming across the fords in front of them. With Wingate wounded and the officers hampered by orders to retreat, the Union counter-offensive breaks down and a general retreat begins. The men trapped at the riverbank have no choice but to swim. Apparently the retreat across the river was not as deadly as the Texans supposed. The 5th US Infantry retreats across the middle ford in good order. The right wing of the army, which was composed of 14 companies of Volunteers and 3 companies of Regulars is still advancing at this time. They have no idea what has happened on the left wing. Soon, dispatchers from Canby reach them with the order to retreat. Kit Carson is very displeased with the situation and apparently tries to ignore the order. The anonymous veteran of the First wrote:

...and the order [to retreat] was disobeyed [by Col. Carson], because neither the officers nor the soldiers of that regiment believed that they were defeated, and because as against the force the Confederates had to bring against them, they were confident that they could remain upon that battlefield until doomsday. But another, and preemptory order was brought by one of the aides de camp, and the regiment was ordered to march off the field left on front to the river... ”⁵¹⁴

J. Francisco Chaves writes:

...to our infinite surprise and chagrin, believing what we were victorious, Lieut. W. B. Mills, aide de camp to Col. B. S. Roberts, came to me with orders to abandon the field without delay, and that McRae’s battery on the right had been captured and our troops in flight across the Río Grande. I ordered Lieut. Eben Everett, regimental adjutant to look for Col. Carson, and I informed Capt. A. H. Pfeiffer [Co. E] of the order to withdraw. That brave old warrior was dumbfounded and as incredulous as myself.⁵¹⁵

Ignoring his feelings, Kit Carson merely reported, “...the column supported by the gun on the right, was moving forward to sweep the wood near the hills, when I received the order to retreat and recross the river.”⁵¹⁶ Rafael Chacón wrote, “At the hour the sun went down the order was given to retreat. I, who already found myself very deep into the enemy zone because of the violence of our attack, did not understand the order at first for we considered that our charge upon the enemy’s main cavalry had won the battle.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹² Taylor, Bloody Valverde, 91.

⁵¹³ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards,43.

⁵¹⁴ Anonymous, Albuquerque Evening Citizen.

⁵¹⁵ Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

⁵¹⁶ Official Records, Carson 2/26/62.

⁵¹⁷ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169.

Behind the Mesa

Lt. Col. Jesús María Baca y Salazar's battalion of the 2nd NM Militia had been searching for the Confederate wagon train all afternoon. At about 5:00pm they finally found it. Major Wesche reported:

*Marched in the given direction, found the wagons without a guard. Not being able to take the wagons with us, I set fire to the ammunition we found in two of the wagons. It was a beautiful explosion. Other property was found and destroyed.*⁵¹⁸

It's ironic that the much-castigated militia troops had delivered the most damaging blow that the Confederates had received all day. The loss of the supplies coupled with the loss of horses that put the 4th Texas Regiment on foot, and the previous loss of mules that caused wagons to be abandoned, really hurt an army that was already almost destitute. They had only five days rations left. For posterity, however, the worst of it was that the first volume of Peticolas' diary also went up in the flames.⁵¹⁹ In addition to this feat other Militia men at the top of the mesa had also contributed to the battle with some very effective sniper fire. Canby's assertion that the battle had been fought, "...almost entirely by the regular troops... with no assistance from the militia, and but little from the volunteers..."⁵²⁰ was entirely without merit. Speaking of supplies, it is a good idea to remember that almost all the supplies the Confederates had used to get this far, not to mention their many rifle-muskets and cannon, had been furnished to them by the US Regulars – Federal supplies in central Texas courtesy of General Twiggs, the supplies at El Paso courtesy of Col. Paul, the cannon, muskets and supplies at Fort Fillmore courtesy of Col. Lynde, the supplies and cannon at Fort Stanton courtesy of Col. Roberts - and everything, in general, courtesy of Col. Canby who spent his time whining instead of taking them back. As noted earlier, they even got some of their horses from the Regulars – the glorious Regulars had failed.

The Retreat

One Confederate who witnessed the Union debacle reported that Kit Carson's 1st Regiment was covering the retreat⁵²¹ but actually, as the reader knows, it was Miguel Pino's 2nd Regiment. Col. Pino states that they "...fired upon the enemy until ordered to return to Fort Craig."⁵²² The same Confederate wrote that a shell landed in their ranks killing and wounding many and they fled. However, they did not flee; they were still there when Col. Canby reached the west bank. Canby characteristically noted that the 2nd was "in the wildest confusion"⁵²³ perhaps they were, due to the artillery fire as well as to the hundreds of refugees streaming through them, but they were still there, firing away. Once again, Canby was more interested in the failure of the 2nd Volunteers than he was in winning the battle.

The 1st NM joined the retreat and remained cool under fire. Lt. Col. J. F. Chaves stated, "The 1st N.M. Vols. which was marching in regular order..." was fired upon by one of the captured guns that only had three shots left. "One shot each falling in front, rear, and over their [the 1st NM] center." Undaunted the First continued their march. "Not having obtained the range, and receiving no more ammunition, the firing ceased."⁵²⁴ Rafael Chacón verifies this: "We were crossing the river when they fired on us with one of our own cannons, but without doing us

⁵¹⁸ Thompson, *Civil War Diary*, 43.

⁵¹⁹ Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande*.

⁵²⁰ *Official Records*, Canby 2/22/62.

⁵²¹ Anonymous, *Albuquerque Evening Citizen*.

⁵²² *Official Records*, Pino 2/26/62.

⁵²³ *Official Records*, Canby 3/1/62.

⁵²⁴ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 379, footnote 13.

any damage.”⁵²⁵ According to the anonymous veteran of the First this was the first inkling they had that something was wrong, as they, “...were not aware that the Union cause had suffered defeat, until fired at by the Confederates with the selfsame guns which they had captured from us.”⁵²⁶ Lt. Col. J. F. Chaves also wrote, “The confederates fired their round shot at our regiment from their captured battery, which fortunately did not strike us, otherwise many of our soldiers would have been killed or wounded.”⁵²⁷ Thanks to McRae’s anonymous sacrificial gunner, the Texans were not able to mount a full cannonade on the retreating units. During this march the 1st NM lost their trophy Texan flag. Captain Felsenthal reported, “Before leaving the Battle Field, this flag was obtained by Captain Graydon from the man who took it, and was by Captain Graydon turned in to the Department Commander as having been captured by him or his Company.”⁵²⁸ The anonymous veteran of the First also reports that the march to the river, was not only done in good order, the troops had time to help the artillery across, sink a captured canon, and prepare to cross the river:

*The marching of our regiment in retreat from the field of battle in such order drew expressions of encomium from the Confederates in their description of the battle, and of the retreat of the Union troops, by the statement that the federal troops had marched off the field as if upon dress parade, mistakenly believing that our regiment must have been necessarily a regiment of regular troops to have preserved such order under such trying circumstances. It was nevertheless the fact, for the first regiment of New Mexico volunteers [sic] was assigned to the support of Hall’s battery at the extreme right of the field, and they marched off as stated and brought over Hall’s battery safely, and sunk a small mounted howitzer captured on the field in the river before crossing [this must have been the gun captured by Chacón earlier]. ...many of the soldiers of the regiment failed to go into the river in their clothes, and divested themselves of them before taking to the water...*⁵²⁹

Chacón’s unit, first on the field that morning, was the last to cross the ford that night. “I was so loath to leave the field that my company was the last of our army to retreat and cross the river.”⁵³⁰ No less than four officers reported that Carson’s regiment, “retreated across the river and marched back to Fort Craig ‘in good order, almost as if they were on parade.’”⁵³¹ “We marched off the field as if on dress parade... and when we reached the west bank, we formed in regular column and marched south to Fort Craig, about three miles, without breaking ranks.”⁵³² Why did they march three or four miles in step? This is not normal procedure as it is very tiring to the men. One can only imagine that Kit Carson had heard the rumors about the NM Volunteers running from the fight, and livid with silent rage at the time, was making a statement to the Regulars. This is the Kit Carson and he knew the character of both the Regulars and the New Mexicans as well as anyone did. One thing is for sure, based on the number of times that Kit’s name is mentioned by the Texans his aura was all over that battlefield. Even at this point many of the men of the First did not know they had lost. Lt. Col. J. F. Chaves reports: “The great

⁵²⁵ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169.

⁵²⁶ Anonymous, Albuquerque Evening Citizen.

⁵²⁷ Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

⁵²⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, 247.

⁵²⁹ Anonymous, Albuquerque Evening Citizen.

⁵³⁰ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 169).

⁵³¹ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 45.

⁵³² Chaves, Albuquerque Daily Citizen.

majority of our men knew nothing of the loss of the battle and of our retreat until after they were taking their supper.”⁵³³

It was all over but the shouting...

Once the Union soldiers were all safely back at Fort Craig the rumors and the blame began to take over. Stunned by their defeat and perhaps shamed by some of their own actions the Regulars sought to find a scapegoat. There had to be a reason they had lost. Two rumors and one fact quickly gained ascendancy. Men by the riverbank had seen the 2nd NM Volunteers turn around in midstream and return to the west bank. They concluded that Pino's men had run from the fight. Canby knew they had been ordered to do so but he did nothing to dispel the rumor. It suited him. He was so confident he never disputed Pino's report to the contrary. His first official report of February 22nd states that, “The immediate cause of the disaster at Valverde was the refusal of one of the volunteer regiments to cross the river and support the left wing...” This is referring to the 2nd NM Volunteers, stating that they were unwilling to cross the river. The fact that they were already crossing proves that they were not unwilling – a fact which Canby himself illustrates on his own battle map. Canby also accused the 2nd Regiment of “failing to obey orders,” and softened it with, “...or in obeying them too slow.” Canby attempted to give veracity to his claims by promoting Captain José D. Sena of Company B to Major for bravery in crossing the river as if to illustrate the failure of the other companies.⁵³⁴ This was Canby's punishment for the humiliation he had suffered a year earlier. And it was a lie. If the 2nd NM had truly been running from the fight they would not have been present on the west bank when the battle and the flood of refugees came to them. They would have kept going – out of harm's way. Yet, amidst fleeing troops, shot and shell, they were there volleying at the enemy and taking fire as ordered. Thus Canby catches himself in his own lie. In addition, he further contradicts himself when he states that “Colonels Pino and Carson, Lieut. Cols. J. F. and Manuel Chaves, and many other officers of the New Mexican Volunteers, were noted for their zeal and energy.”⁵³⁵

Another point needs to be considered. By the regulations and tactics manuals of the day, a regiment is deployed ‘in battalion’ with its Company B on the left of the line and Company A on the right. There are reasons of military science that a regiment always marches ‘by the right’ and deploys its rank and file in the correct order. Otherwise the men can become very confused. The fact that Sena's Company B was leading indicates that the Regiment was marching ‘by the left’ which would only be done in cases of extreme haste. Regular US regiments would not have done that and would have performed a time consuming countermarch to get the men in the correct order so that Company A would be the first to cross the river. Col. Pino and his men had shed official procedure in order to meet the situation.

The second rumor sprang from Plympton's excuse that Mortimore's men had infected the left half of his battalion (two companies) with fear and surely many of his men were already pointing that out to anyone who would listen. He may have gotten the story from them when they were accused of running away. Soon most of the Regulars concluded that the battery had been lost because the New Mexicans had run away. They told themselves that it was true although many of them must have known the bitter truth. One account states that the volunteers lay prone and refused to rise.⁵³⁶ This was Company H of the 7th US that did not move forward, not the Volunteers. Another account by a member of the Fifth US Infantry describes that: “The New Mexican volunteers fired a volley in the air, and with a yell similar to that of an Indian war cry,

⁵³³ Chaves, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*.

⁵³⁴ Twitchell, *Leading Facts Vol II*, 388, footnote 314.

⁵³⁵ *Official Records*, Canby 3/1/62.

⁵³⁶ Marion Cox Grinstead, *Destiny at Valverde: The Life and Death of Alexander McRae* (The Socorro Historical Society, 1992), 36.

fled in every direction, and would not be got into fighting position again.”⁵³⁷ However, if the reader will recall, the Fifth was busy with their wild errand to the other side of the field, from which point the battery could not be seen. They were reporting rumors, not documenting an actual incident. In his initial report of February 22nd, Col. Canby does not mention anything about New Mexicans running from the battery. He was there, yet he didn’t see it, neither did Roberts. It appears that Canby does not get such an idea until he reads Plympton’s report. Then he takes it out of context and includes it in his second report of March 1st. Plympton’s report states that the battery was already lost at the time, but Canby doesn’t mention that. His report is written so that people will believe that the New Mexicans had run first, causing the Regulars to do the same, and thus the battery was lost. Because of this it was established for history that a few New Mexicans had lost the battle. Thirteen companies of Regulars, one of Colorado, and two from New Mexico had originally been posted on the left wing of the army – and it was the New Mexicans who were blamed for the loss even though both companies had been in the group that took 50% casualties – the group that was actually fighting. The awful truth was that five companies of US Regulars had failed to do their duty. Lord’s two companies of the 1st Cavalry had refused to advance, as did two companies of Plympton’s 10th US Infantry, as well as Company C of the 7th US, which ran from the fight. It was the Regulars who seriously weakened the Federal strength on the left wing, not the 20 or so New Mexicans from Mortimore’s Company.

That night, the New Mexicans were aware of the accusations. In response, many company commanders reported that their company had not run from the field. Lt. Col. Valdez reported:

Capt. Pedro Sanchez, Third Regiment New Mexico Volunteers, reports that his company (C) fought gallantly during the battle without making any retreat without orders...

Capt. Juan A. Sarracino, Third Regiment New Mexico Volunteers, reports that Company G, under his command....did not make any retreat without orders.

Capt. Rafael Chacón, First Regiment New Mexico Volunteers, reports that....when the company was ordered to retreat they were satisfied of having obliged the enemy to retreat in all their charges...

Capt. Ricardo Branch, Third Regiment New Mexico Volunteers, reports that his company (B)....did not make any retreat without orders.

The commander of the company of Capt. William Mortimore [A], Third Regiment New Mexico Volunteers, reports that the following non-commissioned officers and privates, viz, First Sergt. J. W. Lewelling, Sergts. Edward Watters and Trancer Moore; Corps. Biter Terreme, Jose Leyra, S.C. Miller, C. A. Reidsen, George Beker, Henry York, Marceline Martínez, and Jose Anartaico Crespin, with others that are killed and missing, fought in the battle the 21st instant gallantly and sustained the battery to the last moment.

*I certify in honor that the above is correct and just.*⁵³⁸

The third item, the only real fact in this mess, was that Canby himself was the third scapegoat. Many soldiers felt that he had given up far too early. Indeed, even after leaving the field he could have posted his army on the west bank of the river. The Confederates still had to cross it. The Federals could have slept on their arms and opposed the crossing in the morning. But Canby himself was defeated. He dragged his men back to the safety of the fort thus giving the Confederates undisputed possession of the fords and the rest of New Mexico to the north. His men fumed with rage and disbelief that the battle was actually lost. John W. Ellis, quoting the

⁵³⁷ Grinstead, Destiny at Valverde, 36.

⁵³⁸ Official Records, Valdez 2/26/62.

wounded Ben Wingate's words to Canby that night at the fort wrote, "Leave me. You are a traitor. Could I but live to get to Washington!"⁵³⁹ Wingate died before he could report anything. William Mills wrote, "...I admired General Canby alike for this courage as for his amiable character, but I believe that if Col. Roberts had been left to carry out his plans that day, Valverde, would have been a Union victory and the campaign closed."⁵⁴⁰ Alonzo Ickis observed, "The padre told Col. Canby he was a traitor. Canby had him placed under guard for two hours and then released."⁵⁴¹ Ickis also notes, "The battle was lost by bad management."⁵⁴² Rafael Chacón wrote, "...the regiment of Colonel Carson....would have retaken the guns that the enemy had captured if the retreat had not sounded just as they were advancing on the enemy for that purpose."⁵⁴³ The anonymous veteran of the 1st asserted that: "The volunteers are firmly of the belief that if Col. Canby had never come on the field, that the Confederate troops would have been defeated, and that at his arrival on the battle field they were in fact and in truth defeated."⁵⁴⁴ Captain Deus stated, "What was the feeling of Canby's men later towards their General can better be imagined that told. The most ignorant in his command said a blind man could easily see that Canby's sympathy was with the South....It was rumored that Canby had concluded to surrender to Sibley on the following day." Deus also mentions the rumor that Canby and Sibley were brother-in-laws, which actually wasn't the case.⁵⁴⁵ But these men were correct that Canby, along with the US Regulars, shared the blame for the defeat. He had weakened the left flank and exposed the battery without adequate support. He desperately needed someone else to blame or he would lose credibility with his men, so he lied, twice, and many historians have conveniently followed suit, by taking Canby's report and the associated rumors as fact while completely ignoring the testimony of the New Mexicans.

*It should be noted that historians tend to feed on each other when sources are scarce. Too often an original error, rather than being corrected by further research, is repeated as the gospel truth of a statement or allegation.*⁵⁴⁶

*But we cannot blame the historian, for he is following his sources. On the other hand, writers and historians have a choice in the material they use.*⁵⁴⁷

No one alive today knows exactly what happened during those few fateful minutes at McRae's Battery. It's impossible to determine from reports if all of Mortimore's company proceeded to the fighting or if part of it ran the other way. Taylor states that Mortimore had about 65 men, but Charles Meketa notes that about 20 or so had been detached to guard horses. Since 19 were captured and 4 killed, that leaves approximately 20 men who could have run away, but when? The only undisputable fact is that everyone ran, eventually. But even if, at worst, some of Mortimore's men did run too early, they were not the only ones, they were not the cause of the

⁵³⁹ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 36.

⁵⁴⁰ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 38.

⁵⁴¹ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 82.

⁵⁴² Mumey, Bloody Trails, 81.

⁵⁴³ Meketa & Meketa, Heroes or Cowards, 36.

⁵⁴⁴ Anonymous, Albuquerque Evening Citizen.

⁵⁴⁵ Castello, Captain Charles Deus, 29.

⁵⁴⁶ Joe S. Sando and Herman Agoyo, Po'pay (Clear Light Publishing, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2005), 134.

This quote is from an Española newspaper article published on 11/5/98 by editor/publisher Robert Trapp.

⁵⁴⁷ Ed. LeRoy R. Hafen, French Fur Traders & Voyageurs in the American West (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, First Bison Books printing, 1997). This excerpt is from the Introduction by Janet Lecompte, 1993.

loss of the battle, they were not any kind of excuse for Plympton or Canby, and, if true, they should not distract us from the men who stayed.

New Mexico Unit Listings

Volunteers

1st Regiment New Mexico Volunteer Infantry

Organized at Fort Union and Santa Fe, July 1 to August 13, 1861, until February 1862.

Colonel: Ceran St. Vrain, Christopher Carson

Lt. Colonel: Christopher Carson, José Francisco Chaves

Major: José Francisco Chaves, Arthur Morrison

Regimental Staff:

Chaplain: Damasio Taladrid

Adjutant: 1st Lt. Eben Everette

Sergeant Major: (unknown)

Quarter Master: Lt., Lawrence Murphy; Sgt, Paul Romel

Band: Leader, 2nd Lt. Lucien B. Jewell; Charles Hopping – Asst. Band Leader (?)

Field Music: Henry M. Holmes (probably a Chief Bugler); Ruperto Borgorquez replaced Holmes.

Ordnance: Sgt. Frederick Berger (later became 1st Sgt of Co. G)

Medical: Surgeon, J. M. Whitlock; Asst. Surgeon, J. H. Shout

Hospital Stewards: James W. Cadogan, John Drennan

Matrons: Georgianna Monteeth, Leonora Monteeth, María Sena

Company A: mounted, Captain José María Valdez, Francisco Gonzales, from Mora.

Valdez became a Lt. Col. in the 3rd Regiment and Gonzales was promoted from 1st Lt., 2nd Lt. Trinidad Lopez (later 1st Lt.), 2nd Lt. Edmund Arnoux,

Company B: foot, Captain Arthur Morrison, José Gutierrez, from Las Vegas. Morrison was promoted to Major and Gutierrez was promoted to Captain from 1st Lt., 2nd - 1st Lt. John B. Atkins

Company C: foot, Captain Francisco Abréu, 1st Lt. Nicolas (or Nicolás) Quintana, 2nd Lt. David McAllister

Company D: mounted, Captain Julian Espinosa, 1st Lt. Enrique P. Martin, 2nd Lt. Donaciano Montoya (& Co. H)

Company E: foot, Captain Albert Pfeifer, 1st Lt. Louis Dickens, 2nd Lt. Juan Gallegos

Company F: foot, Captain Jesús María Sena y Baca, 1st Lt. Pantaleon Archuleta (& Co. G), Lt. John B. Finet (or Finnet) (& Co. E), 2nd Lt. Andres Tapia

Company G: foot, Captain Louis Felsenthal from Santa Fe, Lt. Antonio Abeyta

Company H: foot, Captain Santiago Valdez. Valdez resigned later and 1st Lt. Edward Bergman became Captain. 2nd - 1st Lt. William H. Brooks, 2nd Lt. William H. Lent (& D apparently Lent and Montoya were swapped at some point), 2nd Lt. José Manuel Martínez

Company I: mounted, Captain Charles Deus from Santa Fe, 1st Lt. Bonifacio (or Bonifacio) Machowitz, 2nd Lt. Antonio Avan Gallegos

Company K: mounted, Captain Rafael Chacón from Taos and surrounding area, 1st Lt. Augustin P. Damours (resigned after Chacón beat him up for his constant racial slurs and cruelty to the men), 1st Lt. Martín Quintana, 1st Lt. Maxwell, 2nd Lt. Julian Solíz (Approximately 1,000 men)

2nd Regiment New Mexico Volunteer Infantry

Organized at Santa Fe and Albuquerque, July and August, 1861, until May 31, 1862.

Colonel: Miguel E. Pino

Lt. Colonel: Manuel A. Chaves, Jesús M Baca y Salazar

Major: Jesús M Baca y Salazar (promoted to Lt. Col.), Manuel D. Pino.

Regimental Staff:

Adjutant: Lt. William Brady, followed by Corydon E. Cooley

Chaplain: Alexander Garelachowski (Grechalowski?)

Quarter Master: 1st Lt. Corydon E. Cooley (later became adjutant)

Quartermaster Sgt: Morris Lull

Commissary Sgt.: Clemente P. Ortiz (later promoted to Lt. probably

Quartermaster), Jesús María Aragon

Medical: Surgeon: A. L. Gray; Asst. Surgeon: S. Rankin;

Hospital Steward: Philip Walsh (or Welsh)

Sgt. Major: Percy J. Eyre (or Eyeris), later became a 2nd Lt., John Rogers followed as Sgt. Mjr.

Principal Musician: Esquipala Montoya (promoted from musician Co. A)

Company A: Captain Manuel D. Pino (later promoted to Major), Rafael Ortiz y Chaves

1st Lt.: Rafael Ortiz y Chaves (promoted to Captain), Clono y Sanches, John

Lewis (from Co. B), 2nd Lt.: Rafael Ortiz y Pineda, Pedro Sanches (promoted from Sgt. to 2nd Lt.)

Company B: Captain José D. Sena (promoted to Major after Valverde, José María

Sánchez, 1st Lt.: José María Sánchez, José Trujillo, 2nd Lt.: Nicolás Hodt,

promoted from 1st Sgt. Co. C) 2nd Lt. John Lewis (or Louis or Luis), 2nd Lt. José Trujillo (promoted to 1st Lt.)

Company C: Captain: Manuel Baca y Delgado, 1st Lt.: Aniseto Abeyta (EA), Jacob

Stenger, 2nd Lt. Jacob Stenger (or Stigner, promoted to 1st Lt.)

Company D: Captain: Gregorio Otero, 1st Lt. Saturinio Baca (DA), 2nd Lt. Antonio

Mejicano (or Mexicano)

Company E: Captain Román Baca, 1st Lt. David D. McAllister (EA), 1st Lt. Candelario

Garcia, 2nd Lt. Celso Cuellar Medina

Company F: Captain Ethan Eaton, 1st Lt. Pedro Sossalo, 2nd – 1st Lt. William Ayers

(FBD)

Company G: Captain Anastacio Garcia, 1st Lt. John R. Johnson, 2nd Lt. Magdalena

Calderon

Company H: Captain Juan Labadi, 1st Lt. Manuel Olona, 2nd Lt. Diego Sisneros

Company I: Captain Ildefonso Hay (ID), 1st Lt. José Barrios (IDF), 2nd Lt. Martin

Quintana (IHD)

Company K: Captain Marcos Baca y Padilla, 1st Lt. Joseph Bell, 2nd Lt. Alexander

Dearmond

(Approximately 1,000 men)

3rd Regiment New Mexico Mounted Volunteers

Organized at Fort Union and Albuquerque, August 30 to October 10, 1861, until May 31, 1862.

Colonel: José Guadalupe Gallegos

Lt. Col.: José María Valdez

Major: Luis Baca, Faustino Baca y Ulibarri

Regimental Staff:

Adjutant: John W. Staton, (later) William McLaughlin

Chaplain:

Quarter Master: (unknown)

Quartermaster Sgt: Manuel Baca (H), Francis Moore (A)

Commissary Sgt.: Valentine Basquez

Medical: Surgeon: Asst. Surgeon:

Hospital Steward: Gottfried Gauss

Sgt. Major: William McLaughlin (later Adjutant), Christian Wishler

Principal Musician:

Company A: Captain William Mortimore, (later Manuel Ortiz was promoted to captain after Mortimore was wounded at Valverde), 1st Lt. Telesforo Salazar, 2nd Lt. John Dalton, Lt. Juan José Herrera

Company B: Captain Ricardo Branch, 2nd Lt. Manuel S. Mondragon, 2nd Lt. Pedro Monquillo

Company C: Captain Pedro Sánchez, 1st Lt. Inocencio Martínez, 1st Lt. William B. Russell, 2nd Lt. Leodsio Lucero

Company D: Captain Severiana Martínez, 1st Lt. Juaquin Trujillo, 2nd Lt. Hurbano Lucero

Company E: Captain José Esquibel, 2nd Lt. Francisco Ulibarri

Company F: Captain John Brosee, 1st Lt. Sacramento Montoya

Company G: Captain Juan Sarracino, 1st Lt. Alfredo Branch (G), 1st Lt. Juan Torres, 2nd Lt. Francisco Pena

Company H: Captain Pablo S. Martínez, 1st Lt. Miguel Rivera, Lt. Francisco Griego, 2nd Lt. Ignacio Sena

Company K: Captain Tomas Valencia, 1st Lt. Vicente Trujillo, 2nd Lt. Lorenzo Montoya

Company L: Captain Santiago Gonzales, 1st Lt. Charles LaRouge, 1st Lt. Pedro Sánchez, Lt. Santiago Garcia

(Approximately 1,000 men; organized at Fort Union August 30 to Sept 10 1861;

discharged May 31 1862; there was no Company I; unlisted company officers: 1st Lt.

John Carmedy (or Carmody) – he transferred to the 4th Regiment, 2nd Lt. José Cordova

(I), 1st Lt. Jesús Luna, 2nd Lt. Francisco Salazar)

(Approximately 1,000 men)

4th Regiment New Mexico Mounted Volunteers

Organized at Fort Union in September to February, 1861, until May 31, 1862.

Colonel Gabriel Paul

Major Adolf (Adolph) Mayer

Regimental Staff:

Adjutant: 1st Lt. Nathaniel M. Macrae

Commissary: 1st Lt. Eugene McSweeny

Surgeon: Milnor Rudulf (later became a field Lt.), (later) Allen F. Peck

Asst. Surgeon: Alfred A. Craine

Company A: Captain Julian C. Shaw, Lt. Bernarido (Bernacido?) Salasar

Company B: Captain Julius, Lt. John Thompson, Arageny Perea, Lt. Robert S. Underhill

(also served with Company C)

Company C: Captain Alonzo Adams, Captain John Thompson, 1st Lt. Anisto (Esteban?)

Salazar, 2nd Lt. Francis McCabe

Company D: Captain Juan José Herrera, Lt. Edward Shoemaker, Lt. Regino Ulibarri

Company E: 1st Lt. George W. Cook (also served with Company D)

Company F: (possibly) Captain Buenaventura Lovato, 1st Lt. John Carmody

(About 450 men)

5th Regiment New Mexico Mounted Volunteers

Organized in Albuquerque November, 1861, until May 31, 1862.

Colonel Benjamin Roberts

Regimental Staff:

Aide-de-camp: William W. Mills

Adjutant: Charles Meinholt (Meinhold)

Quartermaster: Lt. Joseph Berney

Company A: Captain Saturnino Barrientos, 2nd Lt Nepomuseno Luera

Company B: Captain Santiago L Hubbell, 1st Lt. Charles M. Hubbell, 2nd Lt. José Chaves

y Chaves

(About 200 men)

Militia

1st NM Militia Division

Organized at large in November 1861; discharged February 1862.

Colonel: Manuel Armijo

Lt. Colonel: Diego Archuleta

Company A: Captain Louis W. Leroux, Captain José Ignacio Martínez, 1st Lt. José Mestos, 2nd Lt. Lorenzo Romero (perhaps one of these captains actually belonged to E or F)

Company B: Captain Juan de Jesús Martínez, 1st Lt. Nasario Lucero, 2nd Lt. Albino Vigil

Company C: Captain Juan Luis Gallegos, 2nd Lt. Pablo Garcia, 2nd Lt. Frederick Schoenor (transferred to Company F). This company appears to have been disbanded with men transferred to other companies.

Company D: Captain Anisilo (or Aniselo) Valdez, 1st Lt. Gabriel Jeantet, 2nd Lt. William Hirsch

Company E: Lt. Gabriel Lucero (one of the captains listed for Co. A was probably captain of this company)

Company F: 1st Lt. Thomas R. Smith, 2nd Lt. Frederick Shoerner (transferred from company C)

(About 500 men; Lt. Hlad Romero's company is not listed, perhaps he was the unit adjutant).

2nd NM Militia Division

Organized in January 1861, until February 28, 1862 (a portion of the mounted troops surrendered at Socorro on February 25, 1862).

Colonel: Nicolás Pino

Lt. Colonel: Jesús María Baca y Salazar

Major: Charles Emil Wesche, Ramon Sena y Rivera

Regimental Staff:

Quartermaster: Lt. Maurice Schwarzkopf

Company A: foot, Captain Antonio Sena

Company B: foot, Captain José E. Duran

Company C: mounted, Captain Ramon Sena y Rivera

Company D: mounted, Captain Velasquez, (company dissolved and incorporated into two other companies)

Company E: mounted, Captain José Merced Sánchez

Company F: mounted, Captain Benigno Valdez

Company G: mounted, Captain Juan de Jesús Valdez

Company H: mounted, Captain Atanacio Ulivarre

Company I: mounted, Captain Celso Baca

Company J: mounted, Captain José Cruz Gutierrez, 1st Lt Antonio Armijo (deserted)

Lieutenants identified by Wesche but not prescribed to specific companies: Lt. Cecilio Robles, Lt. Francisco Ortiz, Lt. Herrera, Lt. J. Dolores Garcia, Lt. Carlos Conklin, and Lt. Tucker.

(approximately 410 men; 280 mounted, 130 foot; This division is not listed in the soldier/sailor database so numbers are very difficult to determine - at least one source says they had 300 mounted men and the two foot companies had over 100 men each).

3rd NM Militia Division (Perea's Battalion)

Organized at large November through January, 1861, until February, 1862.

Lt. Colonel: Francisco Perea

Battalion Staff: (not listed)

Captain Juan de Dias (Dios?) Baca

Captain Francisco Montoya

Captain John R. Hubbell

Captain Francisco Aragon

Captain Augusto Del Balle

(Approximately 500 men; not listed as belonging to specific companies)

Independent Companies

Barrientos' Independent Mounted Company

Organized for three months.

Captain: Saturnino Barrientos

Duran's Independent Company Militia

Organized for three months.

Captain: José E. Duran

1st Lt. Francisco Ortez (Ortiz?) y Salazar, 2nd Lt. Carlos Conklin

(About 50 men)

Gonzales' Independent Company - Nov 23 1861 to Feb 28 1862

Organized at Fort Craig, November 23, 1861, until February 28, 1862.

Captain: Nestor Gonzales

1st Lt. Francisco Gabaldon, 2nd Lt. Greganio Chaves

(About 70 men)

Graydon's Independent Company (1st Co.)

Organized November 1861, until January 31, 1862.

Captain: Paddy Graydon

1st Lt. Philip Gonzales, 2nd Lt. -1st Lt. Juan Arroyo

(About 65 men; the men were recruited at Lemitar and organized at Fort Craig November 1861 for three months, mustered out in early February 1862)

Graydon's Independent Company (2nd Co.)

Organized February 9, 1862, until April 29, 1862.

Captain: Paddy Graydon

1st Lt. Philip Gonzales, 2nd Lt. -1st Lt. Juan Arroyo, 2nd Lt. John Longmuir

(About 85 men)

Hubbell's Independent Mounted Company

Organized at Albuquerque, July 23, 1861, until October 30, 1861.

Captain: Santiago (James) L Hubbell

1st Lt. Charles M. Hubbell, 2nd Lt. Francisco Aragón

Mink's Independent Company

Organized at Santa Fe, July 20, 1861, until October 29, 1861.

Captain: John H. Mink

1st Lt. Felipe Sánchez (Sánchez), 2nd Lt. Matías Medina

(About 90 men)

Ortiz y Alarid's Independent Company

Organized at Santa Fe, December 10, 1861, until February 28, 1862.

Captain Gaspar Ortiz y Alarid

1st Lt. Eduardo Miller, 2nd Lt. Juan Antonio Atencio

Lt. José de la Cruz Ramirez (also listed as a private)

(About 125 men; possibly 2 separate companies, or two companies at separate times)

Perea's Independent Company

Organized in 1862.

Captain José L. Perea

(About 45 men)

Romero's Independent Company Militia Infantry

Captain José Guadalupe Romero

1st Lt. Carlos Casados, 2nd Lt. Francisco Segura

(About 115 men; this was probably Company G of the 1st Militia Division above)

Sena's Independent Mounted Company

Organized for two months.

Captain: Antonio Sena

Lt. Ceselia Robles, Lt. Thomas S. Tucker

(About 60 men)

Simpson's Independent Company Mounted Spies and Guides

Captain William D. Simpson

1st Lt. Hannibal H. Holford, 2nd Lt Antonio Mascarenas

(About 45 men)

Tafoya's Independent Company Militia

Organized at Fort Craig, November 20, 1861, until February 28, 1862.

Captain Luis Tafoya (Tafayolla)

1st Lt. Francisco Armijo, 2nd Lt. Camillo Joyollo

Vigil's Independent Mounted Company

Organized at Santa Fe, July 12, 1861, until October 12, 1861.

Captain: Antonio María Vigil

1st Lt.: Jesús María de Herrera, 2nd Lt.: Henry Clay Pike

(About 80 men)

Biographical Sketches

Abréu, Francisco S. (Captain) p52
Archuleta, Diego (Lt. Colonel) p86
Baca, Román Antonio (Captain) p65
Canby, Edward Richard Sprigg (Major/Colonel) p25
Carleton, James (Colonel) p107
Carson, Christopher (Lt. Colonel/Colonel) p44
Chacón, Rafael (Captain) p62
Chaves, José Francisco (Major/Lt. Colonel) p45
Chaves, Manuel Antonio (Lt. Colonel) p9
Connelly, Henry (Doctor/Governor) p71
Deus, Charles (Captain) p61
Felsenthal, Louis (Captain) p59
Fremont, John Charles (General) p67
Gilpin, William (Governor) p54
Graydon, Patrick (Captain) p81
Hubbell, James (Santiago) Lawrence (Captain) p57
Kavanaugh, F. E. (Doctor) p75
Loring, William Wing (Colonel) p24
McRae, Alexander (Captain) p80
Mills, William Wallace (Lieutenant) p48
Mink, John Heinrich (Captain) p56
Morrison, Arthur (Captain/Major) p50
Otero, Miguel A. (Delegate) p22
Perea, Francisco (Colonel) p84
Pino, Miguel Estanislado (Colonel) p64
Pino, Nicolás (Colonel) p87
Pfeifer, Albert (Captain) p52
Rencher, Abraham (Governor) p22
Roberts, Benjamin Stone (Major/Colonel) p25
Sena, José D. (Captain/Major) p65
St. Vrain, Ceran (Colonel) p44
Taladrid, Damasio (Father/Chaplain) p45
Wesche, Charles (Major) p87
Valdez, José María (Captain/Lt. Colonel) p50